

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK"

SEPTEMBER 14, 2007

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>> THE FOLLOWING IS A SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF WEDU, TAMPA, ST. PETERSBURG, SARASOTA.

>> COMING UP NEXT, TOP REPUBLICANS AT ODDS OVER EXPANDED CASINO GAMBLING IN FLORIDA.

DEBATE OVER HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY TAKES PLACE IN TAMPA.

THE PROPOSED SUPER HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION AMENDMENT IS DROPPING IN THE POLLS.

AND WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR FLORIDA DEMOCRATS IF THE NATIONAL PARTY PENALIZES THE STATE FOR ITS EARLY PRIMARY? POLITICAL INSIGHTS NEXT ON "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

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>> FROM THE WEDU STUDIOS, THIS IS "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

AND NOW, MODERATOR ROB LOREI.

>> WELCOME BACK.

THIS WEEK, OUR PANELISTS ARE: JEREMY WALLACE IS A POLITICAL REPORTER AT THE "SARASOTA HERALD TRIBUNE."

WAYNE GARCIA IS THE POLITICAL EDITOR AT CREATIVE LOAFING

NEWSPAPER.

APRIL SCHIFF IS A POLITICAL CONSULTANT AND A REPUBLICAN.

AND KEITH BERRY IS A PROFESSOR AT HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND A DEMOCRAT.

GOOD TO SEE EVERYBODY.

WELL, SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO IS DEMANDING THE LEGISLATURE BE GRANTED AUTHORITY OVER THE PROPOSED CASINO GAMBLING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR AND THE SEMINOLE TRIBE. RUBIO SAYS REPUBLICAN LAWMAKERS WILL NOT SUPPORT LAS VEGAS-STYLE GAMBLING IN THE STATE.

CRIST AND THE TRIBE ARE BELIEVED TO BE ON THE VERGE OF A COMPACT THAT WOULD LET THE SEMINOLES OFFER NOT ONLY UPGRADED SLOT MACHINES TO REPLACE VIDEO BINGO, BUT ALSO THE STATE'S FIRST LEGAL CASINO GAMES OF BLACKJACK AND BACCARAT.

WELL, KEITH, WHY IS MARCO RUBIO INJECTING HIMSELF INTO THESE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR AND THE SEMINOLE TRIBE?

>> WELL, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE ARE SOME OTHER ISSUES WITH MARCO RUBIO THAT ARE BEYOND THIS, ACTUALLY.

BOTTOM LINE IS, WE HAVE A LOT OF MONEY ON THE TABLE.

WHERE THERE'S MONEY ON THE TABLE, IT'S NOT GOING TO STAY THERE.

AND I PERSONALLY DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE GAMBLING.

FULL DISCLOSURE.

WIFE HAD A BUSINESS TRIP TO VEGAS.

I WENT WITH HER.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

I BET ON THE CHEAPEST TABLE, LESS THAN \$5.

LOST MY MONEY.

SAT THERE, WON IT BACK, ONE CHIP.

TURNED IT IN.

AND THE PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME LIKE PEOPLE FROM FLORIDA LOOK AT YOU WHEN YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO DISNEY.

SO I THINK IT'S WRONG FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA, REALLY, TO FUND THINGS DIRECTLY, IMPORTANT THINGS DIRECTLY WITH GAMBLING.

IF EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT TO US, WE SHOULD FUND EDUCATION PROPERLY.

THE THING ABOUT MARCO RUBIO THAT I'VE SEEN WITH EVEN THE VIDEO OF HIM ANNOUNCING HIS PLAN, IT SEEMED TO BE HIS PLAN OR NOTHING.

AND THERE SEEMS TO BE NO MIDDLE GROUND.

IT WAS, YOU KNOW, YOU CAN KEEP WHAT WE HAVE PRESENTLY, WHICH PEOPLE DON'T CARE FOR, OR YOU CAN GO WITH MY PLAN.

AND I'M NOT SURE IF THAT REALLY GIVES PEOPLE, THE STATE OF FLORIDA A REAL OPTION.

>> APRIL, MARCO -- OR RATHER HOUSE SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO IS THE STANDARD BEARER FOR SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES WHO DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY SORT OF EXPANSION OF GAMBLING IN THE STATE.

>> EXACTLY.

THAT'S PROBABLY WHY IT'S HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT, FOR HIS CONSTITUENTS AND FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

HE IS REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE THAT HE FEELS HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE REPRESENTING, AND HE'S SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS.

AND THAT'S PROBABLY TRULY WHAT HE BELIEVES AS WELL.

WHAT HE SAID IN HIS LETTER WAS THE INEVITABLE SOCIAL HARM ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXPANDED TRIBAL GAMBLING.

AND APPARENTLY FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, THE TRIBE HAS A RIGHT TO EXPAND BASED ON WHAT THE VOTERS OF MIAMI-DADE GAVE TO THE TRACKS TO EXPAND THEIR GAMBLING.

AND I THINK WHAT THE GOVERNOR IS TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THAT EXPANSION INCLUDES SOME REVENUE FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA, WHICH IS THE APPROPRIATE THING TO HAPPEN.

