

Florida's Property Tax Reform: A First Look at Its Affect on Law Enforcement

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Florida Amendment 1 was put before voters in a special election on January 29, 2008. Sponsored by the Florida Legislature, the amendment was projected to slash local taxes by \$9.3 billion over five years. United local governments, already reeling from the effects of an earlier legislative property tax rollback, were urging voters to reject Amendment 1. Less than three weeks before the vote, the governor, aligned with Florida's industry leaders, came out in support of the amendment. Passing with support from more than 64% of the voters, the amendment has left the state, including all 67 counties, and local governments facing a significant loss of operating revenues. Worsened by a recessive national economy, rising unemployment rates and fuel costs dictated by foreign governments, there is no expectation of a rebound in the foreseeable future. This paper will examine the toll Florida's property tax rollback has taken on statewide law enforcement to date, and what may be expected with future funding cuts. The examination expands beyond personnel cuts into effects on law enforcement services, equipment, training and technology.