

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK"

OCTOBER 19, 2007

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

>> COMING UP NEXT, CONGRESS FAILS TO OVERRIDE THE SCHIP VETO.

THE STATE LEGISLATURE IS BOGGED DOWN ON THE ISSUE OF PROPERTY TAXES.

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SAYS IT'S LOOKING INTO THE MARTIN LEE ANDERSON CASE.

AND WHICH DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WAS SEEN CAMPAIGNING IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA THIS WEEK?

POLITICAL INSIGHTS NEXT ON "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

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

AND NOW, MODERATOR ROB LOREI.

>> WELCOME BACK.

THIS WEEK, OUR PANELISTS ARE VICTOR DiMAIO IS A POLITICAL CONSULTANT AND A DEMOCRAT.

JACQUI KNIGHT IS A BUSINESSWOMAN AND A REPUBLICAN.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

LAURA FIORILLI-CREWS IS A NEWS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS PRODUCER
AT TBO.COM.

AND DAVID KLEMENT IS DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC
POLICY AND LEADERSHIP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA,
SARASOTA-MANATEE.

THANKS FOR COMING, EVERYBODY.

GOOD TO SEE YOU.

WELL, THE SCHIP PROGRAM, THE STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM
FOR CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS ARE JUST ABOVE THE POVERTY LEVEL,
WILL NOT BE EXPANDED, AT LEAST NOT RIGHT AWAY.

THE HOUSE FAILED THIS WEEK BY 13 VOTES TO OVERRIDE A
PRESIDENTIAL VETO.

LOCAL CONGRESS MEMBERS SUCH AS ADAM PUTNAM, GINNY
BROWN-WAITE, GUS BILIRAKIS, CONNIE MACK AND TOM FEENEY VOTED
AGAINST IT.

VERN BUCHANAN, BILL YOUNG AND KATHY CASTOR VOTED FOR THE
BILL'S OVERRIDE.

VICTOR, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?

>> WELL, I HAVE TO DISCLOSE UP FRONT THAT MY GRANDPARENTS
CAME HERE TO TAMPA AS CIGAR MAKERS FROM CUBA TO MAKE A
BETTER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES.

SO IF IT WASN'T FOR THE CIGAR INDUSTRY, I WOULDN'T BE HERE
TODAY.

>> THE TAX ON CIGARS IS ONE OF THE PARTIAL WAY OF PAYING FOR
THE EXPANSION OF SCHIP.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

>> THE TAX ON CIGARS WENT FROM A NICKEL TO \$10.

IT WENT UP ASTRONOMICALLY.

AND JUST A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO, I MET WITH ERIC NEWMAN, WHO IS PRESIDENT OF THE CIGAR ASSOCIATION IN TAMPA, WHO REPRESENTS THE CIGAR MANUFACTURERS REALLY ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND IT WOULD TOTALLY DESTROY A PART OF TAMPA'S HISTORY AND FABRIC THAT'S BEEN HERE FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS.

THEY ARE NOT AGAINST DOUBLING THE TAX.

IN FACT, HE WISHED THEY WOULD DOUBLE THE TAX TO TEN CENTS INSTEAD OF TEN DOLLARS.

>> DID THEY ROLL THAT TAX BACK TO THREE DOLLARS A CIGAR?

>> STILL, YOU GO FROM A NICKEL TO THREE DOLLARS.

THE CIGARETTE TAX WAS DOUBLED, BUT THE TAX ON CIGARS WENT UP BY 600%.

THERE WAS A HUGE EXPANSION OF THIS PROGRAM.

THIS PROGRAM WAS GOING TO GO FROM ABOUT \$35 BILLION INCREASED TO ABOUT ALMOST \$60 BILLION.

IT WAS GOING TO BE A HUGE EXPANSION.

THEY WERE GOING TO RAISE THE CAP FROM I THINK \$40,000 A YEAR PER FAMILY TO \$60,000 A YEAR PER FAMILY.

THERE'S A LOT OF -- OBVIOUSLY, IT WAS KILLED.

EVERYTHING WILL GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD.

KATHY CASTOR, OUR LOCAL CONGRESSWOMAN FROM THIS AREA WAS REALLY BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE BECAUSE HER

LEADERSHIP -- PRETTY MUCH THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP IS VERY MUCH FOR THE EXPANSION.

>> SHE INITIALLY VOTED AGAINST IT.

>> SHE VOTED FOR IT, AND THEN SHE VOTED AGAINST IT ON THE PROCEDURE VOTE, BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT -- SHE HAD OTHER IDEAS ABOUT WHAT SHE DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE PROGRAM.

AND THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE PROGRAM.

AND THEN AT THE VERY END, SHE HAD TO GO ALONG WITH HER LEADERSHIP AND VOTE FOR IT.

>> IS THAT GOING TO HURT HER WITH THOSE PEOPLE WHOSE JOBS RELY ON THE CIGAR INDUSTRY?

>> WELL, YOU KNOW, ERIC JUST CAME BACK FROM WASHINGTON JUST HOURS AGO.

HE MET WITH NANCY PELOSI, OUR TAMPA PEOPLE, TO PUT A FACE ON THE PEOPLE WHO WILL SUFFER THE MOST.

YOU DO HAVE TO BE CAREFUL.

A FEW YEARS BACK, WE HAD A LUXURY TAX ON, LIKE, THE BOAT INDUSTRY, AND FLORIDA GOT KILLED AND HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE GOT PUT OUT OF WORK.

IT COST US A LOT OF MONEY IN UNEMPLOYMENT.

THERE'S ALMOST HALF A MILLION PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN EMPLOYED BY THIS INDUSTRY.

IT WOULD PUT A GREAT STRAIN IF ALL THOSE PEOPLE WENT OUT OF WORK AND SUDDENLY THESE GOVERNMENTS ARE GOING TO BE STRESSED TO PUT UP WITH THIS EXTRA PROBLEM.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

SO I THINK THEY ARE GOING TO REALLY HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD ON THIS.

>> LAURA, THERE'S TALK NOW THAT THERE WILL BE SOME SORT OF COMPROMISE WORKED OUT.

THE DEMOCRATS WILL COME BACK WITH SOMETHING.

EVEN SENATOR MEL MARTINEZ WAS TALKING ABOUT BRINGING BACK SOME SORT OF COMPROMISE.

ANY IDEA OF WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT, WHAT THAT COMPROMISE MIGHT LOOK AT IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS?

>> I SUSPECT IT WILL CENTER ON NARROWING DOWN THE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PROGRAM AND TRYING TO CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT IN THAT WAY IT WOULD SAVE COSTS AND NOT LET PEOPLE THROUGH THAT DON'T SEEM DESERVING.

I THINK ONE OF THE BIGGEST THINGS TO COME OUT OF THE FAILURE TO OVERRIDE THE VETO IS -- I KIND OF HEAR THIS OMINOUS MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND AS HUNDREDS OF POLITICAL ATTACK ADS GET MADE.

I THINK THIS WILL BE A HUGE ISSUE IN 2008.

>> DEMOCRATS ATTACKING REPUBLICANS BECAUSE REPUBLICANS ARE HEARTLESS, DON'T CARE ABOUT KIDS' INSURANCE?

>> EXACTLY.

>> OR DEMOCRATS ARE PROFLIGATE AND THE REPUBLICANS ARE ATTACKING THEM FOR EXPANDING THIS PROGRAM TO THE MIDDLE CLASS.

>> PROBABLY A LITTLE BIT OF BOTH.

BUT I THINK IT'S MAINLY GOING TO BENEFIT THE DEMOCRATS IN THE SENSE THAT THEY CAN TELL YOU THAT YOUR INCUMBENT REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN VOTED AGAINST POOR, SICK CHILDREN.

>> THE POPULARITY OF THIS PROGRAM, THE SCHIP PROGRAM, AT LEAST ACCORDING TO SOME POLLS, IS 80% IN THE COUNTRY.

I MEAN, IF WHAT LAURA SAYS IS TRUE, THE DEMOCRATS HAVE BEEN GIVEN A PRETTY GOOD STICK TO WHACK THE REPUBLICANS OVER THE HEAD WITH.

>> I AGREE THAT IT IS, AND THAT THEY WILL.

I THINK THAT A LOT OF THOSE IN CONGRESS AND PERHAPS THE WHITE HOUSE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE IN THE REAL WORLD AND HOW HARD IT IS FOR A FAMILY INCOME OF \$60,000 OR SO TO REALLY AFFORD HEALTH CARE FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN.

AND I THINK IT'S SHAMEFUL THE WAY THAT THE FAMILIES THAT HAVE BEEN HELD UP AS EXAMPLES FOR THE NEED FOR THE PROGRAM HAVE BEEN DEMONIZED.

AND I THINK PRESIDENT BUSH'S MAIN POINT FEARING THAT THIS WILL BECOME SOCIALIZED MEDICINE AND THAT PEOPLE WILL OPT OUT OF PRIVATE COVERAGE TO JUMP IN THIS IS FALSE.

REPRESENTATIVE BILL GALVANO OF BRADENTON, WHO IS A LEADER IN FLORIDA ON THIS ISSUE, HAS SAID IT'S DIFFICULT TO GET THOSE WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO SIGN UP LET ALONE THOSE WHO ARE NOT QUALIFIED BY THEIR INCOME LEVEL TO COME IN AND TRY TO, YOU KNOW, GAME THE SYSTEM.

HE SAYS IT'S JUST NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

SO I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.

>> JACQUI, WHAT DAVID MENTIONED A MOMENT AGO HAS AFFECTED A ST. PETERSBURG FAMILY, THAT IS THAT THE REPUBLICAN MEDIA MACHINE HAS GONE ON THE ATTACK AGAINST SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN PUT UP AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHY THIS PROGRAM IS NEEDED.

THE WILKERSON FAMILY IN ST. PETERSBURG HAS A TWO-YEAR-OLD WHO HAD BRAIN SURGERY AND NEEDED THE SCHIP PROGRAM AND NOW THEY HAVE GONE AFTER THE PARENTS FOR MAKING THE WRONG CHOICES.

I GUESS THE CHOICE TO HAVE A CHILD WHEN THE PARENTS DIDN'T HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE.

>> FIRST, LET ME SAY, I THINK IT'S COMPLETELY RIDICULOUS TO SAY TO A FAMILY DON'T HAVE CHILDREN BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE INSURANCE.

I DON'T EVEN HAVE A COMMENT TO ANYBODY THAT WOULD MAKE SUCH A STUPID STATEMENT.

BUT I WANT TO LOOK AT THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM BECAUSE IN MY MIND, THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM IS THE COST THAT IT ACTUALLY DEMANDS TO TAKE CARE OF -- TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILDREN.

ANY PROGRAM SUPPORTED BY BIG PHARMACEUTICALS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES, IN MY MIND, HAS AN ISSUE WITH ME IN THE FIRST PLACE.

NOW, AS A NEWER MOTHER, BUYING MEDICINE FOR MY CHILD -- AND

I AM ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE THAT DON'T HAVE INSURANCE.

SO I'M SELF-EMPLOYED.

AND I DON'T CARRY INSURANCE.

SO EVERY DAY, I DEAL WITH THIS.

I PAY FOR MY MEDICAL OUT OF MY POCKET.

SO I ACTUALLY SEE THE COSTS EVERY DAY.

AND ANYTIME YOU HAVE TWO OUNCES OF A MEDICINE THAT COSTS \$149, LET'S GO BACK AND FIND OUT WHY IS THE COST SO GREAT.

I THINK IF WE WANT TO EXPAND THE PROGRAM, WE HAVE TO LOOK AT WHAT WE'RE PAYING FOR IT.

I THINK I WAS READING IN ONE OF THE NEWS STORIES ON THE INTERNET ABOUT A WOMAN THAT WORKED FOR -- SHE WENT TO WORK FOR A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY AND SUDDENLY THAT MEDICINE THAT WAS COSTING HER \$129, NOW SHE'S PAYING \$2.65 FOR.

THERE'S AN ISSUE WHEN IT COMES TO WHAT THEY ARE CHARGING US FOR IT AND I THINK WE NEED TO LOOK AT THAT.

>> SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT BE NEGOTIATING WITH DRUG COMPANIES TO LOWER OVERALL COST OF DRUGS FOR ALL FAMILIES IN THE U.S.?

>> I THINK IT'S BEYOND GOVERNMENT.

I THINK PEOPLE NEED TO RISE UP.

I'LL TELL YOU HONESTLY, YOU CAN'T ALWAYS EXCHANGE HOLISTIC MEDICINE FOR MEDICINE.

BUT I THINK THAT WE NEED TO LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DEALING WITH IT.

WE'VE BECOME SUCH A DRUG DRIVEN SOCIETY, DRIVEN BY DOCTORS,

DRIVEN BY WHAT THE MEDICAL PEOPLE SAY, WHAT THE
PHARMACEUTICALS SAY.

TEN YEARS AGO, DID YOU EVER SEE A PHARMACEUTICAL AD ON
TELEVISION?

BASICALLY, THEY ARE DRUG PEDDLING.

THEY ARE TELLING THE PATIENT WHAT TO ASK FOR WHEN YOU GO TO
THE DOCTOR.

>> THIS IS GOING TO BE PART OF THE OVERALL PRESIDENTIAL
DEBATE ON HEALTH CARE.

YOU'RE SEEING A HUGE PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE
DEMOCRATS AND THE REPUBLICANS.

THIS IS GOING TO LEAD RIGHT IN.

IN OUR AREA, GINNY BROWN-WAITE GOT SLAMMED REALLY HARD THIS
WEEK WITH A NEGATIVE AD BECAUSE SHE DID NOT VOTE FOR THIS
BILL.

WHAT YOU'RE SEEING IS THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG OF THE OPENING
ROUND OF WHAT WE'RE GOING TO BE TALKING ABOUT ALL NEXT YEAR
DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

>> ALL RIGHT, WELL, THE STATE LEGISLATURE IS HAVING A HARD
TIME REACHING AN AGREEMENT ON SOLVING THE INEQUITIES IN THE
PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM.

THEY'VE BEEN IN A SPECIAL SESSION FOR THE PAST WEEK AND WERE
CLOSE TO AN AGREEMENT EARLIER THIS WEEK BUT A POTENTIAL DEAL
BROKE DOWN.

LEGISLATORS HAVE UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH TO REACH AN

AGREEMENT IF THEY WANT THE PROPERTY TAX ISSUE ON THE JANUARY
BALLOT.

DAVID, WHY ARE THEY HAVING SUCH A HARD TIME REACHING AN
AGREEMENT?

>> WELL, I THINK YOU COULD PROBABLY GET A LOT OF REASONS
DEPENDING WHO YOU TALK TO, BUT NOT UNLIKE SCHIP, I THINK
IT'S MOSTLY ABOUT POLITICS.

THE QUESTION, WHY DON'T THEY WAIT FOR THE TAX REFORM
COMMISSION TO REPORT?

GOOD QUESTION.

I THINK BECAUSE THEY KNOW WHAT COMES OUT OF THERE WON'T BE
POLITICALLY POPULAR.

THEY MIGHT HAVE TO MAKE THE TOUGH CHOICES THAT NEED TO BE
MADE.

AND SOME OF THESE PLANS THAT VICTOR SAID ARE JUST BEING
THROWN OUT WILLY-NILLY, DO THEY HAVE ANY CONCEPT OF WHAT
THAT WILL DO FOR THE ECONOMY OR TO REAL ESTATE OR JUST TO
HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM FOR HOMEOWNERS?

AND ANOTHER PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THEY ARE NOT EVEN
ADDRESSING OR HARDLY ARE, THE NONHOMESTEAD PROPERTY ISSUE.
THAT'S A HUGE PIECE OF THIS PROBLEM, AND IT'S KEEPING THE
FACT THAT SECOND HOMEOWNERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS ARE NOT
GETTING RELIEF OR VERY LITTLE IS A FACTOR THAT'S GOING TO
IMPACT THE REAL ESTATE MARKET UNTIL IT'S SOLVED.

>> LAURA, WHY DO YOU THINK THEY ARE HAVING SUCH A HARD TIME?

