

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK"

MARCH 7, 2008

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

>> COMING UP NEXT, GROWING TALK ABOUT A RE-DO OF THE FLORIDA DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.

THE GOVERNOR IS UPBEAT ABOUT THE STATE OF THE STATE WHILE MANY LEGISLATORS ARE NOT.

MORE STATE SERVICES FACING BUDGET CUTS.

AND CAN CAMERAS CURE THE PROBLEM OF RED LIGHT RUNNING?

POLITICAL INSIGHTS NEXT ON "FLORIDA THIS WEEK."

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

AND NOW MODERATOR ROB LOREI.

>> WELCOME BACK TO THIS PLEDGE-FREE EDITION DURING THIS IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SPONSOR US BY DONATING ONLINE.

THERE YOU CAN RECEIVE A "FLORIDA THIS WEEK" 15-OUNCE MUG WITH YOUR \$75 GIFT.

JUST VISIT WEDU.ORG, CLICK THE "FLORIDA THIS WEEK" BUTTON

AND LOOK FOR OUR SIGNATURE 15-OUNCE MUG AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THIS WEEK OUR PANELISTS ARE DAN RUTH, A COLUMNIST AT THE TAMPA TRIBUNE.

JEREMY WALLACE IS A POLITICAL REPORTER AT THE SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE.

>> MARY ANN STILES IS AN ATTORNEY AND REPUBLICAN.

AND MARY FIGG IS A FORMER STATE LEGISLATOR AND A DEMOCRAT.

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

THERE COULD BE ANOTHER DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY IN FLORIDA'S FUTURE DUE TO THE PENALTIES AGAINST THE STATE FOR MOVING UP THE DATE OF ITS FIRST PRIMARY.

SOME LEADERS ARE CALLING FOR A REVOTE.

A MULLIGAN.

BOTH DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIR HOWARD DEAN AND GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST SAY THEY ARE OPEN TO A REVOTE IF FLORIDA'S DEMOCRATS PAY FOR IT.

U.S. SENATOR BILL NELSON WANTS THE NATIONAL PARTY TO PAY.

LATEST PROPOSED SOLUTION IS A REVOTE DONE BY MAIL-IN BALLOTS FOR DEMOCRATIC VOTERS.

>> I THINK A REVOTE BY MAIL IS THE BEST OPTION AVAILABLE.

1.7 MILLION FLORIDIANS VOTED.

AS MUCH AS WE'D LIKE TO COUNT IT, WE CAN'T.

IF WE KEEP ARGUING, WE WILL RUN OUT OF TIME AND THE WINDOW WILL CLOSE ON OUR ABILITY TO ACTUALLY HAVE THEIR VOICES COUNTED.

IT IS ABOUT THE FOUR TO FIVE MILLION IF YOU JUST DO THE DEMOCRATS AND A LITTLE BIT MORE IF YOU INCLUDE INDEPENDENTS IN THE VOTE BY MAIL.

THAT'S A MUCH MORE, A NUMBER WE COULD PUT OUR HANDS AROUND. I DON'T THINK THE DNC IS GOING TO HELP US EITHER.

SO IT IS EITHER A DONOR PROGRAM OR THE CANDIDATES STANDING UP AND SAYING TO THEIR DONOR BASE, LET'S HELP FLORIDA, YOU KNOW, COUNT.

>> DAN, IS THAT WHERE WE ARE HEADED, SPENDING FOUR OR FIVE MILLION DOLLARS ON A MAIL-IN VOTE?

>> IT IS SO PATHETIC.

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST NONISSUE STORIES THAT I THINK WE HAVE EVER DONE ON THIS SHOW.

WE COULD DO THIS WHOLE SHOW ON THIS WHOLE STORY, HOW BIZARRE IT IS.

I DON'T SEE HOW ANYTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN ANY TIME SOON BY ANYBODY.

LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION.

LET'S SAY WE HAVE A VOTE.

LET'S SAY SOME MORON COMES ALONG AND ACTUALLY COUGHS UP MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR THIS VOTE.

LET'S SUPPOSE BARACK OBAMA WINS THIS VOTE.

HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT IS GOING TO TAKE BEFORE HILLARY CLINTON IS IN COURT CHALLENGING THE RESULTS OF THAT CONTEST? ARGUING WAIT A MINUTE, I WON THE 29TH VOTE.

I WON IT FAIR AND SQUARE.

THIS THING FROM THE VERY BEGINNING HAS JUST BEEN AN ABSOLUTE DISASTER.

AND HOWARD DEAN OUGHT TO BE HORSEWHIPPED.

TAKEN OUT IN THE TOWN SQUARE AT HIGH NOON AND HORSEWHIPPED FOR WHAT THIS HAS DONE TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

>> JEREMY, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE HEARING TOO?

THIS IS NOT LIKELY TO HAPPEN BECAUSE THIS MIGHT BE A LEGAL CHALLENGE IF WE HAVE A REVOTE?

>> A LOT OF REASONS BEHIND THIS.

FIRST OF ALL, THIS IS A STATE THAT BROUGHT US HANGING CHADS, MYSTERIOUS UNDERVOTES, BROUGHT US BUTTERFLY BALLOTS.

NOW WE ARE GOING TO GO OUT THERE WITHIN 90 DAYS, CREATE THE FIRST EVER STATEWIDE MAIL BALLOT PROGRAM IN THE STATE'S HISTORY, THAT WON'T BE RUN BY THE DIVISION OF ELECTIONS.

SO IT IS THE DEMOCRATS.

DON'T WORRY, IT WILL BE JUST FINE.

NOTHING POSSIBLY COULD GO WRONG.

CLEARLY, THAT'S WHAT'S GIVING A LOT OF PEOPLE PROBLEMS WITH THIS, EVERYBODY I TALK TO TODAY AND LAST COUPLE DAYS HAVE SAID, WE CAN'T POSSIBLY TEST-DRIVE A MAIL VOTING SYSTEM ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.

THIS IS SOMETHING THAT OREGON, WHICH ALSO DOES A MAIL BALLOT SYSTