Montgomery County Eagle Forum – October 5, 2023 2023 TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Mark S. Ramsey, P.E.

Director, North Harris County Regional Water Authority Congressional Candidate CD38 [unsuccessful, 2nd of 10] Trump Electoral College Member 2020 Convention Legislative Priorities Committee Chair

EXPECTATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

"Oh what a tangled web we weave, when we practice to deceive." — Sir Walter Scott from his epic poem "Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field", 1808



TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

2023

METHODOLOGY

- Looked up and studied underlying legislation / lege council / SOS / officials
- Is this a "lobbyist bill"?
- Does this "grow government"?
- Does this raise or lower government spending and taxes?
- Is this limited to one or a few special interests or is it universal?
- Protect individual rights?
- Protect government?
- Why is this a Constitutional Amendment (vs. a simple bill)?
- Others Who supports, Does it fund the left, etc. but this is still my opinion...

1 RIGHT TO FARM

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN FARMING, RANCHING, TIMBER PRODUCTION, HORTICULTURE, AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT.

Not immediately clear "why"?

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | Νο | Νο | Yes- Farms & Ranches No- Eaters! | Yes | Yes- State No- Local (Local control?) | "Right" | Raises the bar for courts—"Protect public health" vs "arbitrary and capricious" overreach: |
| | | | | | | | City restrictions! |
| | | | | | | | Sid Miller "strongly ports." |

2 CHILD CARE CARVE-OUT

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AUTHORIZING A LOCAL OPTION EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXATION BY A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY OF ALL OR PART OF THE APPRAISED VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY USED TO OPERATE A CHILD-CARE FACILITY.

• Why? Local option. If used, MINIMUM 50% property tax cut to the "winners". (Ted Poe quote.)

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Yes | Νο | Yes | Yes | Νο | Yes- Local (Local option) | Unequal treatment of taxation. | Sort of funds the left |
| | | | | | | | Let's local Ds pick winners and losers |
| | | | | | | orizing not eded! | Ds and Moderate Rs. Conserv. Rs opposed |

3 NO WEALTH TAXES

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROHIBITING THE IMPOSITION OF AN INDIVIDUAL WEALTH OR NET WORTH TAX, INCLUDING A TAX ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ASSETS AND LIABILITIES OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY.

• Banning a potential future tax

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Νο | Νο | No | n/a | Yes | No- State No- Local | "Right" | All Rs and even some Ds supported |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

4 PROPERTY TAX BUYDOWN

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO AUTHORIZE THE LEGISLATURE TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY LIMIT ON THE MAXIMUM APPRAISED VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY OTHER THAN A RESIDENCE HOMESTEAD FOR AD VALOREM TAX PURPOSES; TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THE EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXATION BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT APPLICABLE TO RESIDENCE HOMESTEADS FROM \$40,000 TO \$100,000; TO ADJUST THE AMOUNT OF THE LIMITATION ON SCHOOL DISTRICT AD VALOREM TAXES IMPOSED ON THE RESIDENCE HOMESTEADS OF THE ELDERLY OR DISABLED TO REFLECT INCREASES IN CERTAIN EXEMPTION AMOUNTS; TO EXCEPT CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS TO PAY FOR AD VALOREM TAX RELIEF FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATION ON THE RATE OF GROWTH OF APPROPRIATIONS; AND TO AUTHORIZE THE LEGISLATURE TO PROVIDE FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE FOR A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CERTAIN APPRAISAL DISTRICTS.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| No | Νο | Νο | No(?) | Yes | Yes- State No- Local | Breaks the "spending caps" by being exempt. | Terrible "compromise", but better than doing nothing. |
| | | | | | | | Compression vs Personal Exemption |
| | | | | | | | Businesses vs Residential |

5 SHOVEL MORE \$\$\$ TO ACADEMIA

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT RELATING TO THE TEXAS UNIVERSITY FUND, WHICH PROVIDES FUNDING TO CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL PROMINENCE AS MAJOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES AND DRIVE THE STATE ECONOMY.

• TERRIBLE BILL!!!

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | Yes | Yes \$200 MM* | Yes- Public Universities except UT and TAMU | NO! | Yes- State | Breaks the Spending Cap. Exempts. Indexes! | Vague. Bureaucratic. Funds the extreme left. Takes money from Rainy Day Fund. |
| | | *MM=million | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

6 SHOVEL MORE \$\$\$ TO WATER PROJECTS

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CREATING THE TEXAS WATER FUND TO ASSIST IN FINANCING WATER PROJECTS IN THIS STATE.

