# The NC Constitutional Amendments on Taxation

NC Legislators have placed ***two constitutional amendments on the November 2026 statewide ballot that have a major impact on public school funding and other community services.***

Instead of using their legislative power to use regular laws to set policy, legislators are using constitutional amendments. Constitutional amendments are meant to set foundational government rules such as protecting our basic civil rights and should not be used to set ordinary policy. Issues identified, new or existing, can be dealt with by legislators through their law-making authority. They do not need to amend our state constitution to solve policy issues.

Legislators can pass or change laws in a brief time span. **Constitutional amendments are meant to be permanent. The state constitution should not be amended as a political strategy to increase voter turnout or make political statements.**

## Overview of Constitutional Amendments on the November 2026 ballot.

**"Lower Taxes for All"**

- Reduces the maximum state income tax rate allowed by the North Carolina Constitution from **7% to 3.5%**.
- This does **not** immediately change today's tax rate. Instead, it limits how high future legislatures could raise the income tax.
- It will make it harder for future lawmakers to raise revenue during times of need such as natural disasters or funding education, transportation, healthcare, or other public services.

**"Property Tax Levy Limit"**

- Requires the General Assembly to establish limits on local property tax rates.
- The amendment does **not** specify the limit; it directs the legislature to create one *later* through statute (by passing a law).
- It threatens local governments' (counties and cities) ability to fund local services.
- The amendment leaves too many details to future laws. Voters will not know the exact rate limits the legislators may set.
- It takes away local control from locally elected and accountable officials and gives it to state-level lawmakers.

## Why Should Legislators Use Laws Instead of Constitutional Amendments?

- **Protect core rules**: Constitutions should only outline basic rights, not everyday policy.
- **Allow flexibility**: Regular laws can be changed or fixed if a policy fails or conditions shift. If the public misunderstands the implications of a law before it is passed, the law can be changed without passing a new constitutional amendment.
- **Prevent lock-in**: Amendments freeze temporary ideas into permanent law, which stops future lawmakers from fixing mistakes.
- **Maintain public trust**: Overusing amendments for political goals reduces respect for the state's highest legal document. Lawmakers should not make our constitution a political tool.
- **Limits legislator influence**: Laws let legislators govern within their term and do not give legislators indefinite control through the constitution on all future legislators.

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## Before You Vote: Consider These Questions.

- **Constitution vs. Law:** The North Carolina State Constitution is a broad set of *ideas* that remain true *like freedom of speech,* Laws provide the finer details that can and should change over time. Are tax rates fundamental enough to be in the state constitution or should there be future flexibility to change rates as conditions or needs in the state change?
- **Authority**: Do legislators already have the authority to manage the issues of taxation by passing a state law that can be adjusted as needed?
- **Clarity of Impact:** Does the amendment language provide enough detail for voters to understand its long-term consequences?
- **Trade-offs:** How does the amendment balance limiting government authority with preserving the flexibility needed by future legislatures and local governments?
- **Future Implications:** If the amendment does not change current law immediately, how might it limit or shape future policy choices?
- **Impact Statewide:** If tax rates are cut, will NC legislators have enough money to fund public schools, health care services, state roads and bridges, food inspection and safety, public safety etc. to serve all North Carolinians? Will we see higher sales taxes and other user fees for routine services to replace the revenue lost from income taxes?
- **Impact on Community:** If local property taxes are controlled by state lawmakers instead of locally elected officials, will this cut local services like public school staffing and programs, public library services, trash services, and road repairs?
- **Impact on You**: Will the cuts to services end up costing you more than the tax cuts save? Higher fees and sales taxes and reduced services will likely mean that individuals will end up paying more.

## More Resources:

Public Schools First NC: NC Constitutional Amendments on Taxation and infographic.

The NC League of Women Voters: Three Constitutional Amendments. Three Lasting Decisions.

NC Budget and Tax Center: Tax Amendments Flyer (PDF)

NC Budget and Tax Center: Budget and Tax Center Fact Sheet: Lowering the Income Tax Cap in the State Constitution is a Bad Deal for North Carolinians

NC Budget and Tax Center: Budget and Tax Center Fact Sheet: Limiting Property Tax Revenue in the State Constitution is a Bad Deal for North Carolinians

NC Budget and Tax Center: Funding Local Services in NC

The North Carolina League of Municipalities: Property Taxes Public Safety Flyer

The North Carolina League of Municipalities: Property Taxes General Flyer

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