APPARENTLY, IF IT HAPPENS OUTSIDE OF THAT COMPACT BETWEEN THE STATE, THEN THE GOVERNOR OR THE STATE OF FLORIDA IS NOT GOING TO SEE THE REVENUES THAT THEY WOULD SEE.

>> SO, IF THE FEDS AGREE THE SEMINOLES CAN HAVE THIS KIND OF SUPER GAMBLING IN THE STATE AND WE DON'T HAVE A STATE AGREEMENT, THEN THE STATE DOESN'T GET ANY OF THE REVENUE.

>> RIGHT.

THAT'S THE WAY I UNDERSTAND IT.

AND CONSEQUENTLY, I THINK THAT THE GOVERNOR IS TRYING TO PROTECT THE REVENUE OF THE STATE, BECAUSE, OBVIOUSLY, IT APPEARS THAT WE NEED ALL WE CAN GET AT THIS POINT UNDER THE CURRENT SITUATION.

AND SPEAKER RUBIO IS TRYING TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF WHAT HE BELIEVES THE VOTERS OF FLORIDA WANT, AND THAT IS THE ILLS

OF SOCIAL GAMBLING -- OR THE SOCIAL ILLS OF GAMBLING DON'T COME BACK TO HURT PEOPLE AND HARM THE CONSTITUENCY.

>> I THINK TO THAT POINT, I THINK THERE'S A REASON WHY HIS LETTER BECAME PUBLIC.

YOU KNOW, HE WANTED TO MAKE SURE THIS WAS A VERY PUBLIC STAND.

HE'S STANDING UP FOR THAT SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE, YOU KNOW, CHRISTIAN COALITION STANDPOINT, SAYING, LOOK, I'M STANDING UP FOR THIS.

HE HAD TO DO THIS, BECAUSE WHO ELSE WAS GOING TO DO IT AT THIS POINT?

HE HAS TO FILL THAT KIND OF ROLE RIGHT NOW.

CAN'T IMAGINE THAT HE THINKS THAT HIS OBJECTION ALONE WILL STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING.

BECAUSE, YOU CAN SEE, THIS ISN'T A NEGOTIATION BETWEEN RUBIO -- OR BETWEEN CRIST AND JUST THE CASINOS.

LIKE YOU MENTIONED, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS INVOLVED IN THIS.

THIS IS LIKE A THREE-PRONGED NEGOTIATION.

>> JEREMY, ARE YOU SAYING THAT RUBIO IS SHOWBOATING A LITTLE BIT JUST TO SAY I'M GOING TO STAND UP, BUT I DON'T REALLY EXPECT TO STOP IT?

>> I WOULDN'T SAY SHOWBOATING.

HE'S CERTAINLY TALKING TO THE PEOPLE WHO EXPECT HIM TO TAKE A STAND.

>> HE GOES ON RECORD.

>> EXACTLY.

HE'S MAKING SURE IT'S PUBLIC.

MAKING SURE -- BECAUSE HE COULD HAVE JUST GONE TO CHARLIE CRIST AND SAY, I THINK YOU HAVE TO PUT THIS THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE.

CLEARLY CHOSE A DIFFERENT AVENUE.

>> HE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA IN THE POSITION THAT HE'S IN TO REPRESENT WHAT HE REPRESENTS.

AND THE THINGS THAT HE HAS STOOD FOR ALL ALONG TO GET WHERE HE IS TODAY.

AND I THINK HE'S JUST CONTINUING THAT IN THE PROCESS.

>> AND THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT DO BELIEVE IN THAT.

OBVIOUSLY, JEB BUSH DURING HIS TENURE, HE FOUGHT THESE TYPES OF ISSUES ALL THE TIME.

SO WHO WILL BE THERE TO FIGHT THIS?

THIS TIME, RUBIO DOESN'T HAVE JEB.

IT'S HIM ALONE.

CLEARLY, CHARLIE CRIST SEES HIMSELF HAVING TO NEGOTIATE SOMETHING HERE OR LOSING A HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS.

>> WAYNE, IS IT INEVITABLE THAT WE GET SOME SORT OF EXPANDED GAMBLING HERE IN FLORIDA, OR DO YOU THINK THAT MARCO RUBIO AND THE SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES WILL BE ABLE TO STOP IT?

>> I DON'T THINK THEY'LL BE ABLE TO STOP IT, BECAUSE YOU

HAVE FEDERAL LAW AT PLAY HERE, AND WHEN YOU HAVE TRIBAL LANDS, THEY HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS THAT ARE OUTSIDE OF THE STATE'S ABILITY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE RIGHTS.

WHAT I FIND FASCINATING ABOUT THE WHOLE DISCUSSION ABOUT GAMBLING, YOU NEVER REALLY GET TO SOME OF THE REALITIES OF WHAT IT WOULD OR WOULDN'T DO FOR OUR STATE.

AND IN CASE OF THIS SITUATION, I THINK THE GOVERNOR IS TRYING TO NEGOTIATE MAYBE A HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS TO TWO HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR IF HE DOES ALLOW EVEN SOME LAS VEGAS TABLE-STYLE GAMES AT THE INDIAN GAMING SITES.

YOU KNOW, OUR BUDGET DEFICIT IS, WHAT?

A BILLION DOLLARS NOW?

IT DOESN'T WIPE OUT THE BUDGET DEFICIT.

IT DOESN'T REALLY GIVE US HIGH-LEVEL, GLAMOROUS DESTINATIONS LIKE LAS VEGAS WHERE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO COME FROM OUT OF STATE AND SPEND MONEY THAT'S NOT ALREADY IN OUR STATE.

AND SO WHAT YOU'VE SEEN OVER THE YEARS IS A STEADY EXPANSION OF VERY LOW-LEVEL GAMBLING THAT SEEMS TO BE AIMED AT NOT BRINGING IN NEW DOLLARS TO THE STATE, THAT SEEMS TO BE AIMED AT SORT OF THE LEAST ABLE TO AFFORD IT IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA, BECAUSE THESE ARE NOT GREAT AND GLAMOROUS PLACES WITH ALL APOLOGIES TO SOME OF THE DOG RACING, CARD ROOMS, I'M SURE, BUT, YOU KNOW, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET PEOPLE FLYING IN FROM DUBAI TO PLAY FOR A WEEK AT SOME OF THESE CASINOS.

WE ALREADY HAVE GAMBLING.

AND IF WE'RE GOING TO HAVE GAMBLING, WE MIGHT AS WELL --
WE'RE A GREAT DESTINATION FOR TOURISM, MIGHT AS WELL HAVE
IT.

IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE GAMBLING, THEN YOU NEED TO GET
RID OF THE LOTTERY.

YOU NEED TO GET RID OF THE CARD GAMES.

WE JUST ALLOWED MIAMI-DADE TO HAVE SLOT MACHINES AT THEIR
RACETRACKS.

SO IT'S NOT A MATTER OF, YOU KNOW, DO WE HAVE GAMBLING.

WE ALREADY HAVE GAMBLING.

I JUST THINK WE HAVE EITHER THE WRONG KIND OF GAMBLING OR WE
HAVE TOO MUCH GAMBLING.

BUT WE SEEM TO BE WILLING TO ADD LOTS OF LITTLE GAMBLING
THAT I DON'T THINK REALLY DOES MUCH FOR OUR STATE.

>> THAT WILL HAVE TO BE THE LAST WORD ON THAT.

WELL, A DEBATE THIS WEEK IN TAMPA OVER THE PROPOSED FLORIDA
HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY AMENDMENT WAS THE SCENE OF A
DEMONSTRATION BY SCANTILY CLAD DANCERS.

THE WOMEN CARRIED MISSPELLED SIGNS, AND THEY CLAIMED THEY
WERE SUPPORTING ONE OF THE PROHOMETOWN ACT DEBATERS, ADULT
NIGHTCLUB OWNER JOE REDNER.

BACKERS OF THE PLAN WHO GIVE CITIZENS MORE SAY OVER
DEVELOPMENT SAY IT WAS A POLITICAL DIRTY TRICK.

BUT THE HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY OPPOSITION GROUPS CLAIM NO

INVOLVEMENT.

WAYNE, FIRST OF ALL, LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DANCERS.

WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

>> WELL, YOU KNOW, NOBODY -- ALLEGEDLY, NOBODY KNOWS WHO, YOU KNOW, WHO HIRED THE DANCERS.

JOE REDNER SAID THEY WERE NOT MY DANCERS.

I DON'T KNOW EVERY ONE OF MY DANCERS, BUT I KNOW THEY DIDN'T KNOW ME.

WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE WAS ALMOST A CLASSIC NIXON-ERA DIRTY TRICKS TYPE OF THING TO DISCREDIT JOE REDNER.

WHETHER THAT'S BECAUSE OF LOCAL POLITICS HE'S INVOLVED IN. HE'S RUMORED TO BE RUNNING FOR ANOTHER COUNTY COMMISSION SEAT.

I THINK IT'S MORE BECAUSE WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE LINING UP AGAINST THE HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT, THEY HAVE HIRED PEOPLE WHO PLAY A LOT OF HARDBALL, WHO KNOW HOW TO DO ATTACK ADS AND KNOW HOW TO DO THESE THINGS.

I'M NOT ACCUSING HIM OF DOING THIS TRICK.

I ACTUALLY THINK IT'S A VERY, VERY FUNNY TRICK.

BUT REALLY, IT'S GOING TO BE A VERY DIRTY, I THINK BELOW-BOARD FIGHT BECAUSE THE STAKES ARE SO HIGH.

>> I TALKED TO AN ANTIHOMETOWN DEMOCRACY ACT PERSON THIS WEEK, ONE OF THE OFFICIALS.

HE SAYS HE THINKS REDNER DID IT.

HE THINKS IT WAS REDNER THAT HIRED THE DANCERS TO COME OUT.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

>> I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT MAKES ANY SENSE.

I THINK REDNER'S ABILITY TO HAVE AN INTELLECTUAL MESSAGE AT THAT DEBATE WAS COMPLETELY SHOT.

I DON'T KNOW WHY HE WOULD SHOOT HIMSELF IN THE FOOT THAT WAY.

