



## **La. voters to decide 4 constitutional amendments**

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BATON ROUGE -- Louisiana voters will decide on four proposed constitutional amendments on the Oct. 20 statewide ballot.

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, known as PAR, has released its analysis of the amendments in the "Guide to the Proposed Constitutional Amendments."

It is available on PAR's Web site -- [www.la-par.org](http://www.la-par.org). The pamphlet explains the potential impact of the four amendments.

PAR President Jim Brandt said the guide is "designed to help voters understand the propositions and determine for themselves whether to vote for or against each amendment."

Two of the proposed amendments address the state's supplemental pay program for law enforcement officers and firefighters.

The first proposed amendment would require full funding of supplemental pay and never allow it to be reduced, making it a top priority for state funding. The second extends the benefit to police and firefighters employed by levee boards and ports.

A third proposed amendment deals with future retirement benefits for members of state retirement systems -- prohibiting the granting of additional benefits unless there is money to pay for them within 10 years. A vote against continues the policy that benefits can be increased if the cost could be paid within 30 years.

The fourth amendment on the ballot provides a property tax exemption for dealers that hold jewelry on consignment. Works of art already are exempt.

Brandt said all of the amendments could potentially affect state or local government budget flexibility.

The "Guide" pamphlet provides background for each amendment and provides a commentary on each proposed change that includes arguments of proponents and opponents of the issues.

Including the four new proposals, Louisiana voters will have considered 214 amendments since the 1974 Constitution was adopted. So far, voters have approved 148 amendments. No proposed constitutional amendment has been defeated since 2003.

Brandt is urging voters to consider not only the merits of each amendment but also whether the proposed language belongs in the state constitution