

## PROPOSITION 1

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	Explanation	Pro	Con	Texas Tribune	Pro	Con
	1 (HJR 12) The constitutional amendment protecting the right to engage in farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture, and wildlife management.	<p>As the Texas population grows and the demand for food increases, it is important to prevent cities from overregulating agricultural production. • The proposed amendment ensures that “generally accepted” farming, timber production and wildlife management practices are allowed on properties within counties and cities.</p> <p>• Proposition 1 would still allow the state legislature to authorize state agencies or local governments to regulate farming practices that are necessary to protect the public from imminent danger</p>	<p>• Proposition 1 limits the power of local governments to protect the health of their communities by setting rules covering farming practices that impact animal welfare, food safety, drinking water protection, animal waste, odors and pesticide runoff.</p> <p>• The proposed amendment allows farms, including large, industrial farms, to operate with less accountability to the local community.</p> <p>• Counties and cities must follow the definition of “acceptable agriculture practices” as defined by Texas A&amp;M AgriLife Extension, whose interpretation may be too broad for urban areas.</p>	<p>With Texas cities continuing to grow, this amendment would raise the bar for state and local regulation of generally accepted farming and ranching practices. It would require for state and local governments to provide evidence that the regulation is needed to protect the public from danger. For example, it would prevent a city from banning farming in an area for no specific reason, but it would allow for a government to require ranchers to put up fences for their livestock, according to the Texas Farm Bureau, which supports the amendment. The amendment would not affect state or local government efforts needed to preserve or conserve natural resources, such as water, fish, wildlife and trees. Nor would it affect state actions needed to protect animal health and crop production. Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller <a href="#">said</a> “municipal encroachment will no longer threaten the livelihoods” of farmers and ranchers if the amendment passes. — Jayme Lozano Carver and María Méndez</p>	<p>• “As the state’s population continues to grow and the demand for food increases, it is important to prevent municipal overregulation that could threaten agricultural production.” • “Enshrining the right to engage in activities such as farming and ranching in the Texas Constitution can help avoid some of the conflict that has been experienced when suburban expansion and development encroaches on working farmland or ranchland.” • “Although there are currently protections for farmers and ranchers in statute, there is no guarantee that future legislatures will keep them.” • “State agencies and political subdivisions would still be able to address serious concerns involving public health and safety and animal welfare.” • “The proposed amendment officially recognizes the authority of the state or a political subdivision to regulate protected</p>	<p>As the state’s population continues to grow and the demand for food increases, it is important to prevent municipal overregulation that could threaten agricultural production.”</p>

## PROPOSITION 2

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Proposition 2 would allow counties and cities to lower property taxes on some child care centers. This benefit would apply to child care centers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that are owned or rented; and</li> <li>• with at least 20% of children enrolled who receive subsidized child-care services</li> </ul>	<p>Lower property taxes would reduce costs for child care centers, so more can remain open and more can be built.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a larger number of child care centers may lower costs for working parents, allowing them to stay in the workforce.</li> <li>• Child care centers may use the savings from lower property taxes to improve wages and benefits for staff, helping them retain workers</li> </ul>	<p>Proposition 2 would lower property taxes for one type of business, which could increase the tax burden for other property owners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower property taxes would reduce taxes raised to fund counties and cities.</li> <li>• The benefits of this tax break may not flow to parents and child care workers</li> </ul>	<p>. The value of the exemption would have to be at least 50 percent of the property's appraised value.</p> <p>The amendment would offer relief for child care businesses that have been struggling to stay open since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. With federal pandemic relief money set to dry up for child care businesses, some providers are preparing to close in the next year.</p> <p>Supporters of the resolution argue that keeping child care businesses open is a win for the economy. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation found that the Texas economy loses nearly \$9.4 billion a year from breakdowns in child care. Critics say property tax exemptions will result in higher tax burdens for homeowners and other businesses, who will have to pay more to make up for the lost revenue. — Sneha Deyz</p>	<p>• “Inflationary costs are making it hard for child-care facilities to stay in business, and many facilities in Texas have closed in recent years. This leaves working families with fewer options for child care.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The high costs associated with operating child-care facilities and the inability of facilities to provide competitive wages have resulted in a shortage of employees for many child-care facilities.”</li> <li>• “High property taxes have contributed to the rising cost of child care.”</li> <li>• “Providing local governments with the authority to offer a tax exemption for property used to operate an eligible childcare facility may free up resources that could be used to hire and retain staff, which would help to reduce the prevalence of childcare deserts in Texas communities. A facility's savings from such an exemption may also be passed down to consumers, which would address child-care affordability.</li> </ul>	None recorded