>> APRIL, HOW DO YOU THINK THAT DEBATE WENT?

>> I DON'T KNOW HOW THE DEBATE WENT, BUT I THINK THE WORD "DANCERS" IS BEING USED REALLY LOOSELY HERE BASED ON WHAT I'VE SEEN.

[LAUGHTER]

I THINK IT'S A HUGE DISCREDIT TO JOE REDNER.

BUT THE DEBATE, I THINK, IS SOMETHING THAT IS GOING TO CONTINUE FOR A LONG TIME.

UNTIL IT COMES TO THE VOTERS AND A DECISION IS MADE.

BECAUSE I THINK IT'S A REAL DEBATE, AND I THINK THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE PUSHING IT.

IT'S GOING TO CONTINUE TO CREATE CONTROVERSY.

>> IT SAYS A LOT.

I MEAN, YOU KNOW, THE ELECTION IS NEXT YEAR ON -- THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE ENOUGH SIGNATURES YET TO GET FLORIDA HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY ON THE BALLOT, AND ALREADY WE'RE DEBATING IT AS IF IT'S GOING TO BE ON THE BALLOT.

>> BECAUSE IT'S SUCH A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE.

TO TAKE THAT TYPE OF PLANNING AND THOSE TYPE OF DECISIONS AND GIVE IT TO THE VOTERS EACH TIME IT COMES UP, IT'S A HUGE

CHANGE IN THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS.

AND THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES
ON BOTH SIDES.

IT'S GOING TO BE VERY INTERESTING.

IF IT DOES -- WE DO SEE MORE HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY PASSING AND
GOING INTO -- WE HAVE TO GO TO THE VOTERS EVERY TIME WE WANT
TO CHANGE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANS, THOSE ARE DECISIONS THAT
ARE TOUGH FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND TRAINED PROFESSIONALS TO
MAKE.

IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO EDUCATE THE VOTERS.

I THINK IT WILL BE A HUGE BOON TO POLITICAL CONSULTANTS.

BECAUSE THE CAMPAIGNS ARE GOING TO BE SERIOUS WHEN IT GETS
DOWN TO EACH ONE OF THOSE INDIVIDUAL COMP PLAN CHANGES THAT
GO IN TO THE VOTERS.

>> IT SEEMS LIKE THE ELECTED OFFICIALS ALWAYS MAKE THE RIGHT
DECISION ON BEHALF OF DEVELOPERS, THOUGH.

>> I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.

[LAUGHTER]

>> WELL, THIS WOULD CERTAINLY GO THE OTHER WAY.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE IN A REAL SERIOUS, LIKE,
SLOWDOWN.

YOU JUST WOULD NOT SEE MUCH GET CHANGED FROM WHAT YOU'RE
SUPPOSED MASTER PLAN IS.

>> WHAT'S GOING ON IN SARASOTA?

BECAUSE ISN'T THERE KIND OF A MINI HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY ACT?

>> WE ALMOST HAVE A TEST CASE GOING ON IN SARASOTA COUNTY.
WILL HAVE SOMETHING ON THE BALLOT.
THIS WAS JUST APPROVED LAST WEEK, THAT WILL REQUIRE EACH
LAND USE CHANGE LIKE THIS IN THE MASTER PLAN TO GET FOUR OUT
OF FIVE VOTES ON THEIR COUNTY COMMISSION.
SO THEY ARE GOING TO USE SUPERMAJORITY.
EVEN PEOPLE DOWN THERE WHO WANT TO SEE GROWTH SLOW DOWN ARE
LOOKING AT THIS HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY THINKING, WOW, WOULD WE
HAVE TO GO TO A BALLOT EVERY TIME, YOU KNOW, FOR EVERY
CHANGE?
WHAT YOU SEE IN SARASOTA IS A LESSER VERSION OF THIS.
PEOPLE THINK MIGHT BE MORE PALATABLE TO GET A MAJORITY OF
YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO AGREE ON IT.
>> WHAT IS REALLY FUELING THIS THING, THIS IS VERY SIMILAR
TO LIKE WHEN WE'RE IN DROUGHT.
THE TINDER IN THE FOREST AND THE WOOD IS JUST READY FOR THAT
SPARK.
AND THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY KNOWS THIS.
PEOPLE IN FLORIDA FOR A VARIETY OF GOOD AND BAD REASONS
DON'T LIKE THE WAY THINGS HAVE DEVELOPED.
AND A LOT OF PEOPLE COME TO FLORIDA AND WANT TO BE THE LAST
ONE, SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND ME.
I'M NOT SAYING THAT'S RIGHT, BUT THEY HAVE THAT ATTITUDE.
SO ONE OF THE REASONS WHY YOU SEE THIS 12 MONTHS OUT BEFORE
THE ELECTION, THESE CRAZY STUNTS, IS BECAUSE THEY ARE VERY,

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

VERY AFRAID THAT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST SPARK, AND YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A MAJOR, MAJOR FIRE IN THIS.

