

Amendment 3 Op-Ed Template

How to Use This Template

Below, we've provided an outline for an op-ed describing the effects of Amendment 3 on Floridians, along with sample copy showing how the outline can come to life.

You'll want to customize the draft and make it your own. Editors will not accept an op-ed that appears too similar to pieces that have run elsewhere.

Please check a newspaper's op-ed guidelines before editing to learn their preferred word count and any other preferences.

We'll All End Up Paying More If Property Tax Amendment Passes

Introduction

Describe service provided by your nonprofit.

Every day, 24 hours a day, Support for Survivors' hotline is staffed so survivors of sexual violence and other crimes have access to free, confidential support. The organization also provides support during forensic exams and guides survivors through the medical and legal system.

Explain the threat Amendment 3 poses.

But Support for Survivors may need to discontinue its services, leaving women without assistance during the worst moments of their lives, if voters approve a property tax change on the ballot this November.

Without funding from state property taxes, Floridians who rely on nonprofits and local governments for services ranging from affordable childcare to post-hurricane relief will be out of luck.

Make the explicit ask: Vote No on Amendment 3.

That's why voters across the state should oppose Amendment 3 and urge policymakers to consider other proposals to address the high cost of living.

Background

Explain what Amendment 3 is and nod towards the need for relief.

The cost of living has increased steadily over the past few years, squeezing Floridians struggling with higher health care, grocery and energy costs. Amendment 3 attempts to address affordability by eliminating property taxes on the first \$250,000 of a home's value.

Describe, in general, what will happen if Amendment 3 passes.

But, if Amendment 3 passes, we'll all end up paying for the reduction in state tax revenue, whether through higher local taxes, cuts in services or a combination of both. Organizations ranging from police and firefighter unions to mosquito control boards are warning of almost immediate changes in services if Amendment 3 becomes law, leaving us all less safe and covered in bug bites. Local governments are already planning reductions in services.

Effect on Nonprofits Broadly

Pivot to the harm Amendment 3 will bring to people who rely on nonprofits.

Amendment 3 will create a one-two punch for nonprofits, increasing need for their services while reducing their resources. For example, Broward County directs a significant portion of its property tax dollars to the Children's Services Council, a government agency which funds reading programs, early learning initiatives, school nurses and mental health support for kids and families.

The Children's Services Council is forecasting an estimated \$15 million budget cut in the first year after Amendment 3 passes and \$30 million the following. With fewer services available, Floridians will likely turn to nonprofits for help — at the exact moment they have seen a reduction in funding from property tax revenue.

Effect on Your Nonprofit

Detail how your nonprofit is preparing for Amendment 3's passage and how Floridians will be harmed.

At Support for Survivors, we're weighing tough decisions, knowing we will likely face a budget shortfall if Amendment 3 passes. Should we prioritize our 24/7 hotline — which provides real-time counseling to people in crisis — or being on-site during post-assault medical exams, which can be invasive and retraumatizing for survivors? It's a situation that will leave sexual assault survivors navigating a complex and stressful medical and legal process without guidance and assistance.

Conclusion

Reiterate the harm and re-state your ask.

There are no easy answers for the institutions — including governments, hospitals, libraries, nonprofits and public safety agencies — attempting to answer the same questions we are at Support for Survivors because there are real, tangible costs to the property tax proposal. We will all pay the cost if Amendment 3 passes.

Best Practices for Media Engagement and Op-Ed Placement

Writing a strong op-ed is only part of the process. Identifying and proactively contacting the right news outlet can not only improve the chances that your piece is considered for publication but also create opportunities for future coverage.

Prioritize newspapers and news organizations that serve the community your organization knows best.

A locally focused op-ed from a nonprofit leader with direct experience in the community will often be more relevant to an editor than a broadly written statewide piece. Op-eds should generally come from a person who can speak credibly and personally about the issue, such as an executive director, board member, program leader or another community voice directly connected to your organization's work.

Some publications expect op-eds to be offered exclusively while they are under consideration. Check the outlet's policy before submitting the same piece elsewhere.

Build the relationship beyond one submission. Effective media engagement does not and should not end with op-ed placements. Familiarize yourself with the reporters and news outlets who cover your community and the issues related to your organization's work. Being a responsive, reliable source is the most effective way to create opportunities for future coverage and commentary.