## PROPOSITION 3

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Proposition 3 would amend the Texas Constitution to prohibit a wealth tax. A wealth or net worth tax is a tax on the value of a person's assets (what a person owns) less liabilities (what they owe). Assets may include cash, bank deposits, shares of stock, equipment, real estate, pension plans, money funds and trusts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Texans should not be penalized for creating wealth and starting businesses which help the Texas economy grow.</li> <li>This tax would be difficult to administer and enforce due to the complexity of determining the fair value of a person's assets.</li> <li>Some taxpayers may have significant assets, but low cash flow. For example, farmers or retired persons may have valuable property, but paying a wealth tax from their earnings may be a struggle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state needs to maintain the option of a wealth tax that would shift the tax burden to those able to afford to pay more, helping to address wealth inequality.</li> <li>Proposition 3 would limit options for the state to fund its needs in the future, such as for schools, infrastructure, mental and physical healthcare, and public safety.</li> <li>This proposed amendment addresses a tax that is not being considered by the state legislature</li> </ul>	<p>Several states have proposed so-called "wealth taxes" in recent months, referring to a tax on a person based on the market value of assets they own, which can include real property and retirement accounts, minus their debts or liabilities, such as bankruptcies. Texas has not introduced this and does not have a similar tax.</p> <p>Supporters of those taxes argue that the impact on the extremely wealthy would be minimal, that the definition of "wealth" can be defined in a way that best suits each state, and that it would help pay for costly programs without impacting lower income people. Critics say raising taxes on someone's wealth discourages business and that the revenue from it will be less than anticipated. They also say that overall wealth would decline, which would result in less investment and loss of tax revenue from other sources, such as sales and property taxes.</p> <p>This amendment would force lawmakers to ask voters for authorization before they could impose any new state taxes on residents that would be based on net worth or wealth. — Karen Brooks Harper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Enshrining a ban on a wealth tax in the Texas Constitution now will ensure that a future legislature cannot impose such a tax without the consent of voters."</li> <li>"Prohibiting the imposition of a wealth tax will help ensure that Texans know they will not be penalized for working to create wealth."</li> <li>"Wealth taxes discourage economic innovation and investment and can lead to stagnation. Many European countries that previously imposed a wealth tax have since repealed the tax due to negative economic consequences."</li> </ul>	<p>"The current legislature cannot anticipate how the needs of the state will change over time, so it would be better to let future legislatures decide how to address future needs. A constitutional ban means that even if a majority of people support a wealth tax in the future, a minority of legislators in either chamber could block it."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"This measure is unnecessary because a wealth tax has not been proposed in Texas."</li> </ul>