>> LET ME GO QUICKLY AROUND THE TABLE AND ASK YOU GUYS, IF FLORIDA HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY WERE ON THE BALLOT TODAY AND AS IT DOES, NEEDS 60% OF THE VOTE TO PASS, WOULD IT PASS, KEITH?

DO YOU THINK, YES OR NO?

>> I THINK IT PROBABLY WOULD PASS.

I MEAN, THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA, HOW MUCH WORSE OFF COULD WE BE?

HONESTLY, IT IS A COMPLICATED THING, AND I'M NOT SURE -- I THINK IT IS PROBABLY A BAD IDEA TO HAVE IT ON THE BALLOT.

I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING LIKE 200 DIFFERENT TYPES OF LAND USE THINGS THAT COME UP.

THE PUBLIC IS NOT GOING TO BE READY TO TAKE CARE OF THAT.

HOWEVER, A SOLUTION COULD BE, WHY DON'T WE CREATE SOME KIND OF COMMISSION THAT IS ANSWERABLE TO THE PEOPLE, BECAUSE WE NEED TO CIRCUMVENT SOMEHOW THE ISSUES OF CIRCUMVENTING CORRUPTIBLE POLITICIANS.

>> APRIL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

DO YOU THINK IF THE HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY WERE ON THE BALLOT TODAY THAT IT WOULD GET AT LEAST 60% OF THE VOTE?

>> GOOD QUESTION.

I'M NOT SURE.

BUT I'M LEANING TOWARD THE ANSWER IS NO.

AND THAT'S BECAUSE OF THE FUNDING SOURCES THAT WOULD FUEL
THE CAMPAIGNS BEFORE IT GETS TO THE ELECTION.

>> OKAY.

AND JEREMY?

>> I THINK IT WOULD PASS.

YOU KNOW, THIS STATE, WE'VE SHOWN A PENCHANT FOR VOTING FOR
A LOT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.

AND I THINK, YOU KNOW, PEOPLE WILL LIKE THE IDEA OF IT EVEN
IF THEY DON'T LIKE THE SPECIFICS.

>> WAYNE, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

>> IT WILL PASS IN A HEARTBEAT.

>> OKAY.

WELL, SUPPORT IS SLIPPING FOR JANUARY'S SO-CALLED SUPER
HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION AMENDMENT ACCORDING TO THE LATEST
STATEWIDE POLL.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WOULD CHANGE FLORIDA PROPERTY
TAX LAW BY GIVING NEW HOME BUYERS AND SELLERS OF EXISTING
HOMES A BIG TAX BREAK.

BUT VOTERS ARE SKEPTICAL.

THE QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY POLL SHOWS THAT ONLY 47% SUPPORT
THE PROPOSAL.

THAT'S DOWN FROM 57% APPROVAL IN JULY AND FAR BELOW THE 60%
NEEDED TO BECOME LAW.

THE JANUARY BALLOT MEASURE GOES TO A VOTE ON THE SAME DAY AS
THE STATE'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.

APRIL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THAT'S A PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY IN WHICH THE DEMOCRATS'
DELEGATES WON'T COUNT.

>> THIS WILL GO TO VOTE, AND THE DEMOCRATS WON'T SHOW UP TO
VOTE.

>> THAT'S WHAT I'M SUGGESTING.

>> -- THE ELECTION IN A BIG WAY, I THINK.

THE DEMOCRAT ISSUE IS A DIFFERENT ISSUE THAN THE SUPER
HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS.

AND I THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE VERY CONFUSED.

THIS SOMEHOW RELATES TO THE PROPERTY TAX LEGISLATION THAT
WENT THROUGH, AND PEOPLE WERE TOLD THAT THEIR PROPERTY TAXES
WERE GOING TO DROP A LOT.

I DON'T THINK THAT THAT HAPPENED TO TOO MANY PEOPLE IN THE
STATE OF FLORIDA.

I THINK SOME PEOPLE SAW A LITTLE BIT OF A REDUCTION IN THEIR
TAXES.

OTHERS SAW INCREASES.

SO PEOPLE ARE NOW HAVING MUCH MORE SKEPTICISM OVER THE
HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION ISSUE AND HOW IT'S GOING TO AFFECT THEM
AND WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO LOSE IN THE LONG RUN BY TAKING A
SUPER EXEMPTION AND YET HAVING PROPERTY TAX INCREASES AS
YOUR VALUES GO UP, WHICH IS -- APPARENTLY, THE ALTERNATIVE
IS THE CAP ON THE 3% INCREASE ON YOUR TAXES.

AND I THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE ALSO VERY INTIMIDATED BY THE

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS YELLING THAT WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE POLICE OFFICERS.
THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE AMBULANCES WHEN YOU NEED THEM.
PEOPLE ARE FRIGHTENED ABOUT WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AND WHAT
THE REALITY IS.

AND I DON'T THINK PEOPLE UNDERSTAND.

I THINK THEY NEED A WHOLE LOT MORE INFORMATION OF HOW THIS
WILL WORK, HOW IT WILL AFFECT THEM IN THE LONG RUN AND WHAT
IT WILL DO TO THEIR LIVES AS FAR AS THEIR PERSONAL HOMES AS
WELL AS THE SERVICES THAT WE GET FROM GOVERNMENT THAT ARE
VERY VITAL AND IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE.