>> THEY GAVE THEMSELVES A BIT OF AN ARTIFICIAL TIME LINE, I THINK, BY ORIGINALLY SETTING UP A PLAN TO BE VOTED ON IN JANUARY.

AND POSSIBLY INSTEAD OF TAKING A LITTLE MORE TIME WITH THE DISCUSSION OR PLANNING IT A LITTLE BIT BETTER, THEY'VE TRIED TO GO BACK TO TALLAHASSEE, COME UP WITH SOMETHING IN A HURRY, AND PUT IT OUT THERE.

IT'S RESULTING IN SOMETHING THAT'S VERY, VERY CONFUSING. I'VE EVEN JUST BEEN LOOKING AT IT AS A WEB JOURNALIST TRYING TO PUT OUT SOMETHING ON THE WEB THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE FOR PEOPLE SO THEY CAN GO ON TBO AND CALCULATE THEIR TAXES.

IT'S DARN NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THIS PLAN.

IT MAKES NO SENSE.

THERE'S A WHOLE VARIABLE IN THERE, WHICH IS WHETHER YOU'RE GOING TO MOVE TO A MORE EXPENSIVE OR A LESS EXPENSIVE HOUSE, WELL, WHY IS THAT ANYBODY'S BUSINESS?

I'M NOT SURE.

THE RESULT HERE IS A COMPLICATED PLAN THAT IS JUST GETTING MORE AND MORE CONFUSING THE LONGER THEY PLAY AROUND WITH IT.

>> VICTOR --

>> JUST GOT OFF THE PHONE.

JUST MOMENTS BEFORE WE GOT ON THE AIR.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS VERY SIMPLE.

ALL HELL HAS BROKEN LOOSE IN TALLAHASSEE.

IT'S VERY SIMPLE.

MARCO RUBIO HAS DECIDED TO LET EVERY TAX PLAN ANYBODY EVER
DREAMED OF OR THOUGHT OF IN THE LAST TEN YEARS TO BE THROWN
ON THE TABLE.

PEOPLE ARE HOPPING MAD.

>> THIS IS THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE?

>> PEOPLE ARE VERY UPSET IN TALLAHASSEE BECAUSE A SPECIAL
SESSION IS CALLED ONLY WHEN BEHIND-THE-SCENES PEOPLE HAVE
TALKED AND HASHED OUT AN ARRANGEMENT, AN AGREEMENT --
EVERYBODY THOUGHT AN AGREEMENT WAS ON THE TABLE.

NOW THEY COME TO SESSION, AND AT \$40,000 A DAY TO US
TAXPAYERS, NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE.

THE SALES TAX PLAN IS ON THE TABLE.

THERE'S A PLAN TO BRING THE NEWLY FOUND MONEY FROM CASINOS
TO PROVIDE TAX RELIEF.

I MEAN, IT'S HUGE DISASTER RIGHT NOW IN TALLAHASSEE.

>> THE GOVERNOR AND THE SENATE SEEM TO AGREE ON AN
11 BILLION-DOLLAR TAX CUT PLAN.

RUBIO WANTS AROUND AT LEAST 14 BILLION.

WHY IS RUBIO THROWING ALL THESE OTHER PLANS INTO THE MIX?

WHAT'S THE ANGLE THERE?

>> WELL, SOME PEOPLE SAY RUBIO IS WANTING TO RUN FOR HIGHER
OFFICE.

CHARLIE CRIST IS ABOUT THE BEST THING THE DEMOCRATS HAVE
GOING RIGHT NOW.

HE'S ACTING AS A DEMOCRAT.

SO WE HAVE A MODERATE REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR.

YOU'VE GOT A SENATE WHO IS RELATIVELY MODERATE, AND NOW YOU HAVE RUBIO WHO IS TRYING TO GRAB ON TO THE STRAWS OF THE JEB BUSH CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN FAMILY VALUES WING OF THE PARTY.

AND HE WANTS HUGE TAX BREAKS.

THAT'S WHAT HE'S FIGHTING FOR.

AND EVEN IF HE DOESN'T GET IT, WHICH, YOU KNOW, LIKE YOU SAY, THE GOVERNOR AND THE SENATE ARE ON ONE PAGE AND HE'S ON THE OTHER, HE'S STILL GOING TO COME OUT SMELLING LIKE A ROSE BECAUSE HE'S A CHAMPION OF PEOPLE.

I FOUGHT FOR LOWER TAXES EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T GET THEM.

>> JACQUI, IS THAT THE WAY YOU SEE IT?

HOUSE SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO WILL COME OUT LOOKING GOOD BECAUSE HE ASKED FOR THE BIGGER TAX BREAKS.

>> WELL, I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON WHETHER YOU'RE A REPUBLICAN OR A DEMOCRAT.

I DON'T THINK ANYBODY GRANDSTANDING FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL AGENDA IMPRESSES ME NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE STANDING UP FOR.

TO HOLD THIS UP, TO CONTINUE TO SEND BACK TO THE TABLE AT \$40,000 A DAY, WHICH ARE OUR COSTS.

SO YOU'LL CUT OUR COSTS AND ADD ANOTHER 4 MILLION TO IT BY CONTINUING TO DRAG THIS OUT.

I THINK IT'S TIME NOW, I'LL SPEAK AS A HOMEOWNER OF A FIRST HOME AND SECOND HOME.

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I'M SICK OF IT.

GET ON WITH IT.

DO SOMETHING.

I HAVE TWO TAXES TO PAY, TWO INSURANCES TO PAY.

I NEED YOU TO MOVE ON THIS THING.

I THINK THAT'S HOW A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE FEELING.

AT SOME POINT YOU HAVE TO STEP BACK.

THE THING ABOUT IT IS THESE PEOPLE ARE HOMEOWNERS, TOO.

THE SAME PEOPLE UP THERE DEBATING ARE HOMEOWNERS.

THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND WHERE WE ARE.

>> LET ME GO AROUND THE TABLE AND ASK EACH OF YOU.

DO THE VOTERS OF FLORIDA WANT A QUICK SOLUTION TO THIS
PROPERTY TAX CRISIS, OR DO THEY WANT THE LARGER SOLUTION?

AND THAT IS THE BIGGER TAX BREAK.

GIVEN THE TWO THINGS, QUICK SOLUTION OR LARGER SOLUTION,
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY'D ASK FOR, JACQUI?

>> WELL, THAT I THINK WHEN WE'RE LOOKING AT A LARGER
SOLUTION, WE REALLY DO -- AND NOW I'LL SPEAK LIKE A CHARLIE
CRIST.

WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING AT A LARGER SOLUTION, I THINK WE'RE
IMPACTING OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS QUITE A BIT RIGHT NOW.

YOU KNOW, IT WAS GREAT WHEN CHARLIE SAID I'M GOING TO CUT
TAXES, BUT I THINK I'M KIND OF A MIND THAT WE'RE MOVING A
LITTLE SWIFT.

BECAUSE THERE'S NOT ANYTHING COMING OUT THAT MAKES ANY

SENSE.

>> SO YOU WOULD TAKE A THIRD OPTION, A THOUGHTFUL SOLUTION.

>> I WANT A THOUGHTFUL SOLUTION THAT WORKS.

>> DAVID, QUICK SOLUTION, THOUGHTFUL SOLUTION OR LARGER TAX
BREAK?

>> THOUGHTFUL SOLUTION FOR SURE.

>> THAT'S WHAT VOTERS WANT.

>> WELL, THAT'S WHAT I WANT.

I THINK VOTERS WANT THE BIG ONE.

AND MOST PEOPLE OR FEW PEOPLE ARE WORRYING ABOUT THE IMPACT
ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

>> SO RUBIO IS A HERO TO MOST PEOPLE BECAUSE HE WANTS THE
BIGGER ONE.

LAURA, WHAT DO YOU THINK, QUICK SOLUTION, SMART SOLUTION OR
THE BIGGER TAX BREAK?

>> I DON'T KNOW.

I THINK THERE MAY BE PEOPLE OUT THERE HOPING FOR A SO-CALLED
SMART SOLUTION OR A THOUGHTFUL SOLUTION.

IT SEEMS LIKE WITH THE QUICK CHANGING OF PLANS, THEN SHORTLY
AFTER THAT YOU HEAR A BACKLASH, YOU KNOW, THAT IT WASN'T
SUCH A GOOD IDEA, WE SHOULDN'T HAVE MOVED SO FAST.

>> THE PROBLEM WAS CAUSED BY GREEDY FLIPPERS THAT CAME INTO
THIS MARKET IN FLORIDA, JUST LIKE THE LAND BARONS OF THE
'20s, AND THOUGHT THEY HAD THEIR LITTLE LOTTO.

EVERY TIME THEY BUY A HOUSE AND THEY WANT TO SELL IT DOUBLE

WHAT IT WAS WORTH WHEN THEY BOUGHT IT.

THE WHOLE BOTTOM OF THIS MARKET THROUGHOUT THE STATE HAS JUST FALLEN OUT.

AND THE FLIPPERS ARE NOW STUCK WITH PROPERTIES.

THE BANKS ARE STUCK WITH PROPERTIES.

COMPANIES LIKE COUNTRYWIDE MORTGAGE COMPANIES ARE BELLY UP BECAUSE THEY GAVE MORTGAGES TO PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T AFFORD IT.

WHAT WE HAVE TO DO -- IT'S NOT JUST ALL THE GOVERNMENT'S FAULT BECAUSE WE ALSO HAVE AN INSURANCE CRISIS AS WELL.

THIS WILL ALL BALANCE ITSELF OUT AS FAR AS PROPERTY TAX VALUES ARE CONCERNED, PROBABLY GOING TO TAKE TWO OR THREE, MAYBE FIVE YEARS FOR THIS ALL TO BALANCE ITSELF OUT.

>> SOME THINK WE NEED A THOUGHTFUL SOLUTION BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY VARIABLES.

>>> FEDERAL PROSECUTORS SAY THEY ARE CONTINUING THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE FLORIDA BOOT CAMP CASE.

LATE LAST WEEK, SEVEN GUARDS AND A NURSE WERE ACQUITTED BY AN ALL-WHITE PANAMA CITY JURY IN THE DEATH OF 14-YEAR-OLD MARTIN LEE ANDERSON.

ABOUT 200 PROTESTERS GATHERED AT THE STATE CAPITOL WHERE THEY WERE MET BY BLACK LAWMAKERS WHO SHARED THEIR DISMAY. THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS LOOKING INTO POSSIBLE CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE GUARDS AND THE NURSE.

JACQUI, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

DO YOU THINK THAT IT WAS A JUST VERDICT LAST FRIDAY WHEN THE GUARDS AND NURSE WERE ACQUITTED?

>> OKAY.

NOBODY THROW ROCKS AT MY HOUSE.

