

AMENDMENT 12 Lobbying and Abuse of Office By Public Officers

Ballot Language: Expands current restrictions on lobbying for compensation by former public officers; creates restrictions on lobbying for compensation by serving public officers and former justices and judges; provides exceptions; prohibits abuse of a public position by public officers and employees to obtain a personal benefit.

How The Amendment Reached The Ballot: Constitution Revision Commission

What Your Vote Means: A **Yes** vote on this measure: prevents public officers from lobbying for compensation during their term and for six years thereafter.

A **No** vote on this measure: does not create any additional lobbying restrictions For public officers.

Pro: This amendment would establish some of the most expansive ethical standards for public servants across the country. Those in favor of this measure would claim that elected officials should fulfill their role as public servants and not be allowed to then capitalize on their elected office. The measure holds public officers to a standard befitting the duty they take on. Officials owe an obligation to their constituents to refrain from reaping a disproportional benefit because of their post. This measure would extend the current limitation on public officials from two years to six years.

Cons: Those opposed to this measure would highlight some shortcomings found in the ballot language. First, that there are a handful of current and recent lawmakers who also serve as attorneys tied to lobbying firms or lobbyists themselves; this measure restricts the ability to find gainful employment. Even some supporters of the amendment find the six-year limitation to be rather excessive. Moreover, the passing of Amendment 12 would not necessarily solve the issue, but rather it would simply force people to become more creative in their lobbying efforts. Instead of becoming a registered lobbyist, individuals might serve as consultants to lobbying firms. If the measure were passed, the Florida Commission on Ethics would potentially experience an unwarranted increase in authority. Additionally, opponents would contend that this is a measure that does not need to be inserted in the Florida Constitution, and its objectives could be accomplished legislatively. If legislators want to set guidelines on ethical behavior, they may do so on their own. Lastly, opponents claim that this amendment does not address the real issue associated with public officials who lobby, which is money in political campaigns