>> JEREMY, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

>> WELL, I THINK THE POLLS ARE INDICATIVE OF THE PEOPLE WHO
PROMOTED THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE, IN THAT -- AND I WENT TO A
DEBATE -- NOT A DEBATE, A FORUM NOT TOO LONG AGO WHERE SOME
OF THE SAME SENATORS WHO HAD VOTED TO PUT IT ON THE BALLOT,
WERE SAYING, NO, I DON'T THINK IT WILL PASS.

WHAT KIND OF SALES JOB IS THAT?

WE HEARD A LOT OF PEOPLE -- YOU KNOW, THERE'S GROWING
CONCERN.

THERE'S A WHOLE GROUP OUT THERE WHO IS UPSET THAT IT DOESN'T
DO ENOUGH.

IT DOESN'T HELP THE BUSINESSES LIKE THEY WANTED TO HELP
INITIALLY.

AND THEN THERE'S ANOTHER GROUP THAT'S LIKE, WAIT A MINUTE,

THIS IS GOING TO DRIVE A HOLE IN THE EDUCATION BUDGET.
THE ONLY THING LEGISLATORS ARE ABLE TO DO RIGHT NOW TO
COUNTER THAT IS SAY JUST TRUST US.

WE'LL FIND THE MONEY.

PEOPLE IN FLORIDA DON'T HAVE, I DON'T KNOW, A HISTORY OF
WANTING TO TRUST THEIR LEGISLATORS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES
TO EDUCATION DOLLARS.

>> WAYNE, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FATE OF THIS WILL BE?

>> THIS THING IS IN HUGE TROUBLE.

APRIL, YOU KNOW, WHEN WE WERE -- WHEN I WAS IN CONSULTING,
IF YOU'RE RUNNING A REFERENDUM, YOU NEED TO START AT LEAST
10 OR 15 AND PREFERABLY MAYBE 20 POINTS ABOVE WHERE YOU WANT
TO END UP.

TYPICALLY, FROM THE TIME YOU INTRODUCE YOUR IDEA, YOU DO
NOTHING BUT GO DOWN HILL.

THIS THING IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPLAIN IN ANYTHING UNDER
AN HOUR, EVEN IF THEY HIRE THE FEDEX GUY.

I THINK THEY CAN GET IT DOWN TO MAYBE 44 MINUTES.

BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPLAIN, AND FOR THE MOST PART, I
THINK MOST OF THE REGULAR VOTERS IN THE STATE TEND TO BE
VERY STABLE, YOU KNOW, THEY ARE OLDER.

THEY LIVED IN THEIR HOUSES FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

AND FOR THE MOST PART, SAVE OUR HOMES, THE CURRENT SYSTEM IS
BETTER FOR THEM THAN THIS SUPER HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION.

NOW ALL THE PROPERTY APPRAISERS HAVE THEIR LITTLE THING,

PLUG IN YOUR THING AND HIT THE BUTTON AND WE'LL TELL YOU
WHAT YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITH.

I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE THE VOTERS, THE PEOPLE WHO
REALLY BENEFIT FROM THIS ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW AND WANT TO
TRADE UP TO A BIGGER HOUSE OR JUST MOVED INTO THE AREA AND
WONDER WHY I PAY \$1800 A MONTH AND MY NEIGHBOR PAYS
10,000 -- I MEAN, A YEAR, AND THEY PAY \$10,000 A YEAR.
BETWEEN ALL OF THAT, AT 47% RIGHT NOW, THIS THING IS NOT
SOMETHING I WOULD PUT A LOT OF MONEY ON IF I WERE ALLOWED TO
GAMBLE IN THE STATE.

>> WELL, WE HAVE TO GET THE FEDEX GUY TO EXPLAIN THIS.

WELL, WE GET A LOT OF VIEWER COMMENTS EVERY PROGRAM.

MOST OF THE RECENT COMMENTS HAVE BEEN ABOUT THE END OF
FLORIDA NO FAULT AND THAT HUGE AIRPORT PLANNED FOR THE
FLORIDA PANHANDLE.

>>> WELL, WE ALWAYS APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK.

YOU CAN SEND AN E-MAIL TO FTW@WEDU.ORG OR CALL OUR TOLL FREE
LINE AT 800-335-9338.

OR YOU CAN EVEN LEAVE A MESSAGE ON OUR "FLORIDA THIS WEEK"
WEB SITE, ONLINE AT WEDU.ORG.

AND SPEAKING OF THE CONTROVERSY OVER FLORIDA'S BUMPED UP
PRIMARY DATE, THE "ST. PETERSBURG TIMES" REPORTS THAT
FLORIDA DEMOCRATS ARE LOOKING AT THEIR OPTIONS NOW THAT THE
NATIONAL DEMOCRATS PLAN TO PENALIZE THE STATE FOR MOVING UP

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY DATE.

NO FLORIDA DELEGATES WILL BE ALLOWED AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION IF THEY ARE PICKED DURING THE JANUARY 29th PRIMARY.

