

HJR 813

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House Joint Resolution

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution, relating to public education, to limit class size reductions and provide funds for increased teacher compensation and other public education purposes.

Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

That the amendment to Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution set forth below is agreed to and shall be submitted to the electors of Florida for approval or rejection at the general election to be held in November 2006:

ARTICLE IX

EDUCATION

SECTION 1. Public education.--

(a) 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 on the average in each school district:

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31 (1) The maximum number of students who are assigned to
 32 each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for
 33 prekindergarten through grade 3 does not exceed 18 students; and

34 (2) The maximum number of students who are assigned to
 35 each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for
 36 grades 4 and 5 ~~through 8~~ does not exceed 22 students. ~~;~~ and

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

40
 41 The class size requirements of this subsection do not apply to
 42 extracurricular classes. Payment of the costs associated with
 43 reducing class size to meet these requirements is the
 44 responsibility of the state and not of local schools districts.
 45 Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the legislature shall
 46 provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of
 47 students in each classroom by at least two students per year
 48 until the maximum number of students per classroom does not
 49 exceed the requirements of this subsection.

50 (b) In addition to the amounts appropriated to meet the
 51 class size requirements of subsection (a), the legislature shall
 52 annually cause to be appropriated a separate amount equal to the
 53 difference between the estimated cost of implementing a class
 54 size reduction program according to the provisions of subsection
 55 (a) as initially adopted in November 2002 and the cost of
 56 implementing the provisions of subsection (a) as amended in
 57 November 2006. Such separate amount shall be appropriated by the
 58 legislature first for increasing the compensation of public
 59 school teachers to the extent necessary to cause the average
 60 annual teacher compensation in Florida public schools to equal

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61 at least the average annual compensation of all public school
 62 teachers in the United States in prekindergarten through grade
 63 12, and thereafter for funding such public education purposes as
 64 deemed appropriate by the legislature. The legislature shall by
 65 general law take such action as is necessary and proper to
 66 implement the intent of this subsection, including determining
 67 and defining the compensation levels required to be paid
 68 pursuant to this subsection.

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

81 (d)~~(e)~~ The early childhood education and development
 82 programs provided by reason of subsection (c) ~~subparagraph (b)~~
 83 shall be implemented no later than the beginning of the 2005
 84 school year through funds generated in addition to those used
 85 for existing education, health, and development programs.
 86 Existing education, health, and development programs are those
 87 funded by the State as of January 1, 2002, that provided for
 88 child or adult education, health care, or development.

89 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the title and substance of the
 90 amendment proposed herein shall appear on the ballot as follows:

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91 LIMITING CLASS SIZE REDUCTIONS TO SUPPLEMENT
92 TEACHER COMPENSATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

93 Proposes an amendment to Section 1 of Article IX of the
94 State Constitution to limit class size reduction requirements to
95 prekindergarten through grade 3 and to grades 4 and 5 on a
96 school district average basis; to provide that, in addition to
97 the amounts appropriated to meet the revised class size
98 requirements, the Legislature shall appropriate a separate
99 amount equal to the difference between the estimated cost of
100 implementing a class size reduction program according to the
101 constitutional provisions adopted in November 2002 and the cost
102 of implementing these limited class size reduction requirements;
103 and to provide that such separate appropriation shall first be
104 used to increase the compensation of public school teachers and
105 thereafter to fund other public education purposes.