## PROPOSITION 4

Source:Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>		
	Explanation	Pro	Con	Texas Tribune	Pro	Con
	<p>Proposition 4 would amend the Texas Constitution to allow tax cuts that were approved by the Legislature in the 2023 special session to take effect this year. Proposition 4 allows the legislature to reduce property taxes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The homestead exemption would increase from \$40,000 to \$100,000. The homestead exemption is the amount of the appraised value of a primary residence that is not subject to taxes by the local school district.</li><li>• The increase in the appraised value for a non-homestead property (such as a business property or second home) cannot be more than 20% over the prior year's appraised value.</li><li>• Only non-homestead properties with value of \$5 million or less qualify at this time.</li><li>• This non-homestead property tax limit expires December 31, 2026.</li><li>• The Legislature has approved sending money to school districts to replace lost tax revenues. Proposition 4 would allow this money to be sent without counting toward spending limits in the constitution.</li><li>• Currently, members of local appraisal boards are all appointed. Proposition 4 allows the Legislature to require that in counties with a population of 75,000 or more, three of nine members of a board be elected</li></ul>	<p>Proponents say these property tax cuts would save Texas homeowners an average of \$1,300 per year in property taxes, with additional cuts for property owners who are seniors and those with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over \$12 billion will be sent from the state's general revenue funds to school districts so that school districts can lower tax rates. This shifts the burden of school funding away from property taxes to other sources. Tax rate reductions passed by the Legislature limit how much is shifted to businesses.</li><li>• The owners of moderately priced homes would get the most benefit from the increase in the homestead exemption..</li></ul>	<p>The property tax reductions give no relief for renters, who make up more than 1/3 of Texas households, many of whom are struggling with high rents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opponents say the property tax changes approved do not include any new money for schools or teacher pay raises, even though Texas is ranked near the bottom in per-student spending for education.</li><li>• Shifting away from property taxes to fund our public schools could result in higher sales taxes and higher taxes on businesses</li></ul>	<p>Texas has some of the highest property taxes in the nation. Earlier this year, Texas lawmakers approved a \$12.7 billion package of property tax cuts that needs voter approval in order to take effect.</p> <p>The package would send \$7.1 billion to school districts so they can lower their property tax rates. School district taxes make up the bulk of a Texas property owner's tax bill. The amendment would also raise the state's school district homestead exemption — or the slice of a home's value that can't be taxed to pay for public schools — from \$40,000 to \$100,000, at a cost of \$5.6 billion.</p> <p>The amendment also includes other tax reforms, including a temporary limit on appraisals for commercial, mineral and residential properties that don't receive a homestead exemption that are worth less than \$5 million. If voters approve the idea, appraisal districts could not raise the taxable value of those properties by more than 20% each year for the next three years. The limit would expire in 2026 unless lawmakers and voters decide to extend it.</p> <p>The amendment would also expand the pool of businesses that don't have to pay the state's franchise tax — and allow voters to elect three members to their local appraisal district's board of directors, which are currently appointed. — Joshua Fechter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Since Texas taxpayers are responsible for the state’s historic budget surplus, the state should ensure that some of the surplus funds are returned to taxpayers. The proposed amendment will do so by helping to deliver the largest tax cut in state history.”</li><li>• “At a time in which many Texans are struggling to stay in their homes due to rapidly increasing property tax burdens, it is appropriate for the state to step in and dedicate money to help alleviate this burden.”</li><li>• “Increasing the residence homestead exemption to \$100,000 will be especially beneficial to the owners of moderately priced homes—the type of homeowner in the greatest need of property tax relief.”</li><li>• “While renters do not receive direct relief from the proposed amendment, they will still benefit substantially because residential and commercial landlords are going to see their tax burden reduced and those savings will enable landlords to avoid rent increases and even reduce rents.”</li><li>• “By providing tax relief for commercial property owners, the proposed resolution could help stabilize businesses struggling under the weight of rising property taxes and help them to further grow and aid in the state’s overall economic expansion.”</li><li>• “The limit on the increase in the appraised value of non-homestead real property provided for in the proposed amendment will help small business owners stay in business and provide greater predictability to Texans who are helping to drive the state’s economy.”</li><li>• “By making some positions on an appraisal district’s board of directors elected positions in certain counties, appraisal districts in those counties will be more directly accountable to local taxpayers.”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Increasing the residence homestead exemption by such a large amount could result in a shift of the tax burden from homeowners to business owners, which could result in higher prices for consumers.”</li><li>• “The proposed amendment does not go far enough since it does not put the state on a path toward eliminating property taxes entirely.”</li><li>• “Because the tax rate compression may be only temporary if state funding at the increased levels is not maintained, not much actual relief is being provided. Any property tax relief needs to be permanent.”</li><li>• “By reducing property taxes, public education funding is placed in jeopardy as other revenues made available for public schools, such as sales tax revenues, are more volatile and less predictable than property taxes.”</li><li>• “Nearly four million Texans are renters, and the proposed amendment does nothing to provide them any direct financial relief.”</li><li>• “The proposed tax relief is not targeted enough to those who are struggling the most. The state’s historic budget surplus should not be funneled directly to businesses and the wealthy.”</li><li>• “Individuals running for the elected seats on an appraisal district’s board of directors may not be focused enough on the overall business of the board and instead focus too heavily on reducing property values.”</li></ul>

## PROPOSITION 5

Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters				<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	Explanation	Pro	Con	Texas Tribune	Pro	Con
	<p>Proposition 5 would provide money for research grants for Texas' public universities. Currently, the University of Texas and Texas A&amp;M University are the only nationally recognized research universities in Texas and therefore receive substantial funding for research. In 2009, Texas set up the National Research University Fund to provide research grants at other public universities. Currently, eight Texas universities qualify for research grants from this fund. Proposition 5 proposes to replace the National Research University Fund with two new funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas University Fund would be created to support research grants at Texas State University, Texas Tech University, the University of Houston, and the University of North Texas. The Legislature would provide \$4 billion of initial funding for the Texas University Fund. The Legislature may provide \$100 million per year of the interest and investment income from the Economic Stabilization Fund (also known as the Rainy Day Fund) to support this fund. The Legislature can add eligible public universities to the fund only if additional money is provided.</li> <li>• National Research Support Fund would be created to support the University of Texas Arlington, University of Texas Dallas, University of Texas El Paso, and University of Texas San Antonio. Funding would have to be approved every two years by the Texas Legislature.</li> </ul> <p>Also, Proposition 5 standardizes performance metrics to evaluate whether a university program qualifies for a grant</p>	<p>Proposition 5 helps higher education in Texas by providing stable funding for research in the four universities supported by the Texas University Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research at Texas public universities helps drive the Texas economy.</li> <li>• Both funds provide a path for more universities to become eligible for research grants.</li> <li>• Using standardized national performance metrics will allow more universities to qualify for research grant funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposition 5 continues the unequal treatment of public universities in Texas.</li> <li>• Proposition 5 would provide stable research funding for only four additional public universities at this time (those funded by the Texas University Fund).</li> <li>• The funding through the National Research Support Fund is not stable and would still require legislative approval every two years.</li> <li>• No additional universities will be added to the Texas University Fund unless the Legislature adds more money.</li> </ul>	<p>If passed, the amendment would rename the National Research University Fund to the Texas University Fund. The university fund would gain the annual interest income, dividends and investment earnings from Texas' rainy day fund to support research at state universities. Total money moved to the university fund in the 2024 fiscal year would be limited to \$100 million. The annual amount may be adjusted for inflation and is limited to a 2% growth rate. The Texas A&amp;M and University of Texas systems will not receive money from the fund as they receive research funds from a separate Permanent University Fund.</p> <p>House Bill 1595 will also take effect if the amendment is passed, requiring the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to determine which universities are eligible and the size of each deposit. The fund will be managed by the comptroller and the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company. — Caroline Wilburn</p>	<p>"Providing a predictable and sustainable source of funding for high-quality research at universities in Texas that do not have access to the Permanent University Fund will help ensure that the future workforce needs of the state are met and that the state's economy continues to grow."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Increased investment in cutting-edge research at universities in Texas is key to the state remaining competitive with other states making similar investments."</li> <li>• "Investing in research at the state level will help attract federal and private research funding and improve the caliber of the state's research universities. This will make it easier to recruit students and faculty."</li> <li>• "Previous legislation establishing higher education research funds has been successful in helping universities increase their research capabilities. The additional funding provided through H.J.R. 3 will allow these universities to continue their growth."</li> </ul>	<p>No opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment was expressed during legislative consideration of the proposal. However, a review of other sources indicates concern about the use of money from the economic stabilization fund ... to fund higher education initiatives since that fund was not designed for such purposes.</p>