THE OPTIONS BEING LOOKED AT INCLUDE: A STATE PARTY CONVENTION AFTER JANUARY 29th TO SELECT THE DELEGATES.

A VOTE BY MAIL ELECTION.

OR A SERIES OF CAUCUSES ACROSS THE STATE.

JEREMY, HOW LIKELY ARE ANY OF THOSE TO HAPPEN TO SELECT THE DELEGATES?

>> IT'S TAKEN A LONG TIME TO SORT THIS OUT.

SO I THINK THEY'LL COME UP WITH AN INVENTION THAT WE HAVEN'T HEARD OF YET.

BECAUSE I KNOW IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE STATE PARTY, THEY DON'T LIKE THE CAUCUS SYSTEM, YOU KNOW, BECAUSE THEY TAKE TOO LONG TO TRAIN, YOU KNOW, FOUR MILLION DEMOCRATS HOW TO DO THAT.

THEY'VE BEEN DOING IT IN IOWA FOR 30 YEARS SO IT'S NOT SO EASY.

THE VOTE BY MAIL WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE.

SO THEY ARE GOING TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT SOMETHING BACK END OF THE PRIMARY, THAT WILL TAKE SOME OF THE HEAT OFF OF THE JANUARY 29th.

YOU KNOW, IT'S INTERESTING BECAUSE YOU SEE IT'S NOT -- IT'S HARD TO FIND A CANDIDATE WHO THINKS THEY ARE REALLY GOING TO

PENALIZE ALL THE DELEGATES.

THEY ALL SIGNED THIS PLEDGE -- THE DEMOCRATS DID -- ALL SIGNED THIS PLEDGE NOT TO CAMPAIGN IN FLORIDA.

SO A COUPLE OF DAYS AFTER SIGNING THIS PLEDGE, THEY ALL GOT ON AN AIRPLANE AND FLEW TO MIAMI FOR A CAMPAIGN EVENT, WHICH WAS A FORUM, NONETHELESS.

YOU CAN TELL THIS IS GOING TO BE HARD TO KEEP CANDIDATES OUT.

THEY ARE ALREADY COMING IN.

IT'S JUST TOO BIG OF A STATE FOR THEM TO THINK THAT FLORIDA IS GOING TO LOSE ALL ITS DELEGATES OR EVEN HALF OF THEM.

>> KEITH, DO YOU THINK THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATS WILL HAVE TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS ABOUT THIS?

>> THEY ARE GOING TO FIGHT IT OUT.

THIS ISN'T REALLY NEW WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE SCOPE AND THE HISTORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

THEY SPLIT IN 1860 OVER SLAVERY.

THEY SPLIT IN 1948 OVER CIVIL RIGHTS.

AND I DON'T SUGGEST THEY ARE GOING TO SPLIT NOW, BUT THEY ARE HAVING A LOT OF IN-FIGHTING.

AND THAT IN-FIGHTING REALLY IS SIMPLY A POWER STRUGGLE.

AND IT IS A POWER STRUGGLE BECAUSE THE TENT IS VERY LARGE.

YOU HAVE LABOR, BLACKS, WHITES, HISPANICS AND SO FORTH.

AND FLORIDA IS A STATE THAT THEY REALLY CAN'T IGNORE, AND THE CANDIDATES KNOW THAT.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, YOU HAVE SOME OTHER STATES THAT MOVED THEIR PRIMARIES WITH THE BLESSING OF THE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE.

SOUTH CAROLINA, FOR EXAMPLE, MOVED IT UP A LITTLE EARLIER THAN YEARS PAST.

AND THAT STATE IS CERTAINLY, ONE COULD ARGUE, MORE DIVERSE THAN, SAY, IOWA.

SO I REALLY THINK THIS IS A BATTLE BETWEEN AN OLD GUARD AND A NEWER GUARD, IF YOU WILL, THAT WILL HAVE TO GET SOLVED.

>> WAYNE, LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION, I SAW IN THE ST. PETE TIMES POLITICAL BUZZ WEB SITE THAT CONGRESS WOMAN CORRINE BROWN WROTE A LETTER TO DONNA BRAZILE SAYING THAT THE DEMOCRATS CANNOT WIN WITHOUT FLORIDA AND SAYING THAT THIS IS A MISTAKE.

THEY CANNOT WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2008 WITHOUT FLORIDA.

>> YOU KNOW, FOR ME, I THINK THE DAMAGE IS DONE IN THIS MATTER IN THE WAY THAT THEY HANDLED IT.

I UNDERSTAND IT'S A GAME OF BRINKSMANSHIP, BUT IT RESEMBLES SORT OF THE KHRUSHCHEV ERA OF COLD WAR BRINKSMANSHIP.

IT'S NOT BEEN HANDLED VERY SMARTLY.

EVEN IF THEY COME BACK AND SAY, YEAH, OKAY, GO AHEAD AND VOTE, THERE ARE A LOT OF DEMOCRATS WHO FEEL LIKE THEIR PARTY HAS SLAPPED THEM IN THE FACE IN A STATE THAT HAS BEEN CRITICAL IN THE LAST SEVERAL ELECTIONS.