I THINK IT WAS A JUST VERDICT CONSIDERING WHAT THEY WERE TRYING TO CHARGE THEM WITH.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THAT GROUP OF PEOPLE WENT IN TO KILL THIS CHILD.

AND I THINK THAT THEY WERE KIND OF OVERCHARGED.

I THINK THAT IF THEY WOULD HAVE SHOT WITH A LOWER VERDICT, THAT WE WOULD HAVE SOME PEOPLE DOING JAIL TIME.

BUT I THINK TO SAY THEY WENT OUT TO DO HOMICIDE OR MURDER, I THINK THAT WAS AN OVERSHOT ON THE CHARGE.

>> SHOULD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STEP IN OR SHOULD BILL McCOLLUM, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, STEP IN AND FIGURE OUT A WAY TO CONTINUE THE PROSECUTION OF THOSE WHO WERE ACQUITTED LAST FRIDAY?

>> YOU KNOW, HERE IS THE THING ABOUT OUR SYSTEM.

WE TOOK SOME PEOPLE INTO A COURTROOM.

WE SAT THEM BEFORE A JURY.

IT WASN'T LIKE -- ALL THE PEOPLE WEREN'T WHITE AND ALL THE PEOPLE WEREN'T BLACK.

I MEAN, ON THE JURY THEY WERE.

BUT THE PEOPLE THAT WERE ACCUSED WERE A MIXTURE OF PEOPLE.

SO WE SAID YOU MAKE A DECISION, AND THEY MADE A DECISION.

THE ONE THING THAT I DON'T LIKE ABOUT UNDERCUTTING OUR SYSTEM, AT WHAT POINT DO WE NOT UNDERCUT IT WHEN WE JUST DON'T LIKE WHAT HAPPENED?

DO I THINK THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN CHARGED DIFFERENTLY? THEN THE FAULT OF THE PROSECUTOR IS THAT HE CHARGED IT WRONGLY.

I DON'T THINK THAT WE SHOULD TAKE THEM BACK TO COURT BECAUSE THE PROSECUTOR SCREWED UP.

>> I AGREE WITH THAT.

IF HE WOULD HAVE CHARGED THEM WITH SOMETHING LIKE NEGLIGENCE OR SOME VERSION OF THAT, THEY PROBABLY WOULD HAVE GOTTEN A CONVICTION.

IT'S CLEAR FROM THE VIDEO THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE USED A LITTLE BIT BETTER JUDGMENT.

I TALKED TO A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER THIS MORNING, AND HE MADE A COUPLE OF POINTS.

HE SAID WHAT ELSE COULD THE JURY DO WHEN THEY HAD CONFLICTING EVIDENCE, TESTIMONY FROM TWO QUALIFIED MEDICAL EXAMINERS?

EACH OF WHOM GAVE AN OPPOSITE OPINION.

WELL, SHADOW OF A DOUBT, REASONABLE DOUBT, THERE'S A GOOD REASON.

>> SO THEN YOU ACQUIT.

>> YEAH.

AND HE ALSO SAID THERE'S A TERM IN LAW ENFORCEMENT CALLED

"EXCITED DELIRIUM."

IT'S A FORM OF NATURAL SUFFOCATION THAT WHEN SOMEONE IS IN THE PROCESS OF THIS TRAUMATIC ARREST AND SO FORTH, THAT THEIR SYSTEM GETS SO WORKED UP THAT THEY CAN SUFFOCATE.

>> IF ANYBODY BELIEVES THIS KID DIED OF SICKLE CELL ANEMIA, AFTER SEEING THAT VIDEO OF HIM GETTING THE TAR BEAT OUT OF HIM, THAT'S RIDICULOUS.

>> HE WAS BEATEN, BUT I DON'T THINK MURDER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE OUTCOME.

>> THE MEDICAL EXAMINER SAID THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS SICKLE CELL ANEMIA, AND THAT'S RIDICULOUS.

>> WELL, HE SHOULD BE IN JAIL.

>> THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE, VICTOR, THAT FEEL JUSTICE WASN'T DONE IN THIS CASE.

>> THIS WAS AN ALL-WHITE JURY, POOR BLACK KID -- DON'T GET ME WRONG, THIS KID WAS NOT AN ALTAR BOY.

HE WAS IN THERE BECAUSE HE STOLE HIS MOTHER OR GRANDMOTHER'S CAR.

THE MOTHER TURNED HIM INTO THE COPS BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY WAY SHE COULD COLLECT HER INSURANCE.

THERE'S BLAME TO GO AROUND HONESTLY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ISSUE.

>> TWO BLACK DEFENDANTS AS WELL AS THE WHITE ONE.

>> I TALKED TO A LOT OF ATTORNEYS OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS SINCE THIS CAME OUT, IF THIS HAD BEEN TRIED IN TAMPA

OR MIAMI, ANOTHER AREA WITH ALL THE FACTS KNOWN, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT VERDICT.

>> ANYBODY CAN SAY WHAT THEY WANT.

I'LL STATE WHAT I SAID AGAIN.

IF YOU OVERCHARGE, AND I'M SITTING ON A JURY, AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THEY INTENTIONALLY MEANT TO KILL THIS KID, I CANNOT VOTE AND SAY THEY INTENTIONALLY MEANT TO KILL THE KID NO MATTER WHAT RACE THE KID IS.

>> THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM HERE IS THE SUBTLE MESSAGE THIS IS AN ALL-WHITE JURY TELLING THIS POOR BLACK KID, YOU GET OUT OF LINE AND YOU DO SOMETHING WRONG, WE'RE GOING TO TAKE CARE OF IT.

