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Dallas-area business groups back amendment to develop more top research universities

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By **HOLLY HACKER** / The Dallas Morning News
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Several North Texas business groups announced support Tuesday for a constitutional amendment that would provide money to help the state grow more top-notch research universities.

The chambers of commerce for Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth, along with the Dallas Citizens Council, declared support for Proposition 4, which would provide millions of dollars for more "Tier One" universities that conduct extensive scientific research. Seven campuses, including the [University of Texas](#) at Arlington, University of Texas at Dallas and the University of North Texas, stand to benefit if voters approve the measure Nov. 3.

Also voicing support this week: leaders of the state's existing Tier One campuses: UT-Austin, Texas A&M and Rice University. In a joint letter, the three presidents wrote that Proposition 4 does not impose any new taxes and would bring more federal research and venture capital dollars to the state.

Meanwhile, at least one student group has come out against the measure. The Young Conservatives of Texas, which has chapters at several colleges, argues that the private sector, not government, should pay for and perform research. They also say that public universities should focus more on teaching students, not doing research.

Proposition 4 would allow seven public universities to tap into a dormant state education fund of about \$500 million. The campuses would have to meet several academic and financial criteria before they could receive that money.

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