## PROPOSITION 6

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Proposition 6 would create the Texas water fund. This fund would provide grants and low interest loans for water projects across Texas. The fund is being set up to address concerns about not having enough water to meet the needs of Texas' rapidly growing population. The Texas Water Development Board will administer the fund. This Board, whose members are appointed by the governor, is responsible for meeting the state's water needs, so that Texans have access to enough clean and affordable water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposition 6 will provide funding to help communities plan and implement projects to obtain new water supply sources to ensure future water availability for Texans.</li> <li>There is a great need for projects to replace or repair aging pipes which the state estimates leak billions of gallons of water each year. Also, water and wastewater treatment plants in many communities need upgrades and/or replacements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount the Legislature has agreed to put into the fund is not enough to pay for the number of projects needed to secure Texas' future water supply needs.</li> <li>Proposition 6 would allow funds to be taken from state revenues to fund local water projects.</li> </ul>	<p>If approved, this resolution would create a new special fund in the state treasury outside of the general revenue fund, endowed with a \$1 billion down payment. The fund would be administered by the Texas Water Development Board to support a wide range of projects including fixing Texas' aging, deteriorating pipes, acquiring more water sources and mitigating water loss.</p> <p>A portion of the fund would have to be used for water infrastructure projects in rural areas as well as for water conservation strategies and water loss projects. At least 25% of the fund would be used for the New Water Supply Fund for Texas, which will support projects to increase the state's water supply through, for example, marine desalination and treating "produced water," which comes from the ground during the oil fracking process.</p> <p>The new fund would be created Jan. 1, 2024. — Pooja Salhotra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Texas is in need of significant financial investment in water infrastructure and water supply development to address both aging infrastructure, the failure of which causes the state to lose an estimated 136 billion gallons of water each year and often subjects Texans to boil water notices, and the need for new water supply projects to support Texas' growing population amid perennial drought conditions that deplete existing water sources."</li> <li>"The creation of the Texas water fund would further the state's investment in water infrastructure and would give the Texas Water Development Board flexibility in allocating financial assistance through existing and newly created funds to address issues with existing water infrastructure and support new water supply projects across the state for years to come."</li> <li>"Small water systems in less urban areas of the state do not have the tax base to support large water infrastructure projects, and a statewide approach is needed to ensure water resources are available to all Texans."</li> </ul>	<p>"The Texas Water Development Board should be able to address the state's water needs without the creation of new programs"</p>



## PROPOSITION 7

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Proposition 7 would allow the creation of the Texas energy fund. Money put in the fund by the Texas Legislature would be used by the Public Utility Commission to provide low-rate loans or grants to companies to build or upgrade electric generating plants in Texas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional state funding is needed to increase the reliability of the state's electric market, especially for power that can be quickly provided during extreme weather when demand is high.</li> <li>• The money loaned or granted to build the electric generating plants are from the state's budget surplus funds, so electricity customers will not be paying for these plants.</li> <li>• If the plants are completed by June 2029, the builders receive a bonus under the program. This ensures that extra energy generation will be added to the electric grid soon.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Texas energy fund would primarily fund natural gas-powered electric plants. These plants may be more expensive and harmful to the environment than other more cost-effective and clean solutions to make the electric grid more reliable.</li> <li>• Solar and wind projects are not eligible for loans or grants from this fund. They currently generate about 39% of Texas electricity and have reduced electricity costs in Texas.</li> <li>• Natural gas-powered electric plants were among the power sources that failed during the 2021 winter storm. Despite this, they would be subsidized by the Texas energy fund if this proposition passes.</li> </ul>	<p>If approved, this resolution would create a state fund allowing officials to distribute loans and grants to companies with the aim of building new natural gas-fueled power plants. This would include giving a 3% interest loan for the construction of or upgrades to gas-fueled power plants on the state's main electric grid and paying a bonus for getting new plants connected by June 2029.</p> <p>The Legislature set aside \$5 billion to fund these programs for the next two years. Supporters say more gas-fueled power is needed because it can come on any time, unlike wind and solar power that depend on the wind to blow and the sun to shine to operate. Still, gas-fueled power plants are not always reliable and emit greenhouse gasses, which are driving climate change. — Emily Foxhall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Additional state funding is needed to increase the reliability of the state's electric market, particularly with regard to dispatchable generation."</li> <li>• "Creating the Texas energy fund would enable the Public Utility Commission of Texas to provide loans and grants to finance or incentivize the construction, maintenance, modernization, and operation of electric generating facilities, including associated infrastructure, necessary to ensure the reliability or adequacy of the state's electric power grid."</li> </ul>	<p>Providing funding to increase the reliability of the Texas grid would be more appropriate through the rate payer system as opposed to providing state subsidies funded by all taxpayers.</p>

