PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS—
VETERANS' LAND FUND BONDS

S. J. R. No. 18

Proposing an amendment to Article III, Section 49-b, of the Texas Constitution,
as amended, to provide for an additional $200 million in bonds or obligations
of the State of Texas for the Veterans' Land Fund and to allow the sur-
viving spouses of veterans who died in the line of duty to purchase tracts
through the Veterans' Land Board under certain circumstances.

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

Section 1. That Article III, Section 49–b, of the Texas Constitution,
be amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 49–b. By virtue of prior Amendments to this Constitution, there
has been created a governmental agency of the State of Texas perform-
ing governmental duties which has been designated the Veterans' Land
Board. Said Board shall continue to function for the purposes specified in
all of the prior Constitutional Amendments except as modified herein.
Said Board shall be composed of the Commissioner of the General Land
Office and two (2) citizens of the State of Texas, one (1) of whom shall
be well versed in veterans' affairs and one (1) of whom shall be well
versed in finances. One (1) such citizen member shall, with the advice
and consent of the Senate, be appointed biennially by the Governor to
serve for a term of four (4) years; but the members serving on said Board
on the date of adoption hereof shall complete the terms to which they were
appointed. In the event of the resignation or death of any such citizen
member, the Governor shall appoint a replacement to serve for the un-
expired portion of the term to which the deceased or resigning member
had been appointed. The compensation for said citizen members shall be
as is now or may hereafter be fixed by the Legislature; and each shall
make bond in such amount as is now or may hereafter be prescribed by
the Legislature.

The Commissioner of the General Land Office shall act as Chairman
of said Board and shall be the administrator of the Veterans' Land Pro-
gram under such terms and restrictions as are now or may hereafter be
provided by law. In the absence or illness of said Commissioner, the
Chief Clerk of the General Land Office shall be the Acting Chairman of
said Board with the same duties and powers that said Commissioner would
have if present.

The Veterans' Land Board may provide for, issue and sell not to ex-
ceed Seven Hundred Million Dollars ($700,000,000) in bonds or obliga-
tions of the State of Texas for the purpose of creating a fund to be known
as the Veterans' Land Fund, Five Hundred Million Dollars ($500,000,000)
of which have heretofore been authorized. Such bonds or obligations shall
be sold for not less than par value and accrued interest; shall be issued
in such forms, denominations, and upon such terms as are now or may
hereafter be provided by law; shall be issued and sold at such times, at
such places, and in such installments as may be determined by said Board;
and shall bear a rate or rates of interest as may be fixed by said Board
but the weighted average annual interest rate, as that phrase is commonly
and ordinarily used and understood in the municipal bond market, of all
the bonds issued and sold in any installment of any bonds may not exceed
the rate specified in Section 65 of this Article. All bonds or obligations issued and sold hereunder shall, after execution by the Board, approval by the Attorney General of Texas, registration by the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas, and delivery to the purchaser or purchasers, be incontestable and shall constitute general obligations of the State of Texas under the Constitution of Texas; and all bonds heretofore issued and sold by said Board are hereby in all respects validated and declared to be general obligations of the State of Texas. In order to prevent default in the payment of principal or interest on any such bonds, the Legislature shall appropriate a sufficient amount to pay the same.

“In the sale of any such bonds or obligations, a preferential right of purchase shall be given to the administrators of the various Teacher Retirement Funds, the Permanent University Funds, and the Permanent School Funds.

“Said Veterans' Land Fund shall consist of any lands heretofore or hereafter purchased by said Board, until the sale price therefor, together with any interest and penalties due, have been received by said Board (although nothing herein shall be construed to prevent said Board from accepting full payment for a portion of any tract), and of the moneys attributable to any bonds heretofore or hereafter issued and sold by said Board which moneys so attributable shall include but shall not be limited to the proceeds from the issuance and sale of such bonds; the moneys received from the sale or resale of any lands, or rights therein, purchased with such proceeds; the moneys received from the sale or resale of any lands, or rights therein, purchased with other moneys attributable to such bonds; the interest and penalties received from the sale or resale of such lands, or rights therein; the bonuses, income, rents, royalties, and any other pecuniary benefit received by said Board from any such lands; sums received by way of indemnity or forfeiture for the failure of any bidder for the purchase of any such bonds to comply with his bid and accept and pay for such bonds or for the failure of any bidder for the purchase of any lands comprising a part of said Fund to comply with his bid and accept and pay for any such lands; and interest received from investments of any such moneys. The principal and interest on the bonds heretofore and hereafter issued by said Board shall be paid out of the moneys of said Fund in conformance with the Constitutional provisions authorizing such bonds; but the moneys of said Fund which are not immediately committed to the payment of principal and interest on such bonds, the purchase of lands as herein provided, or the payment of expenses as herein provided may be invested in bonds or obligations of the United States until such funds are needed for such purposes.

“All moneys comprising a part of said Fund and not expended for the purposes herein provided shall be a part of said Fund until there are sufficient moneys therein to retire fully all of the bonds heretofore or hereafter issued and sold by said Board, at which time all such moneys reining in said Fund, except such portion thereof as may be necessary to retire all such bonds which portion shall be set aside and retained in said Fund for the purpose of retiring all such bonds, shall be deposited to the credit of the General Revenue Fund to be appropriated to such purposes as may be prescribed by law. All moneys becoming a part of said Fund thereafter shall likewise be deposited to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

“When a Division of said Fund (each Division consisting of the moneys attributable to the bonds issued and sold pursuant to a single Constitu-
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The proposal amends the constitution to authorize the issuance of bonds for the acquisition of lands by a board established for the purpose of providing land to veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces after September 16, 1940. The funds raised from the sale of the lands will be used to retire the bonds issued for this purpose. The lands will be acquired at the lowest price obtainable, paid for in cash, and held for governmental purposes, even though the individual purchasers are subject to taxation.

The Veterans' Land Fund shall be used by said Board for the purpose of purchasing lands situated in the State of Texas owned by the United States or any governmental agency thereof, owned by the Texas Prison System or any other governmental agency of the State of Texas, or owned by any person, firm, or corporation. All lands thus purchased shall be acquired at the lowest price obtainable, to be paid for in cash, and shall be a part of said Fund. Such lands heretofore or hereafter purchased and comprising a part of said Fund are hereby declared to be held for a governmental purpose, although the individual purchasers thereof shall be subject to taxation to the same extent and in the same manner as are purchasers of lands dedicated to the Permanent Free Public School Fund.

The lands of the Veterans' Land Fund shall be sold by said Board in such quantities, on such terms, at such prices, at such rates of interest and under such rules and regulations as are now or may hereafter be provided by law to veterans who served not less than ninety (90) continuous days, unless sooner discharged by reason of a service-connected disability, on active duty in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard or Marine Corps of the United States after September 16, 1940, and who, upon the date of filing his or her application to purchase any such land is a citizen of the United States, is a bona fide resident of the State of Texas, and has not been dishonorably discharged from any branch of the Armed Forces above-named and who at the time of his or her enlistment, induction, commissioning, or drafting was a bona fide resident of the State of Texas, or who has resided in Texas at least five (5) years prior to the date of filing his or her application, and provided that in the event of the death of an eligible Texas Veteran after the veteran has filed with the Board an application and contract of sale to purchase through the Board the tract selected by him or her and before the purchase has been completed, then the surviving spouse may complete the transaction. The unmarried surviving spouses of veterans who died in the line of duty may also apply to purchase a tract through the Board provided the deceased veterans meet the requirements set out in this Article with the exception that the deceased veterans need not have served ninety (90) continuous days and provided further that the deceased veterans were bona fide residents of the State of Texas at the time of enlistment, induction, commissioning, or drafting. The foregoing notwithstanding, any lands in the Veterans' Land Fund which have been first offered for sale to veterans and which have not been sold may be sold or resold to such purchasers, in such quantities, and on such terms, and at such prices and rates of interest, and under such rules and regulations as are now or may hereafter be provided by law.

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"Said Veterans' Land Fund, to the extent of the moneys attributable to any bonds hereafter issued and sold by said Board, may be used by said Board, as is now or may hereafter be provided by law, for the purpose of paying the expenses of surveying, monumenting, road construction, legal fees, recordation fees, advertising and other like costs necessary or incidental to the purchase and sale, or resale, of any lands purchased with any of the moneys attributable to such additional bonds, such expenses to be added to the price of such lands when sold, or resold, by said Board; for the purpose of paying the expenses of issuing, selling, and delivering any such additional bonds; and for the purpose of meeting the expenses of paying the interest or principal due or to become due on any such additional bonds.

All of the moneys attributable to any series of bonds hereafter issued and sold by said Board (a 'series of bonds' being all of the bonds issued and sold in a single transaction as a single installment of bonds) may be used for the purchase of lands as herein provided, to be sold as herein provided, for a period ending eight (8) years after the date of sale of such series of bonds; provided, however, that so much of such moneys as may be necessary to pay interest on bonds hereafter issued and sold shall be set aside for that purpose in accordance with the resolution adopted by said Board authorizing the issuance and sale of such series of bonds. After such eight (8) year period, all of such moneys shall be set aside for the retirement of any bonds hereafter issued and sold and to pay interest thereon, together with any expenses as provided herein, in accordance with the resolution or resolutions authorizing the issuance and sale of such additional bonds, until there are sufficient moneys to retire all of the bonds hereafter issued and sold, at which time all such moneys then remaining a part of said Veterans' Land Fund and thereafter becoming a part of said Fund shall be governed as elsewhere provided herein.

This Amendment being intended only to establish a basic framework and not to be a comprehensive treatment of the Veterans' Land Program, there is hereby reposed in the Legislature full power to implement and effectuate the design and objects of this Amendment, including the power to delegate such duties, responsibilities, functions, and authority to the Veterans' Land Board as it believes necessary.

Should the Legislature enact any enabling laws in anticipation of this Amendment, no such law shall be void by reason of its anticipatory nature.

"This Amendment shall become effective upon its adoption."

Sec. 2. The foregoing constitutional amendment shall be submitted to a vote of the qualified electors of this state at an election to be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1977, at which election the ballots shall be printed to provide for voting for or against the proposition: "The constitutional amendment to provide for an additional $200 million in bonds or obligations of the State of Texas for the Veterans' Land Fund and to allow surviving widows of veterans to purchase tracts under certain circumstances."

Adopted by the senate on February 21, 1977: Yeas 29, Nays 1; adopted by the house on May 11, 1977: Yeas 142, Nays 0, four present not voting.

Filed without signature.

Filed with the Secretary of State, May 26, 1977.