

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK"

NOVEMBER 9, 2007

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

>>> COMING UP NEXT, SARASOTA VOTERS SAY YES TO ELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT REFORMS.

FORMER FLORIDA SENATE PRESIDENT JOHN MCKAY PROPOSES ELIMINATING MANY SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS.

THE STATE STANDS TO LOSE POTENTIAL REVENUE IF THE GOVERNOR AND THE SEMINOLE INDIANS CANNOT AGREE ON AN EXPANSION OF CASINO GAMBLING AND ST. PETE VOTERS SHOW AN INDEPENDENT STREAK IN SELECTING TWO NEW CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

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, DARRYL ROUSON IS AN ATTORNEY AND A REPUBLICAN.

JOHN SEPULVADO IS INTERIM NEWS DIRECTOR AT WUSF RADIO.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

DR. SUSAN MacMANUS IS A PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AT USF IN TAMPA AND PATRICK MANTEIGA IS EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
OF LA GACETA NEWSPAPER AND A DEMOCRAT.

GOOD TO SEE YOU EVERYBODY.

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

WELL, SARASOTA VOTERS THIS WEEK APPROVED SEVERAL CHANGES
THAT COULD MAKE THE CITY A NATIONAL MODEL FOR ELECTION
REFORM AND MAKE IT HARDER FOR DEVELOPERS TO CREATE SPRAWL.
MEASURES INCLUDE: REDUCING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMITS
FROM 500 DOWN TO 200 DOLLARS FOR CITY COMMISSION RACES.
ELIMINATING DIRECT DONATIONS FROM CORPORATIONS, UNIONS,
POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES AND OTHER GROUPS.

REQUIRE THAT IN CITY ELECTIONS CERTAIN FINANCIAL REPORTS ARE
HAND DELIVERED TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE SIX DAYS PRIOR TO
ELECTION DAY.

APPROVED AN INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING SYSTEM FOR CITY COMMISSION
RACES.

AND SARASOTA'S CITY AND COUNTY VOTERS ALSO ELECTED TO
REQUIRE A SUPERMAJORITY OF COMMISSIONERS THAT MUST APPROVE
CHANGES THAT WOULD INCREASE DENSITY IN LAND USE PLANS IN THE
CITY AND THE COUNTY.

SUSAN, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE OUTCOME OF THIS SELECTION?
WHAT'S GOING ON IN SARASOTA AND THE COUNTY?

>> I THINK IT'S A BELLWETHER FOR TRENDS THAT WE'RE GOING TO
SEE STATEWIDE AND NATIONALLY.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

THE ELECTORATE IS VERY ANGRY.

THEY ARE VERY FRUSTRATED.

THEY ARE IMPATIENT.

THEY DON'T LIKE ALL THE MONEY IN POLITICS AND ALL THE FIGHTING.

THEY WANT OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE MONEY THAT IS GIVEN.

AND THERE'S ALSO A VERY STRONG ANTIGROWTH SENTIMENT AT THE MOMENT WHICH IS, OF COURSE, SPELLED OUT IN AN ANTI-INCUMBENT MOVE BECAUSE THERE WERE A LOT OF INCUMBENTS THAT GOT BEAT ON TUESDAY AS WELL.

I THINK, AGAIN, GRASSROOTS POLITICS IS REALLY THE PLACE WHERE YOU START TO NOTICE TRENDS THAT ARE GOING TO GO STATEWIDE AND NATIONAL.

AND I CLEARLY THINK WE SAW THOSE IN SARASOTA AND SARASOTA COUNTY.

>> SARASOTA HAS LONG HAD THIS REPUTATION OF BEING A CONSERVATIVE ENCLAVE OR MAYBE A REPUBLICAN ENCLAVE.

I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WOULD DESCRIBE IT.

BUT IS IT CHANGING IN ANY SENSE?

I MEAN, BECAUSE SOME OF THESE -- LIKE INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING AND SOME LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS, MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A LIBERAL IDEA.

>> WELL, SARASOTA IS CLEARLY BECOMING MORE DEMOCRATIC.

AND THEY HAVE ELECTED SOME DEMOCRATIC STATE REPS AND LOCAL

OFFICIALS.

BUT I THINK YOU ALSO HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT SARASOTA IS ONE OF THE MOST EDUCATED COUNTIES IN FLORIDA.

YOU HAVE PEOPLE THAT ARE VERY ENGAGED IN CIVIC POLITICS AND VERY ACTIVE AND WELL READ.

AND THEY ARE JUST REALLY TIRED OF STATUS QUO POLITICS AND THE NASTINESS AND THE MONEY IN ALL OF IT.

>> I THINK WHAT SHE SAYS IS RIGHT.

IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE VOTERS ARE ANGRY, HOWEVER.

I THINK SHE HIT IT ON THE HEAD, DR. MacMANUS, WHEN YOU SAID THEY ARE MORE EDUCATED.

I THINK THE VOTERS EVERY NOW AND THEN FLEX THEIR MUSCLES IN TERMS OF THEM BEING SMART AND NOT THE HERD MENTALITY THAT YOU WOULD EXPECT SOMETIMES BECAUSE OF LABELS.

>> JOHN, WHAT ABOUT THIS IDEA THEY NOW NEED A SUPERMAJORITY TO INCREASE DENSITY IN DEVELOPMENTS IN SARASOTA.

WHAT DOES THAT INDICATE?

>> WELL, I THINK WHAT IT DOES, YOU HAVE THIS IDEA OF HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY, WHICH IS A STATEWIDE INITIATIVE THAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

IT CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THERE IS, AS YOU SAID, AN ANTIGROWTH SENTIMENT IN WHATEVER SARASOTA COUNTY HAS, IT IS PROBUSINESS.

THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT.

BUT I THINK IT ALSO -- SOMEBODY I WAS SPEAKING WITH IN

TALLAHASSEE THIS WEEK TOLD ME, IT OFFERS THE FLORIDA CHAMBER
A THIRD WAY, THAT THEY CAN GO AND SAY, LOOK, YOU DON'T LIKE
GROWTH.

YOU MADE THAT VERY CLEAR, YOU KNOW, STATE VOTERS.

BUT THIS IS A THIRD WAY.

WE DON'T HAVE TO GET AS DRASTIC AS VOTING FOR A
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT -- OR PARDON ME, HAVING VOTERS
CHOOSE ON EVERY SINGLE COMPREHENSIVE AMENDMENT THAT GOES
BEFORE THE COUNTY.

>> THAT'S THE HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY.

>> RIGHT, RIGHT, RIGHT.

>> YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE THAT, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE?

>> YOU COULD DO SOMETHING LIKE SARASOTA OR, YOU KNOW, THAT
THE VOTERS WILL SPEAK.

SO WHILE IT SHOWS THAT THERE COULD BE VERY MUCH AN
ANTIGROWTH MOVEMENT IN THE STATE, THIS IS A THIRD WAY THAT
YOU CAN DEAL WITH IT, THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO OVER TO
HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY.

>> IT WAS INTERESTING THAT THE SUPERMAJORITY REQUIREMENT IN
SARASOTA PASSED, I THINK, BY MORE THAN 60% OF THE VOTE,
WHICH IS THE MARGIN THAT HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY NEEDS TO PASS,
TOO.

>> AND I THINK AS PROFESSOR MacMANUS HIT IT, PEOPLE,
THEY WANT TO SEE GROWTH CURBED.

I ALSO THINK, TOO, IT GOES BEYOND -- IT SEEMS LIKE PEOPLE

ARE REALLY DOUBTING THEIR ELECTED OFFICIALS WHETHER AT THE LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL LEVEL.

WITH THE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE NEW VOTING MACHINES THAT WENT IN AND ALL WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IS THAT IT SEEMS THAT SARASOTA COUNTY VOTERS SAID WE WANT TO HAVE MORE SAY AND WE WANT TO HAVE A BETTER EYE ON WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE COUNTY LEVEL.

>> TRY AND GET DEVELOPERS TO HAVE NOT SO MUCH POWER.

I SEE IN THIS COUNTY, SARASOTA AND OTHER COUNTIES, THERE'S A REAL FRUSTRATION THAT DEVELOPERS ARE RUNNING THINGS.

I THINK CHANGING ELECTION LAWS ARE OUR WAY TO TRY AND REDUCE THAT.

COME UP WITH A SUPERMAJORITY, A WAY TO REDUCE DEVELOPER'S PULL.

I THINK WHAT YOU ALSO SAW IN SARASOTA, 11 OF THESE PROPOSALS, OF THESE AMENDMENTS PASSED.

THERE WERE ONLY 12 ON THERE.

ONE FAILED AND IT HAD TO DO WITH STADIUM.

OBVIOUSLY, STADIUMS ARE STILL A BAD THING OUT THERE, BUT THIS BODES WELL FOR OTHER INITIATIVES COMING UP, LIKE HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY, BUT ALSO LOCALLY FOR THE COUNTY MAYOR.

>> UM-HUM.

SUSAN, IS THAT THE WAY YOU SEE IT, THAT THIS MIGHT BE A BELLWETHER FOR HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY THAT IF SARASOTA VOTERS WENT TO APPROVE THE SUPERMAJORITY ON THE CITY COMMISSION,

COUNTY COMMISSION TO INCREASE DENSITY, THAT THAT MIGHT SAY
TO HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY BACKERS, YOU HAVE A SHOT?

>> ABSOLUTELY.

WE THOUGHT THAT QUITE SOME TIME.

POLLS SHOW IF IT WAS ON THE BALLOT RIGHT NOW, IT WOULD PASS.

BUT THERE IS STARTING TO BE SOME CONCERN AND I HEARD THIS
ARTICULATED BY SOME PEOPLE IN SARASOTA COUNTY, THAT IF YOU
HAVE TO GO BEFORE THE VOTERS FOR EVERY SINGLE CHANGE IN A
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, IT WILL BE CHAOS.

YOU'LL HAVE TURNOUT OF 5%, WHICH WILL BE DOMINATED BY THE
VERY PEOPLE THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO KEEP FROM HAVING ALL THE
INFLUENCE.

AND IT WOULD BE VERY COSTLY TO GOVERNMENT AND REALLY
INCREASE CYNICISM.

SO AT LEAST WHAT THIS ELECTION DOES IS IT SHOWS THERE'S A
LOT OF ANIMOSITY TOWARDS UNCONTROLLED GROWTH, AND IT SPELLS
TO PEOPLE WHO ARE ALSO NOT WILLING TO GO TO THE IDEA OF
HAVING EVERY SINGLE THING VOTED ON, THAT THEY BETTER GET
THEIR HOMEWORK TOGETHER AND EDUCATE THE FLORIDIANS IF THEY
WANT TO DEFEAT HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY.

BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, THE SENTIMENT ABOUT GROWTH IS SO STRONG,
SO ANTIGROWTH, THAT IF THAT AMENDMENT GOES ON, IT'S GOING TO
PASS.

>> OKAY.

WELL, FORMER FLORIDA SENATE PRESIDENT JOHN MCKAY HAS

PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT THAT COULD CUT PROPERTY TAXES BY UP TO 45% BY ELIMINATING SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS THAT MOSTLY BENEFIT BUSINESSES.

McKAY SERVES ON THE STATE TAXATION AND BUDGET REFORM COMMISSION WHICH HAS THE POWER TO PUT SUCH AMENDMENTS ON THE NOVEMBER 2008 BALLOT.

UNDER THE PROPOSAL, THE LEGISLATURE WOULD REVIEW ALL TAX-EXEMPT GOODS AND SERVICES AND ONLY ALLOW THOSE THAT SERVE A PUBLIC PURPOSE, NECESSITIES SUCH AS FOOD AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, WOULD REMAIN FREE OF THE SALES TAX. WELL, PATRICK, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS IDEA FROM A FORMER SENATOR McKAY?

>> I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT FOR FORMER SENATOR McKAY.

I THINK THEY ARE TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

THIS PARTICULAR ITEM WORRIES ME A LITTLE BIT.

FIRST OF ALL, I UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE GOING TO INCREASE TAXES BY LOOKING AT THESE, YOU KNOW, AND ALLOWING THE SALES TAX TO HAPPEN THAT HASN'T HAPPENED BEFORE.

BUT THEN THE MECHANICS OF HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY TRANSFER THAT INTO A TAX SAVINGS ON THE PROPERTY TAX SIDE HAS ME WORRIED.

ALSO, I WOULD LIKE TO STATE -- LIKE THE STATE TO ADDRESS THE FACT IF WE BECOME MORE DEPENDENT ON SALES TAX, LESS ON PROPERTY TAX, DOES THAT MEAN THAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE PROBLEMS FUNDING EDUCATION IN THE FUTURE?

SALES TAX REVENUES CAN GO UP AND DOWN PRETTY DRAMATICALLY

DEPENDING ON THE ECONOMY.

AND I WOULD HATE FOR ALL OF OUR EDUCATION DOLLARS TO BE TIED TO SALES TAX.

>> UM-HUM.

DARRYL, YOU SIT ON THAT COMMISSION ALONG WITH SENATOR MCKAY.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HIS IDEA?

>> I THINK IT'S A GREAT IDEA.

IT'S A GREAT START.

IN FACT, I'VE INTRODUCED A SIMILAR MEASURE TO LOOK AT EXEMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS, BUT MY MEASURE WOULD TIE THE SAVINGS FROM IT DIRECTLY TO FUNDING K THROUGH 12 EDUCATION.

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO IS UNDERSTAND PEOPLE DON'T WANT TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION.

AND IN MANY INSTANCES, THEY WANT TO CHOOSE WHEN AND HOW THEY PAY THE TAXES.

BY BROADENING THE SALES TAX BASE, WE GIVE THEM SOME TYPE OF CONTROL OVER THAT.

AND HOPEFULLY THE ISSUE THAT PATRICK BROUGHT UP, WE CAN CONTROL IT AND MAKE SURE THAT THE MONEY -- THE SAVINGS REALLY DOES GO TO PROPERTY TAXES AS OPPOSED TO JUST SOME GENERAL OPERATING FUND WHERE IT GETS SWALLOWED UP.

>> AS A MEMBER OF THAT COMMISSION, CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER THIS IS THE GENERAL WAY THAT THE COMMISSION IS HEADING? AND THAT IS, TO REQUEST SOME SORT OF SUNSETTING OF A LOT OF

THESE SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS?

>> I BELIEVE THERE'S WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AMONGST THE COMMISSION.

OBVIOUSLY, BECAUSE OF SUNSHINE, WE CAN'T TALK IN BETWEEN MEETINGS.

BUT FROM THINGS THAT I'VE HEARD IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS AS WELL AS FULL COMMISSION MEETINGS, THERE IS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR LOOKING AT SALES EXEMPTIONS, SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS AND DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

I BELIEVE IT WILL BE A DIFFERENT ANIMAL.

>> SUSAN, I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THAT THE PROPERTY TAX PROBLEM STILL HASN'T BEEN SOLVED AND MAYBE SENATOR MCKAY'S IDEA AND MAYBE DARRYL'S IDEA HAS SOME LEGS HERE.

>> WELL, PEOPLE ARE REALLY FIXATED ON THE PROPERTY TAX RIGHT NOW, AND THEY ARE VERY ANGRY ABOUT THAT, TOO.

BECAUSE THEY SEE A LEGISLATURE THAT'S HAD TO BE CALLED BACK INTO SESSION SEVERAL TIMES AND STILL HASN'T REALLY COME UP WITH A PLAN THAT WILL MAKE THE TAXES DROP LIKE A ROCK.

AND SO THEY ARE GETTING VERY WARY OF PROMISES MADE BUT NOT PROMISES KEPT.

NOW, AS TO THE SALES TAX EXEMPTION AND CLOSING LOOPHOLES, WHEN YOU CLOSE A LOOPHOLE, THAT RAISES TAXES FOR PEOPLE.

AND THAT'S A DIFFICULT ARGUMENT.

WE'VE BEEN DOWN THAT STREET BEFORE, AND THAT WAS ONE OF THE

PROBLEMS IS THAT FOR SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE IT'S FRIVOLOUS TO YOU OR I, IT MIGHT BE SOMEBODY ELSE'S JOBS AND THE ECONOMY OF A CERTAIN COUNTY OR TWO IN FLORIDA, AND THAT'S THE DIFFICULTY YOU HAVE.

I THINK EVERYBODY WILL AGREE THAT WE HAVE A LOT OF LOOPHOLES, AND THEY DO NEED TO BE REVISITED.

BUT WHETHER THE PUBLIC WILL GO FOR IT, WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

>> THAT WAS THE REASON WHY GOVERNOR BOB MARTINEZ WAS A ONE-TERM GOVERNOR BECAUSE HE TRIED TO RAISE SOME OF THE TAXES ON SERVICES THAT ARE NOW TAX-EXEMPT, BUT THIS TIME AROUND, IT WOULDN'T BE THE LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR, IT WOULD BE -- WELL, I GUESS IT WOULD BE, BECAUSE THE LEGISLATURE WOULD HAVE TO REVIEW ALL THESE TAX EXEMPTIONS, RIGHT?

>> IT DEPENDS ON HOW IT'S WRITTEN.

IF THEY ASK FOR THEM TO BE RELOOKED AT BY THE LEGISLATURE, BUT IF IT GOES -- THE TAX AND BUDGET REFORM COMMISSION CAN PUT SOMETHING DIRECTLY ON THE BALLOT WITHOUT HAVING TO GO THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE.

>> WE HAVE ALL THOSE INDIVIDUAL LOBBYISTS THAT WILL FIGHT ON EACH ONE OF THOSE.

YOU TRY AND INCREASE ADVERTISING, NEWSPAPERS WILL GET YA, TELEVISION STATIONS ARE.

THE OSTRICH LOBBY WILL BE UP THERE PROTECTING OSTRICH FEE.

>> SKYBOXES ARE NOW UNTAXED, BUT MIGHT BE TAXED --

>> -- AT THE STADIUM AND ENJOY THAT KIND OF LIFESTYLE ARE GOING TO BE AGAINST IT.

>> THE QUESTION I HAVE, THOUGH, CAN THE COMMISSION DO IT IN 75 WORDS?

AGAIN, I THINK IT SPEAKS TO THE QUESTION OF MECHANICS. HOW IS IT IMPLEMENTED?

JOHN MCKAY DOESN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE LOBBYISTS IN TALLAHASSEE.

HE DOESN'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT POLITICAL.

YOU CAN JUST SEND IT STRAIGHT.

SO I GUESS MY QUESTION IS, HOW IS IT IMPLEMENTED IN 75 WORDS?

>> 75 WORDS IS JUST A BALLOT SUMMARY.

THE AMENDMENT ITSELF CAN BE MUCH LONGER.

THE 75 WORDS APPLIES TO JUST THE SUMMARY THAT'S ON THE BALLOT.

>> BUT HOW DO YOU MAKE THAT SALE TO VOTERS, I GUESS, SO THEY CAN UNDERSTAND IT WHEN THEY READ --

>> ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SEE YOU'RE GOING TO BE INCREASING TAXES.

I THINK THAT WILL BE THE TOUGH SALE THERE.

WHEN YOU GO FURTHER DOWN, MAYBE WE GIVE YOU A TAX DECREASE, I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'RE GOING TO BUY THAT.

>> ALL RIGHT.

WELL, WE'LL HAVE TO SEE.

WELL, WE GET A LOT OF VIEWER COMMENTS.

IN RECENT WEEKS, THE ACQUITTAL OF THE BOOT CAMP GUARDS AND THE NURSE IN THE BEATING DEATH OF MARTIN LEE ANDERSON DREW A LOT OF RESPONSES LIKE THESE:

>> OUR ONGOING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT PROPERTY TAX REFORM DREW A LOT OF RESPONSE:

>> FINALLY, WHILE GOVERNOR CRIST VISITS BRAZIL THIS WEEK AND CONTINUES TO TALK ABOUT ENERGY, WE HAD THIS VIEWER COMMENT:

>> WELL, YOUR COMMENTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.

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

OR ADD A COMMENT AT OUR WEB SITE ONLINE.

THAT'S WEDU.ORG.

WELL, FEDERAL OFFICIALS GAVE GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST UNTIL NOVEMBER 15th TO COME UP WITH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA OVER EXPANDING GAMBLING AT THE TRIBE'S CASINOS.

UNDER FEDERAL INDIAN GAMING LAWS, THE TRIBE IS ENTITLED TO THE SAME LEVEL OF GAMING AS IS ALLOWED IN PLACES LIKE BROWARD COUNTY WHERE SOME LAS VEGAS-STYLE GAMBLING HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED BY VOTERS.

IF THE GOVERNOR AND THE TRIBE CANNOT STRIKE A DEALING, THE FEDS MIGHT GIVE THE SEMINOLES AN OKAY AND FLORIDA MIGHT LOSE ANY CLAIM TO TAX REVENUE GENERATED BY THE GAMBLING.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

JOHN, THE FEDS HAVE REALLY TAKEN A HARD LINE ON THIS.

DO YOU THINK WE'LL COME UP WITH AN AGREEMENT BEFORE NEXT WEEK?

>> I'M NOT GOING TO GAMBLE ON THE QUESTION.

[LAUGHTER]

I HAVE MORE OF A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION, AND THAT IS, YOU KNOW, HOW LONG IS THE STATE GOING TO LOOK TO GET EXTRA BUDGET MONEY FROM SMOKERS AND GAMBLERS?

FANS OF KENNY ROGERS ARE STAYING OUT OF THE STATE IN DROVES.

I DON'T SEE -- EVERY ARGUMENT I HEAR ABOUT IT IS, ONCE YOU APPROVE ONE, YOU GET ADDICTED TO IT.

YOU APPROVE ANOTHER, AND IT GOES IN.

AND I THINK THAT LEADS US TO THE SECOND QUESTION, HOW FIRMLY WILL HOUSE SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO OPPOSE THIS?

IF WE DO GET SOME KIND OF COMPACT BY THE 15th, WILL HE TAKE IT LEGALLY?

WHAT WILL THAT FIGHT LOOK LIKE?

AND I THINK THAT WILL ALL DEPEND ON IF THEY DO GET AN AGREEMENT, WHAT THAT AGREEMENT LOOKS LIKE.

>> WELL, HOUSE SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO, DARRYL, THIS WEEK SAID THAT HE HAS THE RIGHT AND HE'S GOT A LEGAL OPINION FROM JON MILLS, THE FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, THAT SAYS THAT THE LEGISLATURE HAS THE RIGHT TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OR GET INVOLVED IN ANY DEAL THAT THE STATE MIGHT TRY TO WORK OUT WITH THE SEMINOLE INDIANS.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT?

>> WELL, I THINK HE HAS A POINT.

AND CERTAINLY, THE LEGISLATURE, SINCE THEY REPRESENT THE PEOPLE, BEEN ELECTED, SHOULD VOICE AN OPINION AND HAVE SOME SAY IN WHAT GOES DOWN.

WHAT I DON'T WANT TO SEE HAPPEN IS THAT WE SO BLINDLY OPPOSE IT THAT WE LOSE OUT ON AN OPPORTUNITY THAT WILL BE A REVENUE STREAM FOR SOMEBODY, ANYBODY, ANYWAY.

AND SO I THINK THAT WE SHOULD HAVE SOME MEASURED OPPOSITION TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE SOME SAY IN HOW IT COMES DOWN, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE NEED TO CUT A DEAL.

>> UM-HUM.

I THINK SPEAKER RUBIO, SUSAN, REPRESENTS SOME CONSERVATIVES WHO THINK THAT GAMBLING IS AMORAL AND DOESN'T WANT TO SEE AN EXPANSION OF GAMBLING IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

>> AND CERTAINLY THE VOTERS OF FLORIDA HAVE THREE TIMES TURNED DOWN FULL-FLEDGED CASINO GAMBLING.

POLLS HAVE SHOWN EVEN A SHIFT IN ATTITUDE ABOUT GAMBLING BECAUSE IT'S SO PERVASIVE ANYWAY.

AND WHEN YOU'RE STRAPPED FOR CASH, SOMETIMES THE REALITIES OF REVENUE SHORTFALLS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER SOME MORAL ISSUES.

GOING BACK TO SPEAKER RUBIO, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

EVERYBODY HERE KNOWS HE HAS HIS EYES ON THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR AT SOME POINT.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

HE IS DETERMINED TO MAKE HIMSELF OUT TO BE A VERY FISCAL CONSERVATIVE, AND MORE IN THE MOLD OF A JEB BUSH REPUBLICAN THAN A CHARLIE CRIST REPUBLICAN.

>> BUT THE WAY HE'S GOING AFTER GOVERNOR CRIST, YOU'D THINK HE HAS AN EYE ON THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR WHILE CHARLIE IS IN IT.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

EVERY SINGLE ISSUE THEY SEEM TO REALLY BE FIGHTING AND GOING ON.

>> THAT'S MORE THAN AN EYE.

HE BETTER HAVE A HUGE BANK ROLL -- YOU KNOW, I CAN UNDERSTAND WHERE RUBIO IS COMING FROM, WHICH KIND OF SCARES ME, IN THE FACT THAT, YOU KNOW, WE HAVE THIS ONLINE POKER. WE HAVE FANTASY FOOTBALL, LOTTERY, PARI-MUTUELS, ALL KINDS OF GAMING.

IT'S INCREASING WITH OR WITHOUT THE LEGISLATURE APPROVING ANYTHING.

BUT I DO THINK IT IS TIME TO CUT A DEAL.

I DO THINK THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN WHETHER WE HAVE A PIECE OF THE PIE OR NOT.

I'D MUCH RATHER HAVE A PIECE OF THE PIE.

>> OKAY.

WELL, IN OTHER ELECTION NEWS, TWO POLITICAL OUTSIDERS, WON SEATS ON THE ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL THIS WEEK.

THE UPSET VICTORIES OF BILL DUDLEY AND WENGAY NEWT NEWTON

OVER A PAIR OF ESTABLISHMENT CANDIDATES COULD SIGNAL A REVOLT BY VOTERS IN ST. PETERSBURG.

MAYOR RICK BAKER HAD ENDORSED DUDLEY'S AND NEWTON'S OPPONENTS, SO SOME SEE IT AS A DEFEAT FOR THE MAYOR.

ON TOP OF THIS, THE TWO WINNERS WERE ENDORSED BY THE FIREFIGHTERS UNION AND HAD THE SUPPORT OF A GAY RIGHTS GROUP AND THE LOCAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

BUT THERE WAS AT LEAST ONE VICTORY FOR THE MAYOR.

ONE OF HIS STRONGEST CRITICS, BOB KERSTEIN LOST TO HERB POLSON.

DARRYL, HOW WOULD YOU ANALYZE THE OUTCOME OF TUESDAY'S ELECTION IN ST. PETE?

>> I THINK COMPLACENCY WON.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT WAS AN INDICTMENT AGAINST THE MAYOR.

I THINK BECAUSE OF HERB POLSON'S VICTORY AGAINST AN ARDENT CRITIC LIKE BOB KERSTEIN SHOWS THAT IT WAS NOT AN INDICTMENT AGAINST THE MAYOR.

HAVING SAID THAT, HOWEVER, IT'S REFRESHING THAT WE HAVE NEWT AND DUDLEY ON THE COUNCIL NOW WHO HAVE BEEN OPPONENTS OF SOME OF THE MAYOR'S IDEAS AND PLANS.

BUT I DON'T THINK IT WAS A STATEMENT, A MANDATE, IF YOU WILL, FROM THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE MAYOR'S POLICIES.

MORE THAN I THINK COMPLACENCY WON.

>> YOU SAY THAT LIKE YOU MAY BE WORKING WITH THEM IN SOME CAPACITY SOME WAY.

>> I DEAL WITH WHO?

>> WHAT I'M GETTING AT, THOUGH, IT IS GOING TO BE FRAMED THAT WAY WITH MAYOR BAKER THAT PERHAPS THERE WAS SOME ANTIBAKER SENTIMENTS AND NOW THE PRESS RELEASES HAVE GONE OUT.

I THINK THERE'S A CHANCE FOR MAYOR BAKER.

THERE ARE A LOT OF REPUBLICANS THAT REALLY LIKE MAYOR BAKER AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM REACH HIGHER OFFICE.

HE CAN TURN IT ON HIS HEAD.

SHOW SOME MODERATION, BRING THE COUNCIL TOGETHER THAT MIGHT BE A POSITIVE FOR HIM AS HE LOOKS TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

>> WHAT IT IS IS AN INDICTMENT AGAINST MAYOR TO ENDORSE CITY COUNCILMEN.

THEN YOU LOOK STUPID IF YOU LOSE AND IT LOOKS LIKE, YOU KNOW, IT'S REFERENDUM ON YOUR MAYORSHIP.

YOU KNOW, THAT'S PROBABLY THE GREATER LESSON HERE, IS YOU PROBABLY SHOULD STAY OUT OF CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

BUT WHAT IS REALLY STRANGE IS THE FIVE OF US TALKING HERE IS MORE PEOPLE THAN VOTED IN THESE ELECTIONS.

9% VOTED IN ST. PETERSBURG.

HOW CAN THIS BE A REFERENDUM ON ANYTHING EXCEPT THE LACK OF INTEREST IN CITY COUNCIL BY THE VOTERS?

>> AND A LOT OF ANTI-INCUMBENCY.

I THINK THAT'S THE THREAD YOU SAW THROUGHOUT THE STATE ON TUESDAY.

>> DOES THIS LACK OF TURNOUT SHOW THAT PEOPLE FEEL PRETTY COMPLACENT ABOUT THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, THAT THINGS ARE PRETTY GOOD BECAUSE THERE'S NO ISSUE THAT REALLY DRAWS THEM TO THE POLLS?

>> MAYOR BAKER HAS BEEN A GOOD MAYOR IN MANY RESPECTS, ESPECIALLY FOR MIDTOWN.

I SUPPORTED THE MAYOR AND VOTED FOR HIM TWICE.

IT'S IRONIC THAT AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY THAT IS LARGELY DEMOCRATIC VOTED 90% AS A BLOC FOR WHITE REPUBLICAN RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE MAYOR LIKE THEY DID LAST TIME.

BUT HAVING SAID THAT, THE MAYOR HAS NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH ON SOME ISSUES.

AND I'VE BEEN A CRITIC OF THE MAYOR ON PARTICULAR SOME OF THOSE THINGS.

LIKE SOME OF THE DEVELOPERS AND THE FACT THAT SOME MONEY AND CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER THINGS HAVE GONE AROUND ST. PETE BUT SOMEHOW THEY SKIPPED MIDTOWN, AND THEY SKIPPED BUILDING WEALTH IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

I THINK THE MAYOR HAS NOT BEEN THE BULLY MAYOR THAT WE WOULD HAVE LIKED HIM TO BE ON CERTAIN ISSUES.

>> THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT COME TO HIS DEFENSE IN THE ISSUE OF MIDTOWN.

THEY LIKE THAT HE'S FOCUSING ON CHILDS PARK.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS HE'S DOING THAT DO HAVE APPEAL.

>> SOCIAL PROGRAMS, AND THOSE THINGS, TOO, ARE NEEDED.

HE'S GIVING US A JOB.

A JOB CORPS, AND JOBS ARE, CERTAINLY, NEEDED.

BUT WHAT I HAVE NOT SEEN IN ST. PETERSBURG IS THE BUILDING OF WEALTH AMONGST AFRICAN-AMERICANS, THE INCLUSION OF BLACK FOLKS ON BOARDS AND IN CORPORATE BOARD ROOMS AND OTHER PLACES THAT WE NEED TO BE.

AND I BELIEVE THAT A STRONG MAYOR REALIZING THE CONTINGENCY OF VOTES THAT HE GOT FROM MIDTOWN WOULD HAVE DONE MORE FOR THAT COMMUNITY.

>> OKAY.

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.

PATRICK, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK?

>> THE GOP CANDIDATES HAVE AGREED TO DEBATE ON UNIVISION, DO A SPANISH DEBATE OR SPANISH-TARGETED DEBATE.

IT'S GREAT THAT THEY HAVE FINALLY REALIZED THAT A LARGE SECTION OF THE COUNTRY IS HISPANIC.

AND THAT THE FUTURE OF BOTH PARTIES IS PROBABLY FIGURING OUT HOW TO CAPTURE THAT VOTE.

>> THE MAJOR CANDIDATES HAVE ACCEPTED.

WHAT ABOUT SOME OF THE CANDIDATES LIKE TANCREDO, WHO HAS BEEN VERY TOUGH ON IMMIGRATION.

>> I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WOULD DO, DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WOULD SAY.

ALL WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME ONCE THEY GET DOWN THERE.

HAVE TO DO A LOT OF DANCING WHEN ISSUE OF IMMIGRATION COMES UP.

THEY ALL HAVE HORRIBLE POSITIONS ON IT.

MAYBE IT WILL MAKE THEM START THINKING ABOUT A REAL POSITION ON IMMIGRATION.

>> JOHN, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> I THINK THIS IS THE WEEK WE SEE VIOLENT CRIME EMERGE AS A SLEEPER ISSUE, MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT IMMIGRATION AND THE ECONOMY WERE.

ESPECIALLY RURAL AREAS, SEEING AN UPTICK ON BLACK AND LATINO VIOLENCE.

EARLIER THIS WEEK OUT-OF-PLANT CITY, THERE WERE FIVE FARM WORKERS THAT WERE BASICALLY MUGGED.

AND WE'RE STARTING TO SEE THAT THERE'S A CONCERN IN THESE RURAL COMMUNITIES, WHETHER IT'S PLANT CITY, YOU GO UP TO OUTSIDE OF NEW ORLEANS, OUT OF -- GEORGIA, FT. MYERS.

SEEING MORE OF THIS ANECDOTALLY THROUGH NEWSPAPER REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS OF IT.

>> ONE OF THE INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT THE PLANT CITY

ROBBERIES, MIGRANT FARM WORKERS DON'T HAVE BANKS.

THEY CAN'T ESTABLISH BANK ACCOUNTS.

THAT GOES BACK TO THE ISSUE OF TREATMENT OF IMMIGRANTS AND HISPANICS.

>> TO SOME EXTENT.

>> A LOT OF THEM DON'T WANT TO REPORT THESE CRIMES BECAUSE THEY'RE AFRAID WITH THE PRESSURE ON THAT THE SHERIFF IS GOING TO ARREST THEM INSTEAD OF GO AFTER THE ROBBER.

>> DARRYL, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK?.

>> WELL, I THINK IT'S THE PRESS RELEASE THAT CAME OUT FROM THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF FLORIDA IN TERMS OF ITS AFRICAN-AMERICAN OUTREACH.

AN UNPRECEDENTED GATHERING NEXT WEEK ON THE 16th IN ORLANDO WHERE LYNN SWANN, WHO LOST A CLOSE RACE FOR GOVERNOR UP IN PENNSYLVANIA, WILL BE COMING DOWN.

THE FACT THAT THE REPUBLICAN PARTY NOW REALIZES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT WRITE OFF THE BLACK VOTE AND THE DEMOCRATS REALIZING THAT THEY SHOULD NO LONGER TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.

>> AND DO YOU THINK THAT THAT'S GOING TO BE A MAJOR BATTLE IN THE 2008 ELECTION?

>> WITHOUT A DOUBT.

WITHOUT A DOUBT.

I THINK THERE'S A YOUNGER BLACK BUSINESSMEN AND WOMEN COMING UP THAT IS MORE OPEN AND WILLING TO LISTEN THAN BEFORE.

>> SUSAN, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK?

>> ABSOLUTELY.

THE FACT THAT THE ECONOMY HAS OVERTAKEN THE WAR IN IRAQ AS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE ON THE PUBLIC'S MIND.

WHERE DO WE SEE IT MOST AND FIRST?

RIGHT HERE IN FLORIDA, WHERE YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT

PROPERTY TAXES, HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE, RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS, AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE AND NOW GAS PRICES. AND WE'VE SEEN IT.

THE ELECTIONS TUESDAY, I COME BACK TO THAT, WERE JUST, AGAIN, LARGE PART OF THAT WAS PEOPLE'S FRUSTRATION IN THE ECONOMIC -- THIS IS GOING TO BE A POCKETBOOK ELECTION IN '08.

>> WHO IS BEST PREPARED?

DEMOCRATS OR REPUBLICANS, TO TAKE ON THE ECONOMY AS THE ISSUE IN '08?

>> OBVIOUSLY, THE IN PARTY GETS THE BLAME FOR A BAD ECONOMY. LET'S LOOK AT IT TWO WAYS.

THE DEMOCRATS CAN MAKE HAY OF THE FACT THAT MONEY SHOULD BE BETTER SPENT HERE ON DOMESTIC PROGRAMS THAN OUT THERE IN IRAQ.

WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT RISING TAXES, THAT LOSES PEOPLE.

REPUBLICANS MAY WIN ON SAYING WE'RE GOING TO BE LOW TAX, IF THEY LOSE ON SPENDING PRIORITIES THAT AREN'T IN SYNC WITH THE PUBLIC.

IT'S A VERY INTERESTING ISSUE.

>> OKAY.

WELL, THANK YOU, JOHN SEPULVADO, PATRICK MANTEIGA, DR. SUSAN MacMANUS AND DARRYL ROUSON.

AND THANK YOU FOR WATCHING "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

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