## PROPOSITION 8

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Access to high speed internet is now essential for employment, healthcare, education and government, but is not evenly available throughout Texas, especially in rural areas. Proposition 8 would allow Texas to create a \$5 billion fund to expand high speed internet throughout Texas. Money in the fund, along with money from the federal government broadband program and other resources, would provide grants and other support for investments in high speed internet projects. The fund would end in ten years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposition 8 would expand reliable high speed internet to Texans all across the state, including in areas where private companies do not currently operate.</li> <li>• Improved access to high speed internet would result in better productivity and efficiency in agriculture and energy, two of Texas' most important industries.</li> <li>• This fund would enable Texas to use state funds to take advantage of available federal dollars to expand internet availability for more Texans.</li> </ul>	<p>Funding high speed internet expansion is not the responsibility of the government. Private companies have already provided most Texans with access to high speed internet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposition 8 does not prioritize lower income communities for high speed internet development.</li> <li>• The money in the fund is not enough to provide high speed internet to all Texans.</li> </ul>	<p>Texas lawmakers made an investment in broadband development by passing a bill which would create the Texas broadband infrastructure fund — pending approval of this resolution.</p> <p>With the passage of this resolution, \$1.5 billion would be allocated to expand internet availability in Texas, where some 7 million people currently lack access. These dollars would help pay to develop and finance broadband and telecommunications services as well as 911 services. The fund will also provide matching funds with federal money from the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program. — Pooja Salhotra</p>	<p>“Establishing a fund to support broadband expansion and infrastructure investment would provide resources to close the digital divide in Texas, which in turn could help to improve quality of life and lead to increased economic growth.” • “Without reliable access to broadband Internet, millions of Texans are at a disadvantage in seeking employment opportunities and accessing certain educational and health care services that are increasingly going virtual.” • “By investing state dollars in the expansion of broadband infrastructure, the state would be well positioned to draw down funds from the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which matches state dollars on a four-to-one basis.” • “A state funding source for broadband expansion will provide much-needed flexibility in achieving broadband attainment goals that is missing with federal programs that come with certain added constraints.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The broadband infrastructure fund should be required to prioritize projects that develop fiber optic broadband infrastructure, which may be faster, safer, and more durable and reliable than wireless broadband.” • “Texas has previously allocated \$600 million for broadband purposes, and the state is likely to receive billions of dollars from the federal BEAD program for these purposes. Creating a costly new broadband fund with state taxpayer dollars is excessive and fiscally irresponsible.”</li> </ul>



## PROPOSITION 9

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>In 2023, the Texas Legislature approved cost-of-living adjustments and a one-time extra payment to retired teachers or their survivors who currently receive retirement or death benefits from the Teachers Retirement System of Texas. The one-time extra payment was paid in September 2023. The cost-of-living adjustments would start January 2024. The total cost of the one-time extra payments and the cost-of-living adjustments is about \$5 billion. This amount will be transferred from the state's general funds to the Teachers Retirement System so the teachers' pension fund will remain financially sound. Proposition 9 is required so the amount being transferred for the cost-of-living adjustment does not exceed the Texas Constitution's limit on state spending..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retired teachers in Texas do not have a cost-of-living adjustment built into their retirement benefits, and have not received a cost-of-living adjustment in many years. Because of this, many retired teachers have difficulty covering the higher cost of living. This adjustment would help retired teachers and their survivors pay their bills.</li> <li>• The higher payments to retirees would increase their spending, and therefore help local communities across Texas.</li> <li>• The increased benefits will be funded from the current budget surplus, leaving the Teachers Retirement System pension fund financially sound..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost-of-living adjustments proposed are not enough to offset the impact of high inflation on retirees.</li> <li>• The higher payments to retired teachers do not address the current teacher shortage.</li> </ul>	<p>During the regular session, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 10, which would provide some retired Texas teachers with cost-of-living raises to their monthly pension checks. For some, this is the first raise they will see in almost 20 years.</p> <p>But to afford these raises, lawmakers need to ask voters to allow them to use \$3.3 billion from the general revenue fund and move it to the retired teachers fund. — Brian Lopez</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Because the vast majority of school districts in Texas do not participate in the federal social security system, the annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) is the only retirement benefit most retired teachers receive. Without having received a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in nearly 20 years, retired teachers have lost considerable purchasing power with their TRS annuity due to cost increases and high inflation.”</li> <li>• “Funding a COLA for TRS retirees will provide the state's retired teachers with much-needed relief and is a wise use of the state's surplus revenue.”</li> </ul>	No public opposition was recorded.

