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Moving to Florida? Amendment 3 Could Make December 31, 2026 an Important Deadline

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Florida has long attracted new residents in part because of its favorable tax environment, and if 60% of voters approve Amendment 3 this November, individuals considering establishing Florida residency may have another reason to complete the process before the end of 2026.

Amendment 3 proposes significant changes to Florida's homestead property tax exemption. Beginning January 1, 2027, the amendment would increase the homestead exemption applicable to non-school property taxes to $150,000 of assessed value. Beginning January 1, 2028, that exemption would increase to $250,000 of assessed value.

But there is an important catch for new Florida residents: when you establish permanent residency in Florida could affect when you become eligible for the increased exemption.

Why December 31, 2026 Matters

Under Amendment 3, the increased exemption would be available only to persons who maintain permanent residence in Florida as of December 31, 2026 and otherwise establish the right to a Florida homestead exemption.

By contrast, a person who had not maintained a permanent residence in Florida as of December 31, 2026 is not entitled to immediately receive the increased exemption. Instead, the amendment provides a separate exemption structure for those new residents.

Beginning January 1, 2027, new residents would initially receive an exemption of up to $50,000 of assessed value for non-school levies, subject to the amendment's provisions. Beginning with the fifth year of an exemption, they could become eligible for the increased exemption available to qualifying existing Florida residents.

The December 31 deadline should not be viewed as simply a paperwork deadline. Amendment 3 uses the concept of maintaining a “permanent residence” in Florida. Depending on the circumstances, evidence of Florida residency may include obtaining a Florida driver's license, registering to vote in Florida, registering vehicles in Florida, filing a declaration of domicile, changing mailing and financial addresses, and taking other steps consistent with Florida becoming your permanent residence.

Prospective Florida residents should also distinguish between establishing Florida residency and qualifying a particular property for the homestead exemption. Accordingly, someone planning a move to Florida before the end of 2026 should consider both when Florida becomes his or her permanent state of residence and when the Florida property becomes the person's homestead.

In practical terms, if Amendment 3 is approved by Florida voters, individuals considering establishing Florida residency should evaluate their plans well before December 31, 2026 to allow them to obtain increased exemption benefits sooner.

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