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Florida Property Tax Plan Sparks Expert Concerns

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Florida Governor Ron DeSantis’ idea to eliminate property taxes has stirred excitement among many homeowners, but real estate leaders and policy experts are urging caution, warning that essential public services could suffer without a clear plan to replace lost revenue.

Property taxes in Florida generate approximately \$55 billion annually, funding essential services such as public education, law enforcement, infrastructure, and fire protection; they account for roughly 18% of county revenues, 17% of municipal revenues, and up to 60% of

school funding. Real estate professionals stress that while tax relief is a popular talking point, it must be pursued responsibly.

Phil Gutman, president of the Continuum Company, cautioned during an interview with Fox News, “Money does need to be replaced somehow, somewhere by someone.” His concern highlights the broader issue: if property tax revenues vanish, where will the money come from to sustain the services Floridians rely on every day?

Budge Huskey, president and chief executive officer of Premier Sotheby’s International Realty, echoed that sentiment, adding, “At the end of the day, you cannot simply lower property taxes or eliminate property taxes without replacing at least a significant majority of that revenue through alternative means.”

According to the Florida Policy Institute, property taxes make up around 18% of county revenue, 17% of municipal revenue, and approximately 50%–60% of school district funding across Florida. Eliminating this funding stream without a viable alternative could risk everything from school funding to emergency services.

One floated proposal is an “entry tax” on new residents relocating to Florida, which could help offset lost revenue, but policy analysts note its legal complexity and uncertain economic implications without clearer viability data. The Florida Policy Institute estimates that eliminating property taxes would require raising the state sales tax from 6% to approximately 12%, effectively doubling it, to replace lost revenue.

The concern is not that Floridians don’t deserve tax relief; many agree they do, particularly in the face of inflation and increased cost-of-living pressures. But the approach must be structured and strategic. Otherwise, Floridians may face unintended consequences in the form of underfunded schools, crumbling roads, and limited public safety resources.

“Who’s going to build the roads? Who’s going to fund the police? Who’s going to fund education?” Huskey asked, underlining the importance of looking beyond the political optics.

While the Governor’s proposal taps into a long-standing conservative goal of reducing government overreach and taxpayer burdens, experts insist the policy must come with a concrete replacement strategy. Otherwise, the cost of cutting property taxes may prove higher than many Floridians expect.

For now, the conversation continues. What's clear is that balancing tax cuts with fiscal responsibility will require careful planning, not political wishful thinking.

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