White Paper Essay

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

White Paper Essay

**10 Proposed Amendments**

Texas Legislature has proposed 10 amendments to constitutions. The 10 amendments focus on a wide range of issues. The amendments will be enacted once they get a green light from the Texan voters. Voters in Texas are given with the opportunity to either accept or reject the amendments that have been proposed. On November 5th, this year, Texans, using the power of the vote, can either accept or reject a proposed amendment.

Of the 10 proposed amendments, Proposition 7 (HJR 151) has been selected for this paper. In this paper, the rationale behind the 7th proposition will be explained. Moreover, the benefits of this proposition will be elaborated. Additionally, the drawbacks of 7th proposition will be highlighted. Lastly, Texan voters will be provided a recommendation that would help them take a principled stance on the issue.

**Selected Amendment**

Proposition 7 (HJR 151) states that “The constitutional amendment allowing increased distributions to the available school fund” (Explanatory Statements for the November 5, 2019Constitutional Amendment Election, 2019).

**The rationale behind 7th proposition**

Texas is an affluent state. However, lawmakers hailing from Texas have miserably failed to finance the public education system adequately. Students and communities have long suffered the academic and economic implications of the flaws that exist in the financing system of schools. The schools in Texas receive funds from state general revenue and revenue collected from the local property tax. Basically, the state general revenue is used to enhance the funding as a whole and address the subsequent inequitable system which crops up due to funding schools on the basis of domestic property tax. However, a sharp decrease has been witnessed over the years in the state revenue. A decade or so ago, the total contribution from the state towards education was about 48.5% (Constitutional Election - Republican Party of Texas, 2019). This contribution was reduced to 42.4% during the year 2017. During the financial year 2008, the State funded the education of about 4.7 million students by providing $17.1 billion (Constitutional Election - Republican Party of Texas, 2019). However, the number of students whose education was funded by the state surged up to 5.3 million in 2017 by contributing only $19.3 billion. Although there was an increase in the student population of 13.7%, the funding was reduced to 12.6% per pupil. Considering this abysmal figures, Texas state commission on school funding proposed a revisit on this formula arguing that a significant increase in school funding is the need of the hour.

**Advantages of 7th Proposition**

As every Texan is well aware of the fact; the School Land Board is tasked with managing the sales and lease of the land that has been allocated for the Permanent School Fund. The Board of Education then transfers the tax revenue to the Available School Fund. If Texans vote in favor of this proposition, it would see the amount of fund allocated for the education go from $300 million to $600. The biggest advantage of this proposition is that the funding available for public school system would see an unprecedented increase unlike before (Wheeler & Dallas-Fort Worth, 2019). The advocates for this proposition argue that a double increase in the funding for the public education system would bring a significant change in the education system. Furthermore, an advantage of this proposition is that after its passage, the dependence on the domestic property tax should decline (Wheeler & Dallas-Fort Worth, 2019). As a result, the property and real estate market should thrive.

**Disadvantages of 7th Proposition**

The School Fund is managed together by the School Land Board and the Board of Education. In case when the Land Board deposits a large amount in the Available School Fund instead of depositing it in Permanent School Fund, it would alter the number of funds which Board of Education is bound to earmark from the Permanent School Fund (Mudrazija & Blagg, 2019). This is a significant disadvantage. Furthermore, another major drawback is that the Board of Education is under obligation by the constitution that it would allocate a specific percentage based on annual funding to the Available School Fund. In case the Board of Education found itself with little funds left behind in the Permanent School Fund, the collective funding of all the schools would dip significantly (Mudrazija & Blagg, 2019). Moreover, it has been witnessed in the past years that the School Land Board has done objectionable investments at the cost of the funding for public education. With the passage of the 7th proposition, an opportunity is presented to make even bigger contributions. This opportunity has a risk that it would result in the School Land Board making debatable investments at the expense of public education funding.

**How Texans should vote**

Although 7th proposition accompanies some challenges that might impede the smooth functioning of the state of Texas, the challenges are of administrative nature. Moreover, a common Texan must not get bothered over these drawbacks of the 7th proposition. The challenges are for the government to handle alone. In general, the population of Texas must vote in favor of the 7th proposition. Increase in funding in the public education fund is associated with improved educational outcomes. Increase in funding in the ratio of funding per pupil would decrease the education attainment gap is found between kids hailing from low-income and children belonging to affluent families. Moreover, an increase in public education funding would result in children getting the educational resources and infrastructure that is up to date. Certainly, money is not the answer to all ills education system is facing, the adequate and thoughtful distribution would ensure the educational outcomes are improved and society benefits from them collectively. Therefore, it is suggested that Texans should vote in favor of the 7th proposition.

**References**

Constitutional Election - Republican Party of Texas. (2019). *Republican Party of Texas*. Retrieved 27 September 2019, from https://www.texasgop.org/2019-constitutional-election/

Explanatory Statements for the November 5, 2019Constitutional Amendment Election. (2019). *Sos.state.tx.us*. Retrieved 27 September 2019, from https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/2019-explanatory-statements.pdf

Mudrazija, S., & Blagg, K. (2019). School District Funding in Texas.

Wheeler, T., & Dallas-Fort Worth, C. P. M. (2019). Reforming Texas Education Finance-A Value Added Tax Approach.