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## Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written already about the Florida Constitution Revision Commission. No doubt much more will be written about the commission's proposals for a new state constitution before the November referendum. The outcome of that vote will do much to shape the future of Florida. Whatever the outcome, though, the work of the commission will remain of vital interest to Floridians for years to come. For, in all likelihood, the fundamental premises of Florida life and of Florida government will not be questioned again in such detail or amid such drama until 1996.

At that time, yet another Constitution Revision Commission will be convened. And the questions asked by that future commission will, to a great extent, be determined by whether the current commission has answered the questions it confronted during nearly a year of study, scrutiny, and debate. What were those questions? What answers has the Constitution Revision Commission offered to the people of Florida? These are the subjects of this special symposium issue of the *Florida State University Law Review*.

This symposium is the work of many months and many people. It is meant to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. In part, it is meant to be objective as well. But readers are forewarned that some of the articles are quite subjective. A few may even be described as provocative. The authors of this symposium are united in their concern about constitutional revision in Florida. In some instances, though, they may seem to agree on little else.

Some acknowledgments must be made. First of all, the members of the *Review* would like to express our gratitude to the staff of the Constitution Revision Commission for their kind cooperation in providing access to resources without which this symposium could not have been published. Special thanks are extended to Commission Chairman Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte, Executive Director Steven Uhlfelder, and especially to Sylvia Mitchell, who have all shared our ambition of providing a thorough analysis of the proposed revisions for the people of Florida.

The members of the *Review* would also like to thank our faculty advisor, Professor Harold P. Southerland, for his patience and guidance. In addition, we want to extend our thanks to our editorial assistant, Carolyn Mason, and to Sue Wallace, without whom

these articles would never have reached the printer.

Finally, the Editorial Board would like to thank those students who have worked so hard in the past six months to make this symposium a reality. Special mention is due to Michael Hawley, David P. Heath, Ernest Jones, Vicki Gordon Kaufman, Mary Charlotte McCall, John Mueller, Jim Park, David Russ, Mary Eleanor Sweet, and Joseph Warren for shouldering extra assignments during a long summer of research, writing, and editing.

As he has done so often, Governor Reubin Askew set the proper tone for a reconsideration of the Florida Constitution in his opening remarks at the very first meeting of the revision commission. Recalling Thomas Jefferson's assertion that each generation has the right to choose its own form of government, the Governor maintained:

A constitution must be a flexible instrument—a dynamic instrument—a living instrument which can be revised and re-interpreted to accommodate the varied courses of change.

A constitution is not an opinion. It is not a manifesto. It is not a statute.

A constitution is, by definition, the highest law, the fundamental law, the foundation of law which governs and guides our lives. And, because it governs and guides our lives, it is essential that our constitution also reflect our lives.

A constitution must be a practical document, one tempered by the caution that accrues with experience. But a constitution should also mirror our hopes, our ideals, and our noblest aspirations. Our constitution must remind us not only of all that we are, but also of all that we should be.<sup>1</sup>

Are these timeless purposes served by the proposals of the Constitution Revision Commission? Do the commission proposals remind us not only of what we are, but also of what we should be? Our hope is that this symposium will help answer these important questions.



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Editor-in-Chief



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1. Address by Reubin O'D. Askew to Constitution Revision Commission 2-3 (July 6, 1977).