

## **Unique opportunity for Brevard to weigh in on Florida Constitution Review Process**

On Monday, February 19th, the Florida Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) will be holding a public hearing from 1pm until 7pm on the campus of Eastern Florida State College, at the Maxwell C King Center.

This will be one of the final rounds of public hearings before the Commissioners decide on which proposals will be placed on the November 2018 ballot. This is a tremendous opportunity for the Space Coast to speak up and weigh in on some very serious issues. Amending our constitution should be done with great care and caution, and thus citizen participation is critical to this process.

The Florida Legislature created the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) in 1968, to be an independent body that would meet every 20 years to make suggested changes and additions to the state Constitution. The commission is comprised of a mix of appointed and automatic members, tasked with researching issues, holding hearings and public debates before they draft proposed changes to our constitution for inclusion on a general election ballot.

Florida is the only state in the nation to have such a process. I personally, find this process terrifying and fascinating at the same time.

There were 103 Commissioner Proposals and 782 Public Proposals submitted over the last year. Those have been merged, vetted, debated, and whittled down to now 37 active proposals the committee is considering. But 37 is still a LOT. Some of these well intentioned proposals would be more appropriately handled by the legislature, a body designed to create, update and remove statutes as time and circumstance dictate.

The constitution is meant to be a more consistent document, outlining the rights of the people, defining the structure of the government and establishing limits for the powers given to the government.

For example, Proposal 29 would require Florida employers to use a federal e-verify system to check the immigration status of potential employees. This is the perfect example of a proposal that should make its way through the legislative process as a statute, not be amended into our founding document. Technology and federal immigration policies change too frequently. Our constitution should not.

In contrast, proposal 97 seeks to create uniformity in the state constitution by changing the way in which non-taxing amendments are counted to match the same method that taxing proposals are counted (currently there are two different criteria). This is exactly the type of administrative update that is appropriate for a CRC to consider.

The implications of the CRC will be felt by each and every Floridian for decades to come, not to mention this fall when we face a lengthy, confusing ballot. I encourage all residents to familiarize themselves with the CRC, and if you have time, to come out on February 19th and speak on behalf of, or in opposition to, any of the proposals.

Visit:

[www.flcrc.gov](http://www.flcrc.gov) for the list of proposals, summaries, meeting dates and locations.

Other Resources:

<http://www.aif.com/crc/> Associated Industries of Florida have been monitoring this process closely and has an easy to read website with history, news and links.

[www.businessvoicepac.com](http://www.businessvoicepac.com) - at the bottom of our home page, there is a link to a document by former Florida Supreme Court Justice Kenneth B. Bell which outlines the history and purpose of the CRC.

Kathryn Rudloff is the Executive Director of Business Voice Political Committee, an organization that engages businesses from across Brevard County and the Central Florida Region to provide a cohesive voice in political advocacy at the state, regional and local levels. Business Voice is operated on a non-partisan basis to promote pro-business candidates and a pro-business legislative agenda. [www.businessvoicepac.com](http://www.businessvoicepac.com)