

Good News ... For Now

May 6, 2022

For now.

One must always add that proviso — at least with respect to constitutional provisions like term limits and citizen initiative rights, which limit the power of lawmakers and expand that of citizens. For these, incumbents' hostility never ends.

But *for now*? The news is good.

The Florida House of Representatives website reports that HJR 1127 “Died on Second Reading Calendar” in mid-March. The same fate is reported for the companion senate bill.

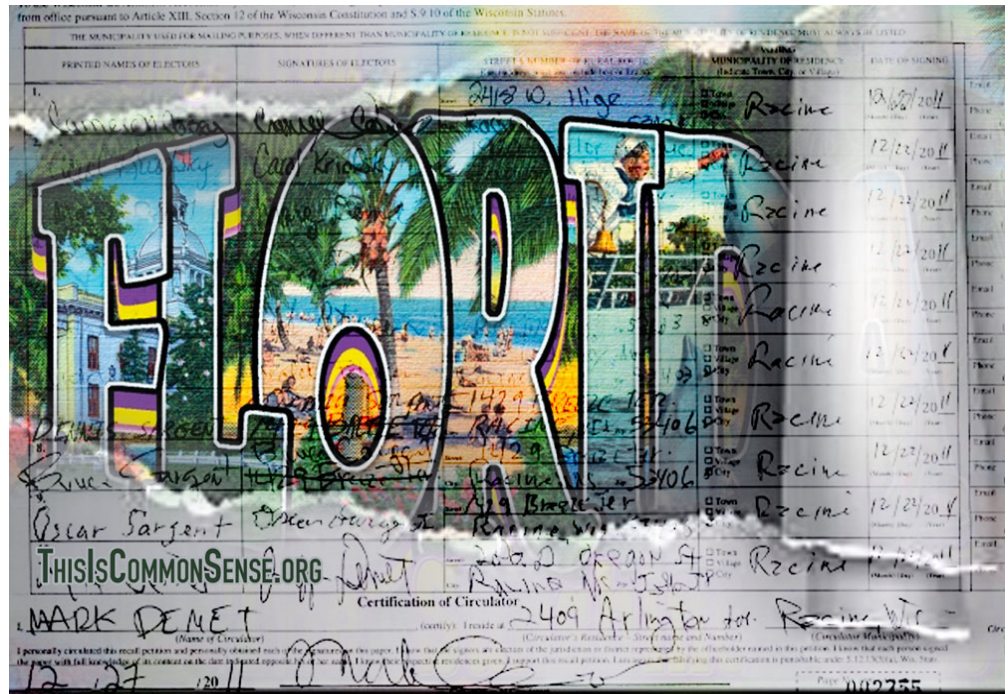
The measure would have amended the constitution to limit citizen-initiated amendments “to matters relating

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to procedural subjects or to structure of government or of State Constitution.”

Citizen initiatives would have been prohibited from dealing with policy matters, including legislatively enacted (or citizen-enacted) policy that voters seek to reverse.*

During the battle over the measure, Kara Gross of the



ACLU observed that some lawmakers “continue to find new ways to make the already-stringent citizen initiative process even more challenging.”

One legislator who challenged the Republican-sponsored measure was Democratic Representative Andrew Learned.

“Is it really best that the legislature make decisions and not the citizens of Florida on the ballot?” he asked. “If the people of Florida at the ballot aren’t a check on the legislature, I don’t know what is.”

No matter how unpopular such a bill might be with mere constituents, many lawmakers would have had no problem imposing it. As a constitutional amendment, though, such a change must be approved by voters.

And that proved a bridge too far.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

* Florida politicians cry crocodile tears over citizen initiatives amending the constitution instead of merely changing a statute. Those same legislators refuse to establish a path for citizens to petition statutory changes onto the ballot.