SO, YOU KNOW, THEY ARE CORRECT, BUT FLORIDA PLAYED THE BRINKSMANSHIP, TOO, SO YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO TAKE IT THE WHOLE WAY.

>> IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS, WE'LL ALL FORGET ABOUT THIS, BECAUSE FIGURE OUT A WAY TO DO IT.

WE'LL HAVE SEVEN CANDIDATES RUNNING AROUND FLORIDA ASKING FOR OUR VOTES.

THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE THESE CANDIDATES IN FLORIDA --

>> WHOEVER BREAKS THE EMBARGO.

>> PARTY POLITICS.

IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME IN ALL THE PARTIES.

POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE INFIGHTING ISSUES.

THEY HAVE RULES, AND THEY FIGHT THE RULES AND CHANGE THE RULES.

THEY ARE GOING TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEM SO THEY CAN SEND THEIR DELEGATES TO THE CONVENTION.

THEY MAY HAVE TO GIVE UP A FEW, WHATEVER.

REPUBLICANS GAVE UP A FEW WHEN THE JANUARY 29th PRIMARY DATE CAME UP.

BUT, THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT THING FOR THE REPUBLICANS.

SO NONE OF THE DEMOCRATS ARE COMING DOWN HERE?

WE LIKE THAT.

THAT'S OKAY.

BUT THEY ARE STILL HERE.

>> WELL, FINALLY, EACH WEEK WE ASK OUR PANEL ABOUT ANOTHER STORY FROM THE WEEK OR ON THE HORIZON WHICH AFFECTS PEOPLE HERE IN WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA.

WAYNE, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK?

>> WELL, THE JIM SMITH LAND SCANDAL DEAL OVER IN PINELLAS COUNTY CLAIMED ITS SECOND VICTIM.

THE COUNTY ATTORNEY WAS FIRED AND THEN A WEEK AND A HALF LATER NOW WE HAVE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, STEVE SPRATT, RESIGNED.

IT WILL BE VERY INTERESTING TO SEE WHO THEY CHOOSE.

HE HAD PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF BEING ABLE TO, I THINK, COVER THESE GUYS POLITICALLY, WHICH IS WHAT THE OLD COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DID FOR A LONG, LONG TIME AND WHICH DIRECTION THEY GO.

EVERYBODY OVER THERE IS TAINTED BY THIS.

IT'S A VERY DIFFICULT THING FOR THEM TO WORK OUT.

>> SOME TALKED OF MAYOR IORIO'S HUSBAND, MARK, MIGHT BE SELECTED AS THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HIS CHANCES ARE?

>> YOU KNOW, I THINK THEY WOULD BE GOOD, AND PROBABLY WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE STABILITY.

HE'S BEEN THERE A VERY, VERY LONG TIME.

HE KNOWS THE SYSTEM.

AND BETTER YET, I THINK A LOT OF THE COMMISSIONERS KNOW HIM AND TRUST HIM.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HIS EXACT CHANCES ARE, BUT THAT WOULD NOT BE OUT OF THE QUESTION.

>> APRIL, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK.

>> WORD OUT OF TALLAHASSEE TODAY, SPECIAL SESSION CALLED AGAIN IN OCTOBER, THE 3rd THROUGH THE 12th TO REVISIT THE BUDGET DEFICIT.

AND HOPEFULLY THIS MEANS THAT WE'VE COME UP WITH SOME GREAT IDEAS, AND WE CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE BUDGET IN TALLAHASSEE AND MAKE IT WORTH THE EFFORT, THE TIME AND THE MONEY AND EXPENSE WE GO THROUGH FOR SPECIAL SESSION.

>> KEITH, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> SEPTEMBER 22nd, THE PRESIDENT OF FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY, DR. JAMES AMMONS, IS GOING TO BE IN TOWN FOR A SCHOLARSHIP GALA.

I CERTAINLY THINK THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA NEED TO STILL KEEP FAMU ON THE FRONT LINE OF THEIR THOUGHTS AND SUPPORT BECAUSE IT IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LET THAT INSTITUTION FLOUNDER.

>> OKAY.

AND JEREMY?

>> FRED THOMPSON.

HE KICKED OFF HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN THIS LAST WEEK, AND HE DECIDED TO SPEND THREE SOLID DAYS IN FLORIDA, WHICH SHOWS YOU HOW IMPORTANT OUR DELEGATES ARE, EVEN IF YOU CUT THEM IN HALF.

AND THAT'S PROVOKED BOTH RUDY GIULIANI AND MITT ROMNEY ARE

COMING BACK TO THE STATE EARLY NEXT WEEK NOW, CLEARLY, THIS STATE IS UP FOR GRABS NOW.

THEY WILL ALL BE FIGHTING THIS THING OUT.

>> THANKS WAYNE GARCIA, THANKS KEITH BERRY, THANK YOU APRIL SCHIFF AND THANK YOU JEREMY WALLACE.

THANK YOU FOR WATCHING "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

THIS PROGRAM WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WEDU.ORG WHERE YOU'LL FIND AN ARCHIVE OF THIS AND OTHER FINE LOCALLY PRODUCED WEDU PROGRAMS.

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