## PROPOSITION 10

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Proposition 10 would remove property taxes on equipment or inventory belonging to manufacturers of medical or biomedical products. Texas is one of only a few states that applies a property tax on the equipment and inventory of medical and biomedical companies. In Texas, property taxes pay for local government services such as police, firefighters, libraries, and public education. Property tax on other property of medical and biomedical companies will remain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removing property taxes on biomedical equipment and inventory may encourage more biomedical companies to move to Texas, creating high-paying jobs.</li> <li>• Removing property taxes on biomedical equipment and inventory could strengthen our medical supply chain and may protect the Texas healthcare network.</li> <li>• The COVID pandemic exposed the risk of having key medical equipment manufactured outside of the country, showing the importance of supporting local biomedical manufacturers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because Texas does not have an income tax, eliminating property taxes on biomedical equipment and inventory will reduce funds available for local school districts and local government services.</li> <li>• The burden of the tax loss will fall more heavily on communities with biomedical manufacturers.</li> <li>• Reducing property taxes for one industry places more tax burden on other businesses and individuals to support their government and public schools.</li> </ul>	<p>School districts, cities and counties are currently allowed to collect property taxes on the value of equipment and inventory that are held by the manufacturers of medical or biomedical products, such as pharmaceuticals, personal protective equipment stocks, and medical devices.</p> <p>This amendment would exempt those from a facility's overall property values, leading to a potential decrease in their taxes. The new exemption would cost districts some \$207 million in estimated revenue over the next five years, according to a financial analysis.</p> <p>Supporters of the exemption say that it will encourage more manufacturers in the industry to locate in Texas, lower healthcare costs and strengthen the medical supply chain. Detractors say that school districts are already strapped for money and that the same goals can be achieved without lowering their revenue. They also point out that the amendment doesn't keep taxing entities from raising tax rates to make up for the loss. — Karen Brooks Harper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Despite not having a corporate or individual income tax, Texas has a high effective tax rate for medical manufacturers as compared to other states. Taxes on medical and biomedical manufacturing inventory discourage capital investment in and the expansion of this industry in Texas.”</li> <li>• “Most medical and biomedical manufacturing is located abroad, and the cost to ship medical supplies to the United States increased more than 50 percent in 2021, causing Texans to pay more for vital supplies. Encouraging local manufacturing would eliminate the added shipping costs.”</li> <li>• “Inflationary pressures and supply chain constraints further contribute to the need to regionalize manufacturing.”</li> <li>• “Since 2020, Texas has missed opportunities for billions of dollars in private investment for biomedical manufacturing because it lacks tax incentives that other states provide.”</li> <li>• “The proposed tax exemption would encourage investment in medical and biomedical manufacturing in Texas, which in turn would promote innovation and advancement in medical technologies, strengthen Texas’ medical supply chain, and create jobs.”</li> </ul>	<p>No public opposition was recorded.</p>

## PROPOSITION 11

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>In 2003, the Texas Constitution was amended to give conservation and reclamation districts (such as municipal utility districts, known as "MUDs") in eleven counties across Texas the ability to issue bonds to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. El Paso County was not included in the list of counties, so it currently does not have this ability, resulting in an underfunded parks system across the county.</p> <p>Proposition 11 would include El Paso County on the list of Texas counties that allow their conservation reclamation districts to issue bonds to develop recreational facilities. These bonds would be supported by property taxes, but could only be authorized if voters of the district approve them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing bonds to be issued for parks and recreation facilities will benefit the health and wellness of El Paso County residents.</li> <li>• More and improved parks will encourage further economic development and growth for the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If approved by a majority of voters in a district, property taxes would be levied to pay interest and principal on the bonds issued. The voters in a district who voted against the issuance of such bonds would still be burdened with additional taxes.</li> <li>• Land allocated to parks could be more economically productive if left in private hands.</li> </ul>	<p>Eleven counties' conservation and reclamation districts are currently permitted to issue bonds supported by property taxes to fund recreational development and improvement. This proposed amendment would add El Paso County to the list.</p> <p>Conservation and reclamation districts aid in managing stormwater storage, land irrigation and the conservation and development of forests within their designated boundaries. Critics of the amendment say it could cause property taxes to increase for El Paso County residents. — Ali Juell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "In 2003, the Texas Constitution was amended to allow conservation and reclamation districts in certain counties to issue bonds supported by property taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities if approved by district voters, but El Paso County was not among the counties included at that time. The proposed amendment would extend this beneficial authority to conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County."</li> <li>• "The issuance of bonds to fund parks and recreational facilities in these districts in El Paso County would help to address the need for more parks and open spaces in the county and improve the quality of life for county residents. It could also make the county more competitive for Texans considering moving to El Paso."</li> <li>• "The decision to assess property taxes to support the issuance of bonds for that purpose is left to the discretion of each district and its voters. The assessment of property taxes would not be mandatory."</li> <li>• "The proposed amendment would not impair any district's contract with the federal government regarding per-acre assessments since it does not create a mandate."</li> </ul>	<p>"The proposed amendment would give certain conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County the unnecessary authority to assess property taxes."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Under Section 55.364, Water Code, certain conservation and reclamation districts in the county have federal contracts that require that any land within the districts be assessed on a per-acre basis. These districts should be excluded from the applicability of the resolution's property tax provisions to avoid additional tax burdens"</li> </ul>

