

AMENDMENT 1 SAMPLE GUEST COLUMN

Tallahassee politicians are at it again. This time, it's Amendment 1. They call it a "tax cut," but it's really a tax shift. Most of Amendment 1's benefits go to a handful of homeowners while the rest of us pay for it—including many citizens of [your city here].

That's just not fair. Florida's tax system should work for all homeowners—not just a few.

Amendment 1 targets tax breaks to properties valued between \$100,000 and \$125,000—about 12 percent of Florida homeowners. However, those in more expensive—and more modest—homes would face a bigger tax burden and the possibility of property tax hikes. The same goes for business owners. And renters? They should expect to pay more as landlords are likely to pass their increased share of the property tax burden onto their tenants.

Instead of using state monies to pay for Amendment 1, Tallahassee politicians are leaving local communities with a bad choice: Either cut vital services or raise property taxes. Worse still, Amendment 1's sponsors know that. They even suggested that local governments raise taxes to pay for Amendment 1. That's like giving away free coffee—but charging 5 bucks for the cup. Even if communities don't raise tax rates, those not in Amendment 1's lucky "12 percent" will bear a larger, unfair tax burden.

Let's face it: Florida's tax system is a complicated mess. Amendment 1 wouldn't fix that. Instead, it would make the problem worse, more complicated and less fair for Florida's families, small business owners and manufacturers.

And make no mistake: Amendment 1 represents a double-whammy for small businesses—everything from pet stores and dry cleaners to retailers and restaurants. We've already talked about their increased share of the tax burden, but the amendment also would expose these job-creators to bigger tax hikes because a business's taxable value rises faster than that of a home.

That's bad for business—and bad for Florida's economy.

Home Rule is a basic principle of government in Florida. That means we trust local communities to set their own priorities and decide how to pay for them. Amendment 1 violates this principle. If the politicians in Tallahassee want to cut taxes, they should do it the old-fashioned way: By cutting their *own* spending. Instead, they've devised a one-size-fits-all scheme that picks winners and losers.

Don't believe the false promise of Amendment 1. Vote No.