



NEWS

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CONTACT: Harvey Bennett

Communications Director
850-222-5052

HOW IS FLORIDA DOING? *Citizens Commission Will Find Out*

TALLAHASSEE — A citizens commission is set to begin meeting in 2007 to take a look at the relationship between Florida government and its citizens when it comes to taxes collected and monies spent. A new report by Florida TaxWatch urges the commission to pay special attention to tax issues that affect the competitiveness of Florida, its businesses, and their employees.

The Taxation and Budget Reform Commission is a 25-member commission, appointed by the Governor, Senate President and House Speaker, which has wide powers of review on our state government's tax structure, budget process, revenue needs, collections, and constitutional limitations on taxation and expenditures at the state and local level. It is set to begin meeting in 2007, pending those appointments.

The TBRC can offer recommendations to the Legislature, but also has the authority to take its proposals directly to Florida voters by constitutional amendments.

"As the last one did, the new Commission may consider major changes to Florida's tax system, including such political hot potatoes as the personal income tax, the services tax, and taxing Subchapter S corporations," said Dominic M. Calabro, President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch. "We urge them to focus on government spending and budget reform first, before looking at new taxes."

The Florida TaxWatch report provides a historical background on the Commission and the scope of issues it may tackle. The first TBRC met 15 years ago and its work resulted in several changes to Florida's Constitution. These include the creation of the Budget Stabilization Fund, the 72-hour "cooling off" period before the legislature can vote on the state budget, and the introduction of a performance and productivity measurement system to state government.

Florida TaxWatch recommends that this Commission follow the lead of the 1990 Commission and focus on spending and budget reform first. This way the Legislature has a chance to begin to embrace and implement its budget reform recommendations as the Commission begins to consider the tax structure. The report also recommends the Legislature provide funding for the Commission in the year following its constitutional proposals so that the Commission can work with lawmakers on implementation.

In the months leading up to the start of the TBRC's meetings, Florida TaxWatch will be releasing reports with recommendations on issues facing the Commission and will continue to offer input and assistance as it carries on its deliberations. [Click Here to View Report](#)

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Florida TaxWatch is a private, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 26 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Our mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government. On the web at www.floridataxwatch.org