• Might be needed in some parts of the state. Not here.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | Yes. | Yes* \$3 MMM** *Will drive water costs higher. | Yes- Connected water infrastructure companies. Bond | No | Yes- State | Breaks the Spending Cap | Empowers the bureaucracies. Keeps building surface water. |
| | | **MMM=billion | companies. Lawyers. | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

7 SHOVEL MORE \$\$\$ TO ELECTRIC UTILITIES

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF THE **TEXAS ENERGY FUND** TO SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, MODERNIZATION, AND OPERATION OF ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITIES.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Yes | Yes | Yes \$10 MMM | Yes- Electric Utilities | Νο | Yes- State | Breaks the Spending Caps | Needed for grid? |
| | | | | | | | |



8 HIGH SPEED INTERNET FOR A FEW

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CREATING THE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE FUND TO EXPAND HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACCESS AND ASSIST IN THE FINANCING OF CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | Yes | Yes \$5.5 MMM | Yes- Telecom companies, rural, low income. | n/a | Yes- State | Breaks spending caps | Picks winners and losers. Obsolete technology. |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

9 TRS RAISES AND MORE MATCHING \$\$\$

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AUTHORIZING THE 88TH LEGISLATURE TO PROVIDE A COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT TO CERTAIN ANNUITANTS OF THE TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF TEXAS.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | Yes | Yes \$3.4 MMM | Yes- Some TRS participants (teachers & admins) | n/a | Yes- State | Breaks the Spending Caps | Do you (or your pension) get automatic increases? |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

10 MEDICAL INVENTORY TAX EXEMPTION

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO AUTHORIZE THE LEGISLATURE TO EXEMPT FROM AD VALOREM TAXATION EQUIPMENT OR INVENTORY HELD BY A MANUFACTURER OF MEDICAL OR BIOMEDICAL PRODUCTS TO PROTECT THE TEXAS HEALTHCARE NETWORK AND STRENGTHEN OUR MEDICAL SUPPLY CHAIN.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| Yes | ? | \$29 MM | Yes- Medical wholesalers | Νο | Yes- State | Unequal taxation | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |



11 EL PASO PARK BOND DEBT

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AUTHORIZING THE LEGISLATURE TO PERMIT CONSERVATION AND RECLAMATION DISTRICTS IN EL PASO COUNTY TO ISSUE BONDS SUPPORTED BY AD VALOREM TAXES TO FUND THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Probably ? | ? | ? for us. Yes for them | Yes- El Paso County | - | "Expands the Legislature' s power" - LC | Expands state lege power. | Voted down in 2011. Fixing a carve in by creating another carve in. |
| | | | | | | | "Mission creep" |
| | | | | | | | D bill. |
| | | | ing has | | | | |

12 ABOLISH GALVESTON COUNTY TREASURER

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROVIDING FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE OFFICE OF COUNTY TREASURER IN GALVESTON COUNTY.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | possibly | n/a | n/a | No – changes elected to appointed. | Concen- trates power in Comm. Court | Currently required by Texas Constitution. 9 counties have abolished. | Makes office appointed rather than elected. Current GC Treasurer ran on abolishing the office. |
| | | | | | | | |

13

13 OLDER AND OLDER JUDGES

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE MANDATORY AGE OF RETIREMENT FOR STATE JUSTICES AND JUDGES.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| ? | n/a | n/a | Yes- sitting judges | n/a | Yes- State | Retirement specified in Constitution. | D bill. Longer terms NOT a good idea. |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |



14 SHOVEL MORE \$\$\$ TO STATE PARKS

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF THE CENTENNIAL PARKS CONSERVATION FUND TO BE USED FOR THE CREATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF STATE PARKS.

| Lobbyist Bill? | Grow Gov't? | Spending & Taxes? | Special Interests | Protect Personal Rights | Protect Gov't Power | Why a Const. Amend.? | Others? |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| ? | Yes | Yes MURKY! Unspecified Unlimited | Yes | n/a | Yes- State | Breaks the Spending Caps | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |



MATRIX

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Mark S. Ramsey | Y | Ν | Υ | Υ | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν |
| True Texas Project | Y | Ν | Y | Y | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | | Ν | Ν | Y | Ν | Ν |
| Don Huffines Liberty | | Ν | | | Ν | Ν | Ν | Ν | | Ν | | | | |
| TFFR | Y | Ν | Υ | Υ | Ν | | | Ν | | Ν | Ν | Υ | Ν | Ν |
| MoCo GOP | Y | | Υ | Y | | | | | Y | | | Υ | | |

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- 1. Government does **NOT have a greater right** to you and your families' resources than you and your family does.
- 2. ALL PROPOSED TAX INCREASES ARE **ZERO SUM GAMES**...YOU and YOUR FAMILIES LOSE—they GAIN. USUALLY PERMANENTLY, **PLUS they SLOW the ECONOMY.**
- 3. Sometimes **doing nothing is riskier** than trying to do something.
- 4. No data IS data.





LAGNIAPPE

2024–25 BIENNIUM CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT ON HOUSE BILL 1 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

FUNDING BY ARTICLE, ALL FUNDS

TOTAL=\$321,337.6

Totals may not sum due to rounding.

(IN MILLIONS)









