

Why Putnam County Taxpayers Need a Charter Government

- **Set Salaries of Elected Officers**

A Charter County can set the salaries and benefits of county commissioners. The Florida Legislature sets the cap on salaries according to the population of a county. However, a Charter can be written to cut the current salaries and tie any increases to the mean level incomes of the taxpayers within the county, thereby forcing the Board of County Commissioners to bring business and industry into the county that would increase income levels of all residents before their salaries could be increased.

- **Set Term Limits for Commissioners**

A Charter County can set term limits for all elected officials, not just the commissioners. Those elected to office are elected to serve the residents and taxpayers, not to be a career opportunity. Two four year terms may well be long enough. The longer an elected officer stays in a position, they learn how to game the system at the expense of the taxpayers and leads to graft and corruption among elected officers.

- **Recall Elections for Commissioners and other Elected Officials**

In a Charter County, voters have the ability to recall elected officers due to corruption, ethics violations and reckless spending habits. Voters will not have to wait for the end of an elected term; they will have the ability to “FIRE” elected officers that have violated a Code of Ethics. After all, if “we” do not do our jobs properly, the “boss” doesn’t have to wait for some anniversary date to boot us out the door.

- **Require County Commission Meetings to be Held in the Evening**

Currently, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meetings are the 2nd and 4th Tuesday’s at 9 AM. A Charter could require that one or both meetings be held at 5:30 PM, giving working taxpayers an opportunity to attend the BOCC meetings.

- **Contracts and Salaries for County Administrator and Attorney**

A Charter may stipulate that no Putnam Co. management position employee can work without a contract, and those salaries, benefits and salary caps for those positions must also reflect a correlation with incomes of the residents and taxpayers of Putnam Co. The current salaries of the County Administrator and attorney are obscene, and the County Administrator has not had a contract for several years.

- **Current Elected Officers may be Appointed or Hired Positions**

A Charter may stipulate that some elected positions could be hired or appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Many Charter Counties have hired the School Superintendent and School Board members. That could extend to the Sheriff and Tax Collector. The current salaries of the School Superintendent, Tax Collector and Sheriff are over \$100,000 a year plus benefits.

- **Tax Increases Approved by Referendum**

Increases in millage rates, budgets, Fire Tax, sanitation fees, landfill fees and many other taxes could require approval by election and not by an arbitrary vote of the commission.. To save election costs, two-year budgets would be needed to coincide with the election cycle. Taxpayers could then be aware of increases on the horizon and reject unnecessary increases.

- **Charter Review Board, Ethic Board**

A Charter Review Board, a Code of Ethics and an Ethics Review Board could be established to maintain taxpayer control of the elected and appointed officers.

In all, a County Charter could contain any and all of the above and more. The danger would only be if the taxpayers of Putnam County became negligent in their duties to maintain control of their Charter Government. But a Charter Government would certainly be better than a handful of elected officers deciding the fate of 72,000 citizens of Putnam County. The choice is now up to you.

Return signed petitions to: **American Patriot News**, 115 Dowda Circle, Crescent City, FL – 32112