

What a difference a few years and a new publisher and editor can make. It was just six short years ago when the *Tallahassee Democrat* demanded that nets be banned in order to “**Save The Fish**”. The former newspaper managers even had a picture of a shrimp boat with a caption under it talking about gillnets. If the citizens ever discover that they have had the bulk of edible finfish taken away and reserved for anglers they too will awaken and be heard. **Bob Jones -04/18/01**

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## Editorial: Amendment hurdle

It's not on the Special Order Calendar yet, meaning it may linger and die when the session ends, but Senate Bill 1426 making it slightly more difficult to amend the Florida Constitution deserves more debate and consideration.

Florida has a history of amending its state constitution to lock in ideas, concepts and even whims that really ought not be impermeable.

**The constitutional ban against net fishing is one example of an issue that ought to be managed by laws, which can be changed and amended, not by state charter.** And then there is last fall's folly mandating construction of an improbably expensive and vaguely conceived high-speed rail system. This is another example of a highly complex issue that belongs in a legislative venue, not left up to a popular vote to be cast in stone.

It's relatively easy to get a constitutional amendment on the Florida ballot, outside of the formal every-20-year Constitution Revision Commission. You hire a company - some say for about \$1.5 million - to gather sufficient petition signatures to place a pet topic such as term limits on the ballot, and then you go about buying the PR to sell it.

A majority of voters can adopt an amendment this way. The proposed bill would require a two-thirds vote. We must retain the people's right to amend their charter, but it ought not be so simple as to trivialize the process. And the current system of amending the charter ought not be immune to review.