>> THAT MAY BE THE ELEPHANT IN YOUR ROOM.

AS A BLACK WOMAN, IT'S NOT THE ELEPHANT IN MY ROOM.

>> WE HAVE TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT TOPIC.

WITH THE FLORIDA PRIMARY A LITTLE BIT MORE THAN THREE MONTHS FROM NOW, AT LEAST ONE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE IS BREAKING THE BAN AND CAMPAIGNING HERE IN FLORIDA.

FORMER ALASKA SENATOR MIKE GRAVEL, ONE OF THE STRONGEST ANTIWAR CANDIDATES ON THE DEMOCRATIC SIDE, OPENLY CAMPAIGNED IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA THIS WEEK.

IN OTHER CAMPAIGN NEWS, SAM BROWNBACK, ONE OF THE MOST SOLID SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE, IS ENDING HIS BID FOR PRESIDENT.

WHILE GOP FRONTRUNNER FRED THOMPSON NOW SAYS HE OPPOSES

EVERGLADES OIL DRILLING.

HE VISITS FLORIDA NEXT WEEK.

AND ON THE MONEY SIDE, ILLINOIS SENATOR BARACK OBAMA AND FORMER NEW YORK CITY MAYOR RUDY GIULIANI ENTERED THE FINAL MONTHS OF THEIR PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY RACES AS THE BIGGEST RECIPIENTS OF TAMPA BAY CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.

SO, LAURA, WITHIN THOSE STORIES, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IN THE CAMPAIGN NEWS THIS WEEK IN FLORIDA?

>> OH, MIKE GRAVEL, HANDS DOWN.

>> LIKE HE HAS A SHOT OR PRAYER.

>> NO, OF COURSE, HE DOESN'T.

MAY NOT BE THE STRONGEST ANTIWAR CANDIDATE IN THAT SENSE, BUT DEFINITELY THE LOUDEST EVERY TIME YOU'RE WATCHING A DEBATE AND HE LETS OUT A NICE YELL.

BUT, YOU KNOW, IT WAS GENEROUS OF HIM TO COME DOWN HERE AND VISIT THE LONELY DEMOCRATS OF FLORIDA WHO ARE NO LONGER SEEING THEIR CANDIDATES COMING THROUGH.

>> WHAT ABOUT OBAMA -- BARACK OBAMA AND RUDY GIULIANI RAISING A LOT OF THEIR MONEY HERE IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA, AND IN SOUTH FLORIDA, HILLARY CLINTON IS THE WINNER IN THE OBAMA-CLINTON RACE.

WHY DOES OBAMA HAVE THE APPEAL HERE IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA?

>> THEY HAVE SOME STRONG SUPPORTERS, AND HE'S BEEN HERE AT LEAST TWICE, THAT I CAN REMEMBER.

HE RECENTLY FELL BEHIND HILLARY, BUT NOT ALL THAT FAR.

HE HAD BEEN DOING VERY WELL.

MAYBE THIS IS JUST AN AREA WHERE HIS MESSAGE RESONATES.

PEOPLE ARE CATCHING ON.

>> VICTOR, THERE'S A STRAW POLL THIS WEEKEND, THE VALUES VOTERS ARE GOING TO MEET IN WASHINGTON, D.C., THE SAME TIME THE REPUBLICANS ARE DOWN HERE.

THE VALUES VOTERS, WHICH ARE CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICANS FOR THE MOST PART, ARE MEETING IN WASHINGTON.

THEY ARE TAKING A STRAW POLL ON SATURDAY TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT THEY SHOULD RUN A CANDIDATE AGAINST RUDY GIULIANI.

>> WELL, THAT'S TRUE.

TO ME AS A DEMOCRAT, I'M SAD OVER WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE PRIMARY, BUT I HAVE TO LAUGH ON THE LEADING CANDIDATE WHO IS WORKING ON HIS THIRD MARRIAGE, AND YOU HAVE ROMNEY WHO IS ALSO FROM TWO OF THE MOST LIBERAL AREAS OF THE WORLD, NEW YORK AND MASSACHUSETTS.

>> GIULIANI IS IN TROUBLE WITH THE REPUBLICAN BASE?

>> I THINK THEY BOTH ARE.

I THINK THE REPUBLICANS ARE HOLDING THEIR NOSE IN SUPPORTING THESE GUYS.

THEY REALLY DON'T TRULY REPRESENT THE BUSH WING OR THE RIGHT WING REPUBLICAN CHRISTIAN CONSERVATIVE FAMILY VALUES PARTY THAT WE'VE KNOWN.

>> JACQUI, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT GIULIANI, HOW MUCH APPEAL DOES HE HAVE FOR THAT REPUBLICAN BASE?

>> I HATE TO AGREE WITH VICTOR.

[LAUGHTER]

NO, I LOVE VICTOR.

I HAVE TO AGREE.

I MEAN, WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT, EVEN NOW, YOU KNOW, THEY'VE
BEEN OUT THERE.

AND I'M STILL LIKE, GOSH, WHO DO I VOTE FOR?

BECAUSE THERE ARE SOME THINGS ABOUT GIULIANI THAT ARE JUST A
LITTLE BIT TOO LIBERAL FOR ME.

MITT ROMNEY, I'M NOT FEELING HIM.

YOU KNOW, I'M NOT FEELING HIM.

I DON'T WANT SOMEBODY LIKE DR. DOBSON TO RUN.

I DON'T THINK WE CAN WIN THAT WAY.

I THINK IT WOULD APPEAL TO THAT BASE, BUT I DON'T THINK HE'D
WIN THE ACTUAL PRESIDENCY.

I'M OUT THERE WITH HIM.

I DON'T KNOW.

WE'VE GOT A MESS.

>> THE REPUBLICANS ARE SUCKING WIND RIGHT NOW.

BUSH IS AT 20% IN THE APPROVAL RATINGS.

THEY ARE HAVING THEIR PRESIDENTIAL FOUR THING COMING UP IN

ORLANDO, I THINK, THIS WEEKEND WHICH I CALL PRESIDENTIAL

"IV" BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO NEED.

HONESTLY, IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA, THE REPUBLICANS ARE DOING
WELL.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

BUT NATIONALLY THEY ARE REALLY HAVING A VERY DIFFICULT --

>> THERE'S NO ONE EXCITING.

>> THAT WILL HAVE TO BE THE LAST WORD.

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

VICTOR, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK?

>> I WANT EVERYBODY TO KNOW MY LAWSUIT AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS STILL ACTIVE.

WE ONLY GOT -- THERE ARE THREE RUNGS IN THIS LADDER, AND WE ONLY WENT PAST THE FIRST ONE.

ACTUALLY, THE JUDGE DID US A FAVOR.

WE'RE IN ATLANTA RIGHT NOW.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE NEXT WEEK TO ANNOUNCE OUR ACTUAL PLEADING AND WHAT OUR ARGUMENTS ARE GOING TO BE.

WE WANT TO GO TO THE BIG DANCE WITH THE SUPREME COURT,

BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THIS WILL FINALLY BE DECIDED.

I'M TRYING TO MOVE THIS ALONG.

I WAS OUT THERE A MONTH AND A HALF BEFORE NELSON JUMPED IN.

I DON'T HAVE ANY DISAGREEMENT WITH NELSON BECAUSE WE ARE

GETTING TWO DIFFERENT BITES OF THE APPLE BECAUSE OUR

ARGUMENTS ARE SIMILAR IN ONE CASE AND DISSIMILAR IN THE

OTHER.

I'M ARGUING THE 14th AMENDMENT.

HE'S ARGUING VOTERS' RIGHTS.

PLEASE STAY WITH US.

WE'RE STILL ACTIVE.

WE'RE STILL FIGHTING FOR YOU.

>> JACQUI, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> I DON'T SO MUCH HAVE A STORY AS I JUST WANT TO BRING TO LIGHT AND GIVE KUDOS TO AN ORGANIZATION IN TAMPA CALLED "WE CARE SERVICES."

IN THE AREA OF HEALTH CARE, THEY GO INTO HOMES OF PEOPLE WITH NO HEALTH CARE INSURANCE AND PROVIDE IN-HOME HEALTH CARE AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE INSURANCE.

AND IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ON THEM, PLEASE CHECK OUT THE WEDU WEB SITE.

WE'RE GOING TO POST SOME INFORMATION THERE.

BUT THEY ARE GOING INTO THE COMMUNITY DOING THAT THING WHICH IS APPARENTLY NOT GETTING DONE FOR MORE THAN 3 MILLION PEOPLE IN THIS STATE.

>> DAVID, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> MANATEE COUNTY HAS A "WE CARE" PROGRAM LIKE THAT ALSO, JACQUI.

I'M AWARE OF THAT.

>> IT'S THE SAME PROGRAM.

>> YES.

USF IS TAKING ANOTHER STEP TO ELIMINATING ITS IMAGE OF A COMMUTER CAMPUS WITH NOT MUCH GOING ON.

AND IT'S NOT JUST BECAUSE OF FOOTBALL, WHICH IS CERTAINLY A

FACTOR, BUT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS CONSIDERING MAKING
RESIDENCY IN THE DORMS FOR OUT-OF-REGION FRESHMAN MANDATORY.
AND I THINK THAT A DORM RESIDENCE, LIVING ON CAMPUS IS A BIG
PART OF UNIVERSITY LIFE ALONG WITH WINNING FOOTBALL TEAMS.
AND GO BULLS.

>> ALL RIGHT.

LAURA, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK.

>> WELL, JUST BEFORE I LEFT TO COME OVER HERE, IT CAME OUT
THAT MEL MARTINEZ HAS STEPPED DOWN AS HEAD OF THE RNC.

NOBODY REALLY KNOWS MUCH ABOUT THAT.

IT'S ABRUPT.

HE'S ONLY BEEN IN FOR TEN MONTHS.

SOMETHING TO WATCH.

>> ALL RIGHT.

WELL, THANK YOU JACQUI KNIGHT, DAVID KLEMENT.

THANK YOU, LAURA FIORILLI-CREWS, AND THANK YOU, VICTOR
DiMAIO.

AND THANK YOU FOR WATCHING "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

WE ALWAYS WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT THIS PROGRAM.

YOU CAN CALL OUR TOLL FREE LINE AT 800-335-9338.

OR YOU CAN SEND AN E-MAIL TO FTW@WEDU.ORG.

OR ADD A COMMENT TO OUR "FLORIDA THIS WEEK" WEB PAGE ONLINE,

THAT'S WEDU.ORG WHERE YOU CAN ALSO READ ABOUT OUR PANELISTS,

LINK TO TOPICAL WEB SITES AND VIEW THIS PROGRAM LATER.

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK" RETURNS NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT AT 8:30 AND

SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT 12:30.

FROM ALL OF US AT WEDU, HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND!

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