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By Commissioner Washington

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A proposal to amend

Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution to specify the purpose and intent of the state's public education system.

Be It Proposed by the Constitution Revision Commission of Florida:

Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution is amended to read:

ARTICLE IX

EDUCATION

SECTION 1. Public education.-

- (a) The purpose of the public education system of Florida is to develop the intellect of the state's citizens, to contribute to the economy, to create an effective workforce, and to prepare students for a job. The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people may require. To assure that children attending public schools obtain a high quality education, the legislature shall make adequate provision to ensure that, by the beginning of the 2010 school year, there are a sufficient number of classrooms so that:
- (1) The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for

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prekindergarten through grade 3 does not exceed 18 students;

(2) The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for grades 4 through 8 does not exceed 22 students; and

(3) The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for grades 9 through 12 does not exceed 25 students.

The class size requirements of this subsection do not apply to extracurricular classes. Payment of the costs associated with reducing class size to meet these requirements is the responsibility of the state and not of local schools districts. Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the legislature shall provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of students in each classroom by at least two students per year until the maximum number of students per classroom does not exceed the requirements of this subsection.

(b) Every four-year old child in Florida shall be provided by the State a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. An early childhood development and education program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child's ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings in the development of language and cognitive capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory and moral capacities through education in basic skills and such other skills as the Legislature may determine to be appropriate.

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(c) The early childhood education and development programs provided by reason of <u>subsection</u> <u>subparagraph</u> (b) shall be implemented no later than the beginning of the 2005 school year through funds generated in addition to those used for existing education, health, and development programs. Existing education, health, and development programs are those funded by the State as of January 1, 2002 that provided for child or adult education, health care, or development.

(d) In order to build Florida's talent pipeline for the careers of today and tomorrow and align the state's education, workforce, and economic development efforts, it is the intent of the people to provide high quality and affordable postsecondary education opportunities.