## PROPOSITION 12

Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>		
	Explanation	Pro	Con	Texas Tribune	Pro	Con
	<p>Proposition 12 would eliminate the office of the county treasurer of Galveston County effective January 1, 2024. The members of the Commissioners Court of Galveston County would assign the duties of the treasurer's office to individuals in other county offices (such as, auditors, chief financial officer, county clerk) or would contract the work out to other individuals. Nine other counties in Texas have eliminated the treasurer's office. The current county treasurer, elected in 2022, ran on a platform to abolish the county treasurer's position. This amendment takes effect if this constitutional amendment is approved by a majority of statewide voters and if a majority of Galveston County voters approve abolishing the office in the November 7, 2023 election.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the Chief Financial Officer of Galveston County, abolishing the county treasurer's office would save taxpayers in the county \$450,000 annually.</li> <li>• Supporters say that abolishing the office would make the work formerly performed by the treasurer's office more efficient and cost effective.</li> <li>• Abolishing the county treasurer's office may reduce the risk of misappropriation of funds such as occurred in 2018.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the estimated taxpayer savings may shift to other departments' costs.</li> <li>• Removing the office of county treasurer would impact current checks and balances between elected county commissioners, who control the budget, and the elected county treasurer, who makes financial management decisions.</li> <li>• An elected county treasurer is accountable to voters..</li> </ul>	<p>If passed by a majority of Texans and Galveston County residents, this amendment would abolish Galveston County's office of the county treasurer, an office that exists in other counties.</p> <p>The office's current role is to act as a bank for the county, which includes overseeing county investments, maintaining records of deposits and withdrawals and ensuring the safety of county funds. The Commissioner's Court of Galveston County would be allowed to employ or contract an existing county official or other qualified person to complete tasks previously under the office.</p> <p>Galveston County's current treasurer, Hank Dugie, ran on eliminating the position and said in his campaign video the office is, "redundant and a waste of more than half a million dollars each year." The County Treasurers Association of Texas opposes the proposition, however, arguing that such a change won't save money and that having an independently elected treasurer — rather than an employee of the commissioners court — ensures a separation of powers in the county and creates a system that lets a treasurer "challenge the commissioners' court if they question the legality and propriety of a payment order." — Ali Juell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Galveston County Treasurer's Office does not provide a sufficient level of added protection for taxpayers to justify the amount of county funds needed to operate the office."</li> <li>• "The duties of the office of county treasurer could and would be absorbed by other county departments and done at a cost savings to taxpayers."</li> <li>• "Galveston County is well suited to successfully operate without a county treasurer as the county has a number of other officers, including an auditor, CFO, and purchasing agent, who perform duties that are performed by the county treasurer in other counties."</li> <li>• "Elimination of the treasurer's office is supported by the current Galveston County treasurer, all members of the Galveston County Commissioners Court, and all municipalities in the county."</li> <li>• "Galveston County voters have already tacitly approved of abolishing the office of county treasurer by voting for the current county treasurer, who ran on the platform of abolishing the office."</li> <li>• "Nine other counties have eliminated their county treasurer position and have been able to continue operating efficient county governments."</li> <li>• "Voters statewide have previously recognized that an official treasurer position is not necessary by voting to abolish the office of state treasurer in 1995."</li> <li>• "Eliminating a constitutionally elected office is not unprecedented as other such offices, like county land surveyor or animal control officer, have been eliminated in the past."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "A stand-alone office of county treasurer that is headed by a person directly elected by county voters provides essential checks and balances in the operation of county government."</li> <li>• "Eliminating the office of county treasurer would not provide any real cost savings as the duties undertaken by the office would still be necessary and additional employees would need to be hired in other county departments to carry out those duties."</li> <li>• "Eliminating one county office and absorbing its functions into other departments sets a bad precedent and could lead to the concentration of power within the county."</li> <li>• "Since the office of county treasurer is a constitutionally elected office, it is important to maintain the office."</li> </ul>

