

# Opinions

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## The last of this year's amendments

Proposed constitutional Amendment No. 4 seems to be similar in its operation to what the voters of Catahoula Parish have already done for themselves in trying to address the shortfall in our Sanitation Fund by drawing down the huge surplus in our Health Unit Fund. That strategy was successful in buying time for the Police Jury to come up with a plan (albeit not a very well executed one) to levy a \$12 per month tax on those receiving house-to-house garbage pick-up. (Is it really a plan if it's just a tax increase?)

In this amendment, there is no tax increase. The amendment simply increases from 5% to 10 % the amount of money that can be transferred from one fund to another in the event of a projected revenue shortfall in the receiving fund.

The proposed amendment contains an important change to one word in the language. The real money line in the law is this: "Such adjustments SHALL not exceed TEN percent of the total appropriation or allocation from the fund for the fiscal year." "May" is changed to "shall" and "five" is changed to "ten".

But the word "shall" puts the brakes on any excess of enthusiasm to monkey with the money. Or so one hopes.

While it is arguable if this change to the law is appropriate to a constitutional amendment, it nonetheless is relatively unobjectionable to use money you already have to address an emergency rather than going on another endless revenue chase by raising tax rates. With that thought in view, I will vote "Yes" on Amendment No. 4 (otherwise called ACT No. 157, or House Bill No. 487) to amend the constitution in this case.

I will vote "No" on the first three amendments that I have previously reviewed here.

While these proposed amendments were originally scheduled and publicized to be held October 9, 2021, that to my knowledge has been rescheduled for November 13, 2021.

I have complained many times in these pages about the whole amendment process in Louisiana. It is too easily done for reasons inappropriate to a document that exists only to lay out foundational

By: Leo Chappelle

principles and fundamental structures of government with detail sufficient merely to avoid misunderstandings when possible but not to specify any law in so narrow a sense that it cannot be readily seen to apply to all the eligible voters and protected citizens of the state.

Propose Amendment No. 1 fails in this respect by delegating the taxing authority of the legislature to an unelected commission.

Proposed Amendment No. 2 fails (for me, at least) by eliminating the tax deduction for federal taxes and creating a non-progressive flat tax rate on persons who will find that a greater burden than those better off.

Proposed Amendment No. 3 fails for seeming to be self-contradictory and unclear.

While I object in a general sense to the annual trivialization of our state constitution and the political cowardice of the ruling class who drag us to the polls to do their job for them and leave them unaccountable, Proposed Amendment No. 4 is not necessarily a bad idea.

## JEB Tales



"But Dad, I don't want to go. Goodbye son."

### The World's Worst Cowboy

(The name has been left out to protect the stupid)

Last week I had to leave some good cowboys out of the article about open range cowboys because I ran out of room. Someday I hope to write more about open range cowboys and bull riders.

However, this week I would like to write about the world's worst cowboy. The dad of this young man who wanted to be a cowboy was a farmer and logger who had brought a pair of red mules to use on his farm and in the log woods. Old "Red" was the good male mule and "Pet" was the lazy crazy female mule.

The Dad had built a cow and mule lot for the cows, mules and the one horse that the family owned. Inside the lot he had built a shed to hold the bridles, saddles, harnesses, cow and horse feed and some hay. There were stalls for the mules and one horse to be fed.

Black birds had found the feed troughs and had really become a nuisance so the farmer would leave a twenty-gauge shot gun and shells in the building next to the lot. Thank goodness the dad only used short brass, light weight shells.

Adjoining the cow and mule lot was a four-acre pasture with very good, fertilized grass that the mules and horses loved. After the evening feeding the mules and paint horse were turned into the four-acre pasture. The next morning the mule "Red" would come into the lot very easily but the girl mule "Pet" did not want to go to work so she was hard to get into the lot.

Well to shorten this already too long story, one morning the logger-farmer told his second son it was his turn to go feed and pen the mules so they could be harnessed and taken to the log woods. As usual old "Red" came into the lot to feed, however the lazy stubborn old female mule "Pet" would get to the lot gate and then turn and run past the young boy to the back of the pasture. After she had done this three times the boy remembered the twenty-gauge shotgun in the building next to the lot. Thank goodness the kid did not get the safety pushed off on the shotgun until old "Pet" was pretty far past him. But when he shot old "Pet" in the butt she could not get into the lot fast enough. And double thank goodness there was no lead shots in her butt. When the dad asked the boy what he had shot at, the boy said, "blackbirds."

