



# More Than a Dozen Florida Newspapers Agree: Vote **NO** on Amendment 8

## ► Orlando Sentinel:

"[O]pponents are right to be suspicious of Amendment 8. It could be a back door to making private religious schools eligible for state funding through school vouchers. This policy has been embraced before by lawmakers but struck down in some court rulings based on the no-aid provision. It would siphon badly needed public dollars from public schools. Voters should say no to Amendment 8."

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## ► Tampa Tribune:

"The title is 'religious freedom,' but that's not what this is about. A better title would be 'allowing tax money to aid any religion or sect.' Give it an accurate title and it would have no chance of passing, which says a lot....We recommend voting no on Amendment 8."

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## ► Palm Beach Post:

"The ballot title of Amendment 8 — 'Religious Freedom' — is intentionally deceptive. It implies that the state is limiting religious freedom. The state is not. Instead, the Florida Constitution forbids the direct or indirect public financing of religious organizations. Amendment 8 would remove that prohibition. In fact, Amendment 8 would open the door for the Legislature to spend public money for religious purposes. Too many legislators have shown that they would be happy to rush through such an opening. *The Post* recommends a NO vote on Amendment 8."

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## ► Lakeland Ledger:

"Removing the no-aid sentence would allow the Legislature to fund religious groups for a spectrum of reasons, with the greatest potential expenditure being for church-school and religious-based education. That would stretch — perhaps to the breaking point — funding for public schools, which could result in school districts struggling or unable to sustain operations....The Ledger recommends a NO vote on Amendment 8."



▶ **Tampa Bay Times:**

“When Florida legislators put Amendment 8 on the ballot, they deceptively titled it ‘Religious Freedom’ rather than the more accurate ‘Public Funding of Religion’ to make it more palatable to voters. Don’t be fooled. Amendment 8 is the polar opposite of religious freedom. It opens the door to taxpayers being forced to support religious faiths and to a vast expansion of school vouchers to religious schools....Just say no to the Legislature’s attempts to amend the Florida Constitution.”

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▶ **Miami Herald:**

“The proposal is not about religious freedom at all, but rather a blatant attempt to use public money to finance private religious institutions. On Amendment 8, The Miami Herald recommends: Vote No.”

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▶ **Sun Sentinel:**

“Despite the Religious Freedom amendment’s lofty title, the change amounts to the removal of the ‘no-aid’ provision, the state’s constitutional prohibition of allowing religious institutions from receiving taxpayer funding and a legal thorn in the side of school voucher advocates, who believe religiously affiliated schools should receive public monies in the form of school vouchers....Freedom of religion is a compelling issue, but this change seems more about allowing religious organizations to feed at the public trough than anything else.”

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▶ **TCPalm.com/Scripps:**

“For 126 years, the Constitution has forbidden the use of taxpayer funds to support religious institutions such as schools and churches. That ban does not apply to funding of social services provided by religious organizations such a food programs, clinics and housing assistance.... [T]his proposal is superfluous and does not belong in the Constitution.”

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▶ **Bradenton Herald:**

“Proponents promote the foggy notion that the amendment is designed to support the ‘delivery of non-sectarian social services by religious groups.’ But the real goal is future school voucher programs. The proposal would allow lawmakers to pass legislation permitting parents to send their children to religiously affiliated private schools at taxpayer expense, thus diverting money from public schools.... Taxpayers should not be forced to support religious institutions they find objectionable for whatever reason. The separation of church and state must be maintained. The ‘no aid’ provision in the Florida Constitution should be maintained and this amendment rebuffed.”



▶ **Sarasota Herald-Tribune:**

“The Legislature titled this measure “Religious Freedom” -- a grossly misleading choice of words. Amendment 8 is not needed to preserve religious liberty...We recommend: NO.”

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▶ **Gainesville Sun:**

“Don’t be fooled about proposed state Constitutional Amendment No. 8. Or, as it has been grandly titled, the “Religious Freedom” amendment. It ought to be called the “Robbing Public Schools to Pay Private Religious Schools” amendment....Don’t be fooled by its deceptive title. Amendment 8 is an assault on public education and it deserves to be soundly rejected.”

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▶ **Pensacola News-Journal:**

“There’s also the chance to vote on 11 amendments to the Florida Constitution...Amendment 8: A ‘Yes’ vote would allow public money to go to private religious institutions. A ‘No’ vote would continue to prohibit public funding of institutions and groups that promote religion....We agree with the Florida League of Women Voters and recommend opposing them all.”

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▶ **Florida Times-Union:**

“If it is approved, legislators who already shift tax money to private and religious schools through a corporate tax designation program are certain to take another run at vouchers....The uncertainty over what it would mean and the lack of clarity about what problem it would actually solve are reasons enough to vote against it.”

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▶ **Florida Today:**

“[Amendment 8] isn’t necessary. Florida already spends millions on social services, housing and food programs through church-based initiatives....We urge you to vote ‘no’ on all 11 of the proposed Florida constitutional amendments, which include everything from additional property-tax breaks to abortion funding. It will save you time in the voting booth with no harm to your finances or quality of life.”

**Early voting begins October 27, 2012**  
**www.VoteNoOn8.com**