## PROPOSITION 13

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Currently, the Texas Constitution: • Requires that a state judge retires at the end of the term in which he or she turns 75. • Allows the state legislature to set a lower mandatory retirement age, not less than 70. • Requires a state judge elected to a six-year term to retire by December 31st of their fourth year of the term if they reach the age of 75 during those first four years. Proposition 13 would: • Raise the mandatory retirement age for a state judge to 79 (instead of 75). • Allow the legislature to set a lower age, not less than 75 (instead of 70). • Repeal the provision regarding mandatory retirement at the end of the fourth year in a six-year term for those judges reaching age 75 during the first four years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are living and working longer, and experienced state judges should be allowed to continue to serve if they are capable and willing.</li> <li>• Allowing judges to serve longer may result in a more predictable and stable judiciary.</li> <li>• State judges in Texas are elected. Voters can determine whether a judge deserves to be elected. The Judicial Conduct Commission is available to address any issues with a judge's competence between elections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Judicial Conduct Commission may not be able to promptly address issues with older judges who experience cognitive decline and/or lower productivity.</li> <li>• Extending the age limit will keep the Texas judiciary from reflecting the demographics of the current Texas population.</li> <li>• Retired state judges are still eligible to serve as visiting judges, so retired state judges can continue to work if they choose.</li> </ul>	<p>Voters will decide if state judges can retire at 79, instead of the current mandatory retirement age of 75. Proposition 13 would also increase the minimum retirement age from 70 to 75 for state judges.</p> <p>Legal groups advocating for the change argued that more people are working later into their careers than previous generations. Supporters say extending this mandatory retirement age will minimize judicial turnover by keeping elected public servants, who are willing to do this work, on the bench. — William Melhado</p>	<p>“Because people are living and working longer than in decades past, it is appropriate to allow judges and justices to serve beyond the current mandatory retirement age of 75.” • “Increasing the mandatory retirement age for judges and justices will allow experienced and competent public servants who are willing to continue to serve.” • “Allowing judges and justices to serve longer could decrease turnover and ensure a more predictable and stable judicial system.” • “Since judges and justices in Texas are elected, any issues with the performance of a particular judge or justice can be addressed by the electorate.”</p>	<p>No public opposition was recorded</p>

## PROPOSITION 14

	Source: Summary from the League of Women Voters			<a href="#">Texas Tribune</a>	<a href="#">Texas Public Policy</a>	
	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	Texas Tribune	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	<p>Proposition 14 directs up to \$1 billion from the current budget surplus and other sources to create the centennial parks conservation fund, a dedicated pool of money to buy land for the creation and improvement of state parks.</p> <p>Texas state parks contain diverse wildlife, natural landscapes and important cultural and historical sites. Population growth and loss of land to housing and commercial development, combined with increased demand for outdoor recreation, have led to crowding and some park closures. More than 95% of land in Texas is privately owned and every year land is getting more expensive to buy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State parks provide affordable access to outdoor recreation such as hiking, hunting, fishing and camping.</li> <li>• State parks protect water resources and safeguard habitat for wildlife.</li> <li>• State parks provide an economic boost to the outdoor recreation industry and to the rural communities located nearby.</li> <li>• State parks educate Texans about their heritage by preserving significant cultural and historic sites, an essential legacy to future generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taxpayer money should not be used to create and maintain more state parks.</li> <li>• There are other public needs more pressing than adding to the state park system.</li> <li>• Recreation is not a proper role for the government.</li> <li>• Having more public lands could impose restrictions on private development and limit agricultural and mineral rights.</li> </ul>	<p>Texas ranks 35th in the nation for state park acreage per capita, according to a report by Environment Texas. This pressured lawmakers to propose investing more than \$1 billion for state parks, which advocates said would create “a new golden age” for the park system. The funding would go to buying more land for the state parks system, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. — Alejandra Martinez</p>	<p>““Establishing a dedicated state fund for the purchase of land to develop new state parks would provide a stable and longterm funding source that will empower the state to protect Texas’ unique natural resources and cultural history while making them accessible to our growing population.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “S.J.R. 74 would afford voters the opportunity to ensure that Texans and visitors alike can continue to enjoy the beauty of Texas’ parks for generations to come.”</li> <li>• “Texas has lower park acreage per capita than many other states, and visitation to Texas’ parks has grown significantly in recent years.”</li> <li>• “The current state park system is strained by user demand, with the vast majority of sites requiring reservations months in advance.”</li> <li>• “The fund created by the proposed amendment would enable the state to purchase land for the development of new parks before land becomes more costly.”</li> <li>• “State parks are a driver of economic activity and provide recreational, educational, and conservation opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>No public opposition was recorded</p>



