

# Florida Taxpayers Union



April 17, 2008

## **An Open Letter to the Florida Legislature: Put the 1.35 Percent Property Tax Cap on the 2008 Ballot**

Dear Legislator,

On behalf of the members of the Florida Taxpayers Union and the National Taxpayers Union, we urge you to support limits on property tax growth in Florida. Specifically, we ask you to cosponsor Senate Bill 2190 and House Bill 949. Should these bills become law, a 1.35 percent property tax cap would be placed on the 2008 ballot via legislative referral. So far, 150,000 Floridians have signed petitions to put the 1.35 percent cap on the 2010 ballot; you can make property tax relief a reality sooner by putting the proposal to voters this year.

Florida's property tax levies have more than doubled in the past nine years. No one doubts that the state's property tax system is in need of extensive reform and that taxpayers are in need of solid relief. For many Floridians, the burden of property taxes exceeds their ability to pay. First-time homeowners and senior citizens are finding the property tax load too much to bear and are having a hard time making ends meet. Businesses are shrinking operations, eliminating jobs, or looking to relocate to another state. The same can be said for snowbirds, as they seek out other states for their winter destination. Non-homesteaded properties (such as commercial, investment, and second homeowner parcels) are an extremely important and integral part of Florida's economy, yet they're also being crushed under the high costs of property taxes.

Without extensive property tax relief, Florida risks not being able to effectively compete in emerging global and regional markets. On the other hand, limiting property taxes will encourage a fiscal climate that will attract and retain high-value jobs for Florida residents.

Many analysts and elected officials have acknowledged that Amendment One did not go far enough to solve the property tax crisis. You have an opportunity to do better by supporting the 1.35 percent property tax cap. This plan would require that the total tax on any parcel not exceed 1.35 percent of the highest taxable value of the property. Voter approval would be required for any deviation from this limitation. The protection would apply equally to all property types and preserve the "Save our Homes" and homestead exemptions. Fully implemented, this plan would cut property taxes by \$5.9 billion and reduce property taxes by an average of 20 percent. That's a real savings for struggling families and businesses.

If you are interested in fostering genuine economic growth, we encourage you to support the 1.35 percent property tax cap (SB2190/HB949). This pro-taxpayer legislation would help restore Florida as a destination of choice for families and businesses.

Sincerely,

John Hallman  
Vice-President of Government Relations  
Florida Taxpayers Union

Kristina Rasmussen  
Director of Government Affairs  
National Taxpayers Union