

Florida Supreme Court's Advisory Opinion on Amendment 4 is a 'Triumph of the Text'

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Carlton Fields Shareholder D. Matthew Allen authored an opinion article in the *Tampa Bay Times* explaining why he believes the Florida Supreme Court correctly interpreted the law in a recent advisory opinion on Amendment 4, which concerns the voting rights of convicted felons who have completed their sentences. The court interpreted the phrase "all terms of sentence" in the voter-approved amendment to mean that felons must pay all assigned fines, restitution, and fees before their voting rights are restored following a completed prison sentence. The *Tampa Bay Times* editorial board criticized the decision for "ignoring the voters' clear intent." In his response, Allen wrote that the court objectively interpreted the text of the law. "Here, the court used the tools of legal analysis — language and logic — to conclude that 'all terms of sentence' had only one natural meaning — referring to all obligations, including monetary ones, not just prison time," Allen wrote. READ: [Tampa Bay Times, "Florida Supreme Court's advisory opinion on Amendment 4 is a 'triumph of the text'"](#)

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