

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK"
DECEMBER 7, 2007

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

>>> COMING UP NEXT, HILLARY TAKES THE LEAD IN FLORIDA POLLS AS THE GOP CANDIDATES GET READY FOR A DEBATE IN MIAMI.

SOME SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SAY THEY'D LIKE TO SEE CREATIONISM TAUGHT IN FLORIDA SCHOOLS.

ALLEGATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AGAINST JEB BUSH.

AND RUBIO AND CRIST TAKE THEIR BATTLE TO COURT.

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.

FIRST UP, THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CALLED LAST WEEK TO THE STATION TO SUPPORT WEDU AND "FLORIDA THIS WEEK" DURING OUR FUND-RAISING SPECIAL.

MORE THAN 60 PEOPLE MADE DONATIONS TO HELP KEEP "FLORIDA THIS WEEK" AND ALL OUR OTHER FINE LOCAL PROGRAMMING ON THE

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

AIR, AND WE'RE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

WELL, THIS WEEK, OUR PANELISTS ARE WILLIAM MARCH IS A
POLITICAL REPORTER AT THE "TAMPA TRIBUNE."

ERNEST HOOPER IS A COLUMNIST AT THE "ST. PETERSBURG TIMES."

JULIA RETTIG IS A BUSINESS OWNER AND A REPUBLICAN AND EVELYN
HALE IS A COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AND A DEMOCRAT.

GREAT TO SEE EVERYBODY.

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

WELL, NEW QUINNIPIAC POLL SAYS IF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
WERE HELD TODAY, HILLARY CLINTON WOULD BEAT RUDY GIULIANI 48
TO 41 PERCENT IN FLORIDA.

THAT'S A REVERSAL FROM A MONTH AGO WHEN RUDY TOPPED HILLARY
BY 3% IN THE STATE.

IN FLORIDA'S DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY RACE, CLINTON'S LEAD OVER
BARACK OBAMA IS HUGE, 53 TO 17 PERCENT.

GIULIANI HAS A 30% MARGIN OVER HIS NEAREST RIVAL MITT ROMNEY
WHO GETS 12%.

AND THIS SUNDAY, FLORIDA HOSTS ANOTHER GOP PRESIDENTIAL
DEBATE, THIS ONE SPONSORED BY THE UNIVISION NETWORK IN
MIAMI.

THE ISSUE OF IMMIGRATION IS AGAIN SURE TO COME UP.

WELL, WINDY, LET'S START WITH THE ISSUE OF HILLARY'S POLL
NUMBERS RIGHT NOW.

WHAT DO WE MAKE OF THESE?

IS THIS SIGNIFICANT THAT SHE'S NOW PRETTY FAR AHEAD OF RUDY

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

GIULIANI IF THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE WERE HELD TODAY?

>> IT'S SIGNIFICANT.

BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO OVERPLAY THIS ONE, ROB.

IT'S A SEVEN-POINT LEAD.

THE REASON THAT'S SIGNIFICANT IS FOR THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, GIULIANI AND HILLARY HAVE BEEN VERY CLOSE IN FLORIDA.

IN FACT, YOU SAID THIS WAS A REVERSAL FROM LAST MONTH.

LAST MONTH WAS A REVERSAL FROM THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

FOR THE LAST TWO MONTHS, BOTH OF THEM WHEN THEY WERE GOING BACK AND FORTH IN THE LEAD, NEITHER ONE OF THEM EVER MANAGED TO GET BEYOND THE MARGIN OF ERROR.

WELL, THIS IS THE FIRST POLL THAT I'VE SEEN THAT SHOWS HILLARY LEADING HIM BY MORE THAN THE MARGIN OF ERROR.

BUT IT'S ONE POLL OUT OF SEVERAL THAT ARE DONE IN FLORIDA AND POLLS DIFFER.

YOU CAN'T RELY ON ANY ONE OF THEM.

SEVEN POINTS IS BIGGER THAN THE MARGIN OF ERROR, BUT IT'S NOT HUGE.

AND I STILL HAVE TO SAY THE STATE IS PRETTY MUCH A TOSS-UP BETWEEN EITHER IN THE CLINTON-GIULIANI MATCHUP OR IN WHATEVER GENERIC REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRATIC MATCHUP COMES OUT.

>> WE'RE SEEING LESS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES.

SOME OF THEM SNEAK IN FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT HILLARY REALLY DOESN'T HAVE MUCH OF A PRESENCE HERE.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE GOP, CNN, YOUTUBE DEBATE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH RUDY'S NUMBERS FALLING?

>> SURE, YOU COULD SAY THAT.

GIULIANI HAD A BAD PERFORMANCE IN THE DEBATE RIGHT BEFORE THIS POLL WAS DONE.

THE LAST POLL THAT SHOWED GIULIANI LEADING HILLARY WAS DONE RIGHT AFTER THE BIG STORIES ABOUT THE DEMOCRATIC BOYCOTT THAT WAS BAD NEWS FOR CLINTON.

SO YOU CAN RELATE THESE NUMBERS TO THE EVENTS.

BUT, AGAIN, I STILL HAVE TO SAY THE STATE IS STILL PRETTY MUCH A TOSS-UP.

THE NUMBERS MEAN SOMETHING, BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO OVERPLAY THESE NUMBERS.

>> JULIA, IT'S GIULIANI WITH 30% ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE, IF WE LOOK AT THE PRIMARY RACE, AND THEN IT'S ROMNEY WITH 12, HUCKABEE WITH 11, THOMPSON WITH 10 AND McCAIN WITH 9.

ANY SURPRISES THERE FOR YOU?

>> NOT REALLY.

I THINK HILLARY CLINTON HAS GREAT NAME RECOGNITION AND REMEMBER WHEN HOWARD DEAN WAS BEATING EVERYBODY IN THE POLLS SOME TIME AGO BEFORE THE INFAMOUS -- TO ME, POLLS DON'T MEAN A LOT.

THE GOP IS DOING A SMART THING BY DOING THEIR DEBATE ON UNIVISION.

I THINK THAT READERSHIP, THAT AUDIENCE WILL BE HUGE FOR THEM

TO PRESENT THEIR PLATFORMS.

THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT FLORIDA, DR. SUSAN MacMANUS, WHO HAS BEEN ON THE SHOW A BUNCH, WAS WITH ME THIS WEEK AND SHARED SOME POLLING.

AND THE REASON WHY FLORIDA IS SUCH A PIVOTAL BATTLEGROUND STATE IS THE HISPANIC VOTE.

IT'S KIND OF EVENLY BROKEN AS FAR AS REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT.

BUT THERE'S A REALLY BIG NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT VOTERS.

THAT'S WHY IT'S SUCH A BATTLEGROUND STATE.

IF THERE'S A POLL AFTER THE UNIVISION DEBATE AND WHAT IT DOES TO SKEW THE NUMBERS.

IT WILL BE REALLY INTERESTING.

>> EVELYN, THIS UNIVISION DEBATE IS SUNDAY NIGHT.

ALMOST ALL OF THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE GOING TO BE THERE EXCEPT FOR TOM TANCREDO.

HE'S BACKING OUT, SAYING HE'S NOT GOING TO BE THERE.

HE SAYS BY DOING THE DEBATE IN SPANISH, THAT THESE OTHER REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE PANDERING TO THE SPANISH-SPEAKING POPULATION.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT?

>> WELL, I THINK IT'S A REALLY SILLY MOVE ON HIS BEHALF.

AND THE REASON WHY -- I MEAN, LET'S TALK ABOUT BOTH WHAT REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC STRATEGISTS ARE SAYING.

IN ORDER TO WIN THE WHITE HOUSE, THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MUST RECEIVE AT LEAST 40% OF THE HISPANIC VOTE.

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

SO THAT MEANS THAT HISPANICS ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE AT LEAST 10% OF THE TOTAL VOTE IN 2008.

THERE HE LOST THE VOTE.

AND, ESPECIALLY, I MEAN, I THINK THAT RIGHT NOW, THE UNIVISION, WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO WITH THIS DEBATE WILL BE A VERY BIG ISSUE.

BUT IMMIGRATION IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THEM.

>> WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THE SPANISH SPEAKERS?

>> THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES ARE THE SAME ISSUES THAT WE ALL HAVE.

OUR EDUCATION, OUR FAMILY, OUR CRIME, OUR ECONOMIC PROGRESS, BUT THEY HAVE DECIDED TO MOVE ON AND SAY, WE SEE HOW THIS IMMIGRATION THING IS HAPPENING, THIS REFORM IS HAPPENING, AND WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.

AS YOU SEE, THEY HAVE WOKEN UP.

THEY HAVE GONE AND NOW YOU SEE THE VOTING TURNOUT INCREASE FOR HISPANICS 33% FROM 2002 TO 2006.

>> I'LL SUBMIT TO YOU THAT I THINK GOVERNOR BUSH AND MEL MARTINEZ HAVE A GREAT INFLUENCE ON BRINGING THOSE VOTER BASES OUT.

I THINK BOTH OF THEM SPEAKING SPANISH AND BEING BILINGUAL HAS REALLY GENERATED A LOT OF INTEREST FROM THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY.

AGAIN, DR. MacMANUS SUGGESTS THAT AS WELL.

IT IS INTERESTING BECAUSE JEB BUSH IS SO POPULAR IN THE

STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE FACT THAT HE'S SO LIKED AND FLUENT AND BILINGUAL, HE'S CAPTURED A LOT OF ATTENTION, AND MORE VOTERS ARE TURNING OUT BY VIRTUE OF THAT, I THINK.

>> BUT THE FACT IS, NO LONGER -- JEB BUSH DID A GREAT, GREAT FACT IN DOING THAT, BUT RIGHT NOW, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY DOES NOT HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON THE HISPANICS.

THERE'S 50 -- I THINK 57% ARE REGISTERED DEMOCRATS.

23% ARE REPUBLICAN.

AND NOW WE'RE SEEING IN MIAMI THE CUBAN VOTE, THE OLDER CUBAN VOTE, THEY ARE STARTING TO PASS AWAY.

NOT ALL OF THEM, I DON'T MEAN THAT.

BUT THEIR CHILDREN ARE CHANGING THEIR MINDS AND SAYING, I LIKE THIS PERSPECTIVE.

I LIKE THIS POINT OF VIEW.

>> ERNEST, ONE OTHER THING HAPPENED THIS WEEK, THAT IS MIKE HUCKABEE CAME OUT, ONE OF THE REPUBLICAN CONTENDERS AND SAYS HE HAS A NEW IMMIGRATION PLAN WHICH PRETTY MUCH GOES AGAINST WHAT HE DID AS GOVERNOR AND SOME OF THE THINGS HE SAID IN THE PAST.

AMONG THE THINGS THAT HE SAYS IS THAT HE WANTS TO FORCE PEOPLE WHO ARE HERE WITHOUT DOCUMENTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR HOME COUNTRIES BEFORE THEY CAN APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP.

I THINK THERE'S SOME 12 MILLION BY THE NUMBERS, 12 MILLION PEOPLE WHO ARE HERE ILLEGALLY.

AND HUCKABEE, I THINK, WAS CONSIDERED A MODERATE UNTIL HIS

PLAN WAS ANNOUNCED LATE THIS WEEK ON THE ISSUE OF IMMIGRATION.

>> YOU KNOW, I WAS REALLY INTERESTED TO SEE HUCKABEE COME OUT WITH THAT PLAN, BECAUSE AT LEAST IN MY MIND, HE SCORED POINTS IN THE YOUTUBE GOP DEBATE WHEN THE DISCUSSION OF WHAT TO DO WITH THE CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS.

AND HE FAVORED -- IF THEY MADE GOOD GRADES AND IF THEY HAD DONE WELL ACADEMICALLY, HE FAVORED ALLOWING THEM TO APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP IN ARKANSAS THAT WAS OPEN TO OTHER STUDENTS.

AND I THOUGHT HE CAME ACROSS ON THAT ISSUE AS BEING MORE COMPASSIONATE AND MORE HUMAN THAN MITT ROMNEY, WHO TOOK A VERY STAUNCH OPPOSITION TO ALLOWING ANYONE WHO IS HERE ILLEGALLY TO ACCESS THAT SCHOLARSHIP MONEY.

THAT'S THE WRONG CALL, IN MY OPINION.

AS HUCKABEE EXPRESSED SO WELL, WE NEED TO ALLOW THEM TO BECOME EDUCATED, TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS, AND IT'S NOT THEIR FAULT THAT THEIR PARENTS BROUGHT THEM HERE.

YES, THEY MAY BE HERE ILLEGALLY, BUT THAT'S NOT A CHOICE THAT THEY MADE.

SO THIS SEEMS TO BE GOING COUNTER, HIS PLAN THAT HE ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK SEEMS TO BE GOING COUNTER TO THE COMPASSION HE SHOWED IN THE YOUTUBE GOP DEBATE.

AND I SEE THAT AS A MISTAKE ON HUCKABEE'S PART.

>> A MEMBER OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SAYS THAT SHE

WILL VOTE AGAINST FLORIDA'S NEW SCIENCE STANDARDS BECAUSE EVOLUTION WOULD BE TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THE EXCLUSION OF OTHER THEORIES ON THE ORIGINS OF LIFE.

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT FLORIDA MAY SOON SEE A BATTLE OVER ITS PROPOSED NEW SCIENCE STANDARDS, STANDARDS THAT ADVOCATE TEACHING THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION.

CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS GROUPS ARE ORGANIZING, SENDING COMMENTS BY THE THOUSANDS TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DEMANDING THAT INTELLIGENT DESIGN ALSO BE TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND LOCALLY, A MAJORITY ON THE POLK SCHOOL BOARD FAVORING TEACHING INTELLIGENT DESIGN ALONG WITH EVOLUTION.

ERNEST, IS THIS A BATTLE THAT WE'RE GOING TO SEE COMING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS?

ARE WE GOING TO SEE A BATTLE OVER INTELLIGENT DESIGN AND PEOPLE THAT FAVOR JUST TEACHING EVOLUTION IN FLORIDA SCHOOLS?

>> YOU KNOW, ROB, I THINK THERE'S A SOLID MAJORITY OUT THERE THAT FAVORS THE TEACHING OF EVOLUTION.

CERTAINLY, CREATIONISM AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN, I THINK PEOPLE WILL BE COMFORTABLE WITH THAT BEING DISCUSSED IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS, BUT I DON'T THINK THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THIS STATE ARE COMFORTABLE WITH IT BEING TAUGHT IN SCIENCE CLASS.

MY PROBLEM WITH INTELLIGENT DESIGN IS THAT I BELIEVE ALL OF

ITS FINDINGS ARE ROOTED IN SOMEONE WANTING TO DISPROVE
EVOLUTION, NOT WANTING TO BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE EVOLVED FROM
APES.

EVOLUTION WAS NOT SPURRED BY SUCH A DESIRE.

IT, IN MY OPINION, WAS DRIVEN PURELY BY SCIENCE.

AND I THINK IF WE TRY TO INTRODUCE INTELLIGENT DESIGN OR
CREATIONISM INTO OUR SCIENCE CURRICULUM, I THINK WE MAY BE
THREATENING ACCREDITATION OF OUR SCHOOLS ON A NATIONAL
LEVEL.

>>Rob Lorei: EVELYN, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

>> WELL, I CAME FROM A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN BOGOTA, COLOMBIA,
A MISSIONARY SCHOOL.

I'M A MISSIONARY KID.

ALL I KNEW WAS INTELLIGENT DESIGN.

I WAS NEVER SHOWN THE SIDE OF EVOLUTION UNTIL I WENT TO THE
UNIVERSITY.

AND MY THOUGHT OF THIS IS THAT YOU SHOULD GIVE BOTH
THEORIES.

I MEAN, YOU SHOULD BE OPEN-MINDED, TOO, AND RESPECT OTHER
PEOPLE'S DECISIONS AND THOUGHTS ON WHAT THINGS ARE AND WHAT
THEY BELIEVE IN.

THAT'S WHAT I COME OUT WITH MY CONCLUSION.

>> IT'S INTERESTING THAT SHE SAYS THAT BECAUSE IN THINKING
ABOUT THIS TOPIC, I THOUGHT I'M NOT AN EXPERT IN EITHER ONE,
BUT I WAS RAISED CATHOLIC IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL, VERY SHUNNED

UNEDITED REALTIME CLOSED CAPTIONING

TO OUTSIDE BELIEFS.

AND THEN I WENT TO A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL WHERE EVOLUTION WAS DISCUSSED.

AND I REALLY QUESTIONED WHAT I WAS RAISED AS.

AND I WAS QUESTIONING MY OWN BELIEFS, AND THAT WAS DIFFICULT.

I RATHER WOULD HAVE SEEN MYSELF BE ABLE TO LEARN BOTH AND ABSORB BOTH AND THEN COME TO MY OWN CONCLUSIONS AND NOT BE STIFLED FROM THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN SOMETHING ELSE.

SO I KIND OF TOOK MYSELF BACK TO MY YOUTH AND SAID, YOU KNOW WHAT, I WAS VERY CONFLICTED.

AND I NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT, BY THE WAY.

I NEVER CAME HOME -- THEY WOULD HAVE KILLED ME -- AND SAID TO MY PARENTS, HEY, I'M CONFUSED.

IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU WOULD EVER BRING UP.

>> BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU MAKE THE DECISION AS AN ADULT.

>> YOU BOTH USED THE WORD "BELIEF" WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THIS.

SCIENCE IS NOT ABOUT BELIEF.

I THINK THAT'S THE POINT ERNEST WAS MAKING.

SURE, TEACH IT IN RELIGION CLASS, BIBLE CLASS, WHATEVER.

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IS WHAT YOU TEACH AS SCIENCE.

SCIENCE IS SCIENCE.

IT'S NOT ABOUT BELIEF.

YOU GUYS CAN GO TO SCIENCE CLASS AND STUDY SCIENCE AND THEN
GO DECIDE YOU BELIEVE SOMETHING ELSE.

BELIEFS AREN'T ABOUT SCIENCE.

>> I TOTALLY AGREE WITH YOU.

>> WELL, THIS IS ABOUT PEOPLE TRYING TO MAKE CREATIONISM OR
INTELLIGENT DESIGN INTO SCIENCE, WHICH THEY QUITE SIMPLY
AREN'T.

SCIENCE IS SOMETHING THAT CAN BE DISPROVED.

RELIGION CANNOT BE DISPROVED.

>> WINDY, I HAVE TO ASK YOU --

>> SHOULDN'T BE TAUGHT IN SCIENCE CLASS.

>> WHAT ERNEST SAID, YOU TEACH IT IN SOCIAL STUDIES IF YOU
WANT TO TEACH INTELLIGENT DESIGN OR SEND YOUR KID TO
PAROCHIAL SCHOOL.

THERE ARE SCHOOLS THAT YOU CAN PUT YOUR CHILDREN IN THAT
TALK ABOUT THAT.

>> WINDY, I HAVE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE POLITICS OF THIS.

THE ISSUE REALLY IS BEING PUT FORWARD BY THE FLORIDA BAPTIST
WITNESS NEWSPAPER, AND IT'S ALSO BEING PUT FORWARD ON SOME
RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS AROUND THE STATE.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THEY TO KIND OF MOVING THE STATE'S
POLITICAL APPARATUS?

I MEAN, HOW MUCH POWER IS THERE IN THOSE KIND OF GROUPS?

>> THERE IS SOME POWER IN THEM, ROB.

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS

CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT IN FLORIDA SAME AS NATIONWIDE, REALLY, NO DIFFERENT FROM NATIONWIDE, IS THAT IT'S LOST A LITTLE INFLUENCE LATELY, LARGELY BECAUSE IT'S REALLY HEAVILY ASSOCIATED WITH GEORGE BUSH, AND HIS POPULARITY HAS DECLINED.

AND SECOND, BECAUSE THE MOVEMENT CONSERVATIVES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO UNIFY THEMSELVES BEHIND ANY ONE OF THE CURRENT REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

THE MOVEMENT CONSERVATIVES ARE LITERALLY ALL OVER THE MAP IN THIS PRIMARY.

GIULIANI, HUCKABEE, THOMPSON, ROMNEY.

AND IN FLORIDA, THE ASCENDANCY OF CHARLIE CRIST, A MODERATE, HAS CAUSED SOME DECLINE IN THE INFLUENCE LEVEL OF THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES, THE MOVEMENT OF CONSERVATIVES.

SO THEY STILL HAVE SOME CLOUT.

NOT AS MUCH AS YOU WOULD HAVE SAID THEY HAD THREE, FOUR, FIVE YEARS AGO.

>>> LET'S GO ON TO OUR NEXT TOPIC.

LAST MONTH, AN ORLANDO-BASED BANKING COMPANY APPOINTED FORMER GOVERNOR JEB BUSH TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

THE BANK, CNL BANCSHARES, IS THE SAME ONE GRANTED

\$3.1 MILLION IN TAX BREAKS FROM BUSH'S OFFICE WHEN HE WAS GOVERNOR.

THE APPOINTMENT RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

A COMMON CAUSE OFFICIAL SAID IT, QUOTE, SMACKED OF POLITICAL

PAYBACK.

BUT A SPOKESPERSON FOR ONE OF THE BANK'S OWNERS DENIED THAT THERE WAS ANY CONFLICT.

JULIA, ANY CONFLICT FOR THE GOVERNOR SITTING ON A BOARD WHERE WHEN HE WAS GOVERNOR, HE GAVE \$3.1 MILLION IN TAX BREAKS?

>> HE DIDN'T GIVE 3.1 MILLION.

THE STATE DID.

AND THE QUALIFIED TARGETED INDUSTRIES TAX CREDIT HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE 1995, SOMETHING THAT WAS ESTABLISHED BY US AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE TO COMPANIES WHO NOT ONLY RELOCATED HERE OR STAYED AND GREW THEIR EMPLOYMENT BASE, BUT THEY HAD TO MEET A COUPLE OF CRITERIA.

NUMBER ONE, THEY PAID A CERTAIN SALARY.

AND NUMBER TWO, THAT THEY GREW THEIR EMPLOYMENT POOL BY SO MUCH.

SO THE PEOPLE THAT BENEFIT FROM THE QTI TAX CREDIT ARE PEOPLE WHO GET EMPLOYED BY THAT COMPANY.

AND THEN THE COMPANY MAKES A COMMITMENT TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA THAT THEY ARE STAYING.

AND ALL THESE CRITERIA HAVE TO BE MET.

IN FACT, QTI HAS BEEN USED PROBABLY FOR 70 DIFFERENT COMPANIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

SO I GUESS JEB BUSH COULD EFFECTIVELY BE ON 70 BOARDS.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE.

HE WAS A REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, VERY SUCCESSFUL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

AND WAY BEFORE HE WAS OUR GOVERNOR, HE WAS INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL IN THAT DISCIPLINE.

SO A COMPANY LIKE CNL, WHO, BY THE WAY, IS A COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, WOULD BE SMART TO HAVE A GUY LIKE JEB BUSH ON THEIR BOARD.

IT'S GOOD BUSINESS.

ANYBODY PUTTING A BOARD TOGETHER PICKING SMART PEOPLE.

YOU KNOW, JEB WASN'T THE ONLY GUY RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT QTI TAX CREDIT THING.

>> ERNEST, DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANY SORT OF CONFLICT HERE?

>> I DON'T.

I THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOME GOP HATERS TRYING TO MAKE HAY OF THIS.

BUT I'LL SAY THIS, WE HAVE ETHICS TO GOVERN NOT ONLY REALITY, BUT PERCEPTION.

AND JEB HAS TO BE MINDFUL OF THE PERCEPTION PEOPLE MIGHT HAVE AND AT LEAST SPEAK TO THOSE CONCERNS AND NOT IGNORE THEM.

>> DO YOU THINK HE SHOULD MAKE A STATEMENT?

>> YEAH, I DO.

I DO.

>> THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT IT, CNL DIDN'T RECEIVE THE WHOLE \$3 MILLION.

THEY ONLY RECEIVED \$200,000 OF THE TAX CREDIT BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T ACHIEVE ALL THE CRITERIA WE TALKED ABOUT.

AND THE STATE MONITORS THAT EXCLUSIVE OF THE GOVERNOR.

THAT'S AN AGENCY THAT MONITORS IF THE EMPLOYER IS MEETING THE STANDARDS.

>> UM-HUM.

WILLIAM, DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANYTHING THERE?

>> MAYBE A LITTLE MORE THAN WHAT WE'VE HEARD FROM ERNEST AND JULIA.

GRANTING THE TAX CREDITS IS ALWAYS A JUDGMENT CALL.

THE COMPANY HASN'T, IN FACT, PRODUCED AS MANY JOBS AS IT SAID IT WAS GOING TO PRODUCE.

JEB HAS TAKEN SEVERAL CORPORATE DIRECTORSHIPS SINCE HE LEFT OFFICE.

A POSSIBLY MORE SERIOUS ONE -- A QUESTION WAS REPORTED IN FORBES MAGAZINE LAST WEEK.

JEB HAS ALSO BECOME A HIRED CONSULTANT TO LEHMAN BROTHERS.

LEHMAN BROTHERS SOLD THE STATE THE MORTGAGE BACKED SECURITIES THAT ARE CURRENTLY SPIRALING DOWNWARD AND CAUSING A RUN ON THE STATE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT POOL.

BUT YOU HAVE QUESTIONS LIKE THIS THAT ARISE WITH MANY POLITICAL FIGURES WHEN THEY LEAVE OFFICE AND THEN TAKE JOBS WITH COMPANIES THEY REGULATED WHILE THEY WERE IN OFFICE.

AND JEB IS NO MORE THAN ONE OF DOZENS, YOU MIGHT EVEN SAY HUNDREDS OF FORMER CONGRESS MEMBERS, FORMER GOVERNORS,

SENATORS, WHATEVER, MILITARY OFFICERS, WHO LEAVE GOVERNMENT AND TAKE JOBS WITH THE BUSINESSES THEY DEALT WITH AS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

AND IT'S A DIFFICULT AND TOUCHY SUBJECT.

AND THERE ARE SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, SOME MILITARY PEOPLE, WHO ADOPT A PURE -- AN ATTITUDE OF RAISING NO POSSIBLE ETHICAL QUESTION BY REFUSING TO DO THIS.

>> OKAY.

WELL, THIS WEEK, GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST ANSWERED HOUSE SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO'S LAWSUIT THAT ATTEMPTS TO THROW OUT FLORIDA'S GAMBLING AGREEMENT WITH THE SEMINOLE TRIBE. CRIST SAID THE HOUSE'S DECISION TO SUE THE GOVERNOR IS MISGUIDED AND PREMATURE.

RUBIO'S SUIT CLAIMS THE AGREEMENT IS INVALID BECAUSE IT EXPANDS GAMBLING AND THEREFORE EXCEEDS THE GOVERNOR'S AUTHORITY.

CRIST WANTS RUBIO TO WAIT FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO FIRST APPROVE FLORIDA'S DEAL WITH THE TRIBE, A SOVEREIGN NATION, AND THEN, IF THE LEGISLATORS REJECT THAT DEAL, THEY CAN SUE HIM, HE SAYS.

EVELYN, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE?

>> WELL, WHAT I SEE, ROB, IS THAT MARCO RUBIO IS REALLY WANTING THAT GOVERNOR SEAT.

HE IS SEEN BY HIS OWN PARTY AS THE REAL, THE TRUE REPUBLICAN

IN TERMS OF HIS CONSERVATIVISM, IN TERMS OF HIS VISION, AND HE HAS A LOT OF SUPPORTERS.

NOW, CRIST IS BEING ATTACKED BY HIS OWN PARTY ALSO, SO I THINK IT'S A MOVE FOR HIM IF CRIST BECOMES ELECTED AS VP OR SOMETHING. HE'S MAKING THOSE MOVES, BUT HE'S NOT REALLY THINKING ABOUT HOW GAMBLING CREATES TOURISM AND DIFFERENT THINGS LIKE THAT FOR OUR STATE.

SO THAT'S WHAT I THINK.

>> WILLIAM, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOING ON HERE?

>> WELL, THERE'S A LOT OF MONEY INVOLVED, ROB.

USUALLY IS.

THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE IS, WHETHER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE FORCED FLORIDA TO ACCEPT INDIAN GAMBLING IF FLORIDA DIDN'T GO ALONG WITH IT ON ITS OWN.

MARCO RUBIO AND THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CRITICIZING CHARLIE CRIST FOR AGREEING TO THIS GAMBLING COMPACT SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT DIDN'T HAVE THE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO FORCE FLORIDA TO ACCEPT GAMBLING.

THE GOVERNOR SAYS THAT IT DID.

THE AGREEMENT THAT HE MADE ALLOWED THE INDIANS TO GO FARTHER WITH GAMBLING IN THEIR RESERVATION CASINOS THAN ANYONE THINKS THE STATE COULD HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ACCEPT, BUT IT ALSO PROVIDES THE STATE SOME MONEY.

>> UM-HUM.

>> SO --

>> DIDN'T WE SEE -- IN PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS, DIDN'T WE SEE GOVERNOR CHILES KIND OF STAND BY WHILE THE SEMINOLES WERE TRYING TO INSTITUTE SOME GAMBLING?

AND BECAUSE HE DIDN'T GET INVOLVED, THE STATE LOST OUT ON REVENUE DURING THAT ROUND OF GAMBLING EXPANSION.

>> THE STATE HAS BEEN STIFF-ARMING THE INDIANS OVER THIS ISSUE FOR 16 YEARS.

JEB BUSH REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM EVEN FOR MOST OF HIS TERM.

WHAT GOVERNOR CRIST IS NOW SAYING IS THAT IF WE DON'T NEGOTIATE, IF WE DON'T REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH THEM, THEY'LL DO IT ON THEIR OWN BY FORCE OF FEDERAL LAW.

WHAT MARCO RUBIO IS SAYING IS, THE FORCE OF FEDERAL LAW WOULDN'T BE THERE TO FORCE IT TO HAPPEN.

BUT WHEN THE GOVERNOR MAKES THE AGREEMENT AND GIVES THEM WHAT HE GAVE THEM, THE STATE GETS A HUNDRED MILLION A YEAR FROM IT IN ADDITION.

AND THAT MONEY IS NEEDED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BECAUSE BOTH THE LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR HAVE SAID THEY WANT TO CUT PROPERTY TAXES, BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO CUT FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SO ONE WAY TO LOOK AT THIS IS GOVERNOR CRIST WENT FOR THE MONEY.

>> OKAY.

ALL RIGHT.

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.

ERNEST, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY OF THE WEEK?

>> WELL, THIS WEEK, WE SAW A FORMER "AMERICAN IDOL" --

>> NO, THAT'S MY STORY.

[LAUGHTER]

YOU WERE LATE AND CAN'T STEAL MY STORY.

>> YOU CAN BOTH TALK ABOUT IT.

>> ALL RIGHT, WE'LL SHARE IT.

>> I WAS JUST GOING TO SAY THE COVERAGE OF JESSICA SIERRA
TELLS US THAT FAME AND OUR SOCIETY'S QUEST FOR FAME HAS
GOTTEN WAY OUT OF CONTROL.

AND WE REALLY NEED TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE AND REALIZE THAT A
LIFETIME OF RESPECT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN 15 MINUTES OF
NOTORIETY.

>> WAS THAT GOING TO BE YOUR STORY?

>> NO, ACTUALLY, IT WASN'T.

>> JULIA, YOUR TURN.

WHAT IS YOUR BIG STORY?

>> IT IS ABOUT HER.

IT'S INTERESTING, BECAUSE I THINK OUR YOUTH TODAY IS SO
INVOLVED IN WATCHING ALL THESE REALITY SHOWS AND ALL THESE
STARS AND ALL THE MONEY THEY HAVE.

AND I THINK IT INFLUENCES THEM.

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AND THEN YOU'VE GOT THE TRAGEDY OF HER.

BUT I ALSO HEARD THAT SHE IS POTENTIALLY GOING TO BE ON THIS
VH-1 REALITY SHOW ABOUT CELEBRITIES GOING TO REHAB.

AND I JUST WONDER, I'M THROWING IT OUT THERE, I HOPE THIS IS
THE CASE AND SHE'S NOT AS SICK AS SHE MIGHT SEEM, THAT THEY
ARE JUST DOING THIS AS A PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE
SHOW.

I MEAN, THE SHOW IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMING OUT IN THE NEXT
MONTH, THE NEXT TWO MONTHS OR SOMETHING.

SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE CELEBRITIES.

I JUST WONDER IF THERE'S ANY CORRELATION TO THAT AND THE NEW
SHOW.

>> DO EITHER OF YOU THINK THE NEWSPAPERS AND TELEVISION
SPEND TOO MUCH TIME TALKING ABOUT CELEBRITIES?

>> THAT'S ALL THEY DO.

"ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT," ALL THOSE SHOWS --

>> SQUEEZES OUT ISSUES ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND STATE
GOVERNMENT?

>> WELL, IT'S A TOUGH TIGHTROPE WE WALK.

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT THE NEWS THAT IS
IMPORTANT.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE TO APPEAL TO OUR READERSHIP
AND RETAIN READERS.

SOMETIMES THERE ARE DIFFICULT DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN TERMS
OF WHAT WE COVER AND WHAT WE DON'T COVER.

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>> RUNNING HER MUG SHOT ON THE FRONT PAGE FOR THREE WEEKS
ISN'T EXCESSIVE?

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

>> MY BIG STORY IS ABOUT SOME YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY ARE
DOING AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

I'M HAPPY BECAUSE I SEE SO MANY PEOPLE USING USF T-SHIRTS
AND EVERYTHING.

I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS, LIKE, AT USF, I WAS LIKE, NO, I'M NOT
FROM USF.

BUT I'M WEARING MY USF PIN FOR SOME VERY BIG PEOPLE.

AND THOSE ARE CALLED BULLS IN GOVERNMENT WHO GRADUATED TODAY
FROM THE LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.

AND I CAME OUT OF THAT.

AND I'M VERY PROUD TO SEE THIS BECAUSE IT JUST BRINGS MORE
PEOPLE AND THE BELIEF OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.

SO I'M REALLY HAPPY AND I'M VERY PROUD OF THEM.

>> CONGRATULATIONS.

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

>> IT'S REALLY BORING COMPARED TO JESSICA SIERRA.

I THINK, BY THE WAY, WHAT THE JESSICA SIERRA STORY PROVES IS
THAT IT WAS A SLOW NEWS WEEK.

A JUDGE THREW OUT SENATOR BILL NELSON'S LAWSUIT AGAINST THE
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

THAT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE PARTY TO LIFT THE SANCTIONS
AGAINST FLORIDA'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY AND SEAT A FULL

FLORIDA DELEGATION AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

HE LOST.

THE CANDIDATES CONTINUE TO BOYCOTT THE STATE, AND THE
PRIMARY WILL HAVE POLITICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND NEWS VALUE,
BUT NOT VALUE IN TERMS OF PICKING DELEGATES FOR A CANDIDATE
OR CANDIDATES.

>> OKAY.

WELL, THANK YOU, WILLIAM MARCH.

THANK YOU, JULIA RETTIG.

THANK YOU, EVELYN HALE.

AND THANK YOU, ERNEST HOOPER.

AND THANK YOU FOR WATCHING "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

WE ALWAYS WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS.

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

YOU CAN SEND AN E-MAIL TO FTW@WEDU.ORG OR YOU CAN COMMENT ON
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FROM ALL OF US AT WEDU, HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND AND THANK YOU
FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

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