Shortly after the "Old Pet" incident a wild horse was bought or traded for and needed to be broke. Wanting to be a real cowboy the younger brother wanted to be the first to ride "Sundown." Sundown was half paint horse and half palomino. So, one day when the father and the older brother were off in the log woods the "Louisiana Kid" as he had renamed

himself put a saddle and bridle on "Sundown." Not wanting Sundown to run away with him "the kid" tied two long ropes together and put one on Sundown and tied the other end to a big fence post. That was not a good idea because when the running wide open horse hit the end of the rope it spun him around to a stop, but the "Louisiana Kid" went flying and hit the top of an old butane tank. No broken bones but had a good-sized knot on his head, "The Kid" put the horse back in the pasture.

Later the young "want to be cowboy" got a horse of his own. The paint horse mare had a red mare calf with a blaze face. She was named "Beauty," but when J.D. Alexander saw her, he called her "Possum Face," which is what she was called in Jug Bend from then on. J.D.'s horse was a big plow horse named "Sam." Austin Tomlinson rode a black horse. Frank Ogden rode Coy Lee Ogden's horse, Nicky and Cecile Williams usually would ride borrowed horses.

Some of these young folks and others played cowboys and Indians on horses in the wooded areas of Jug Bend. Back in those days all the woods were in open range. So, the cattle, horses and hogs kept all the under brush eaten down and you could ride your horse wide open in most of the woods. It was necessary to touch someone to put them out of the game. Sometimes you were touched hard.

Now fast forward to the 1970's. The want to be cowboy now had three daughters one of which was in 4-H and wanted to show a calf in a stock show. Mr. David Neal the associate county agent found a nice young black angus' bull calf in Union Parish and recommended it for her 4-H project.

To show a calf, it must be trained to lead. This is not an easy task. This bull calf was very stubborn and very strong. But Mr. Neal said to show the yearling bull who was boss. The dad said okay, I will show him. A halter was put on after a pretty good tussle. The dad wrapped the halter lead rope around his hand several times and tied it. When he tried to jerk the bull, calf's head around it upset the young bull very much and he came forward wide open and knocked the daddy down and then took off across the pasture. Remember the rope that had been tied very good? Well, it was, and the young bull dragged the daddy all the way across the pasture stepping on his head and ears every step of the way. When the bull stopped in the corner of the pasture the daddy unwrapped the rope from his hand and crawled out from under the bull yearling and said, "Well now we know who is boss."

Being married to a woman who had a thing for cowboys, the dad decided to buy an Appaloosa horse. He got a good deal which included a lariat rope. The next day a cow was in the wrong pasture and the man decided to move the cow. He could



Pictured above John Ed Bartmess and granddaughter Casey Carroll.

have taken a bucket of corn and moved the cow anywhere he wanted to, but he wanted to show off and rope the cow. It was a bad decision, he missed with the rope and the cow ran through the fence and out on to the highway.

Next the want to be cowboy bought some registered red Brahm cattle. They were beautiful and most of them would eat out of your hand. But not all of them. When the Brahm's started having calves one of them, the wildest, biggest, meanest one of the bunch had a calf that could not suck its momma. The want to be cowboy got his lariat rope and started out of his house when his wife said, "Be careful, that's a big cow." The want to be cowboy said, "She may be bigger than me, but I'm smarter than her." He got very close to the old cow because she would not run away from her calf. So close that he almost just laid the rope over the cow's head. He had let about half of the rope drag behind him. When the cow felt the rope go around her neck, she charged the poor fellow who had gotten his feet tangled in the rope and butted, kicked, and stomped him until she got tired. Next the old huzzy decided to run away. When she did the poor fellow had one of his feet tangled in the rope and she drug him all the way across the pasture. He literally had to crawl back to the house.

His sweet wife said, "Well you showed her."

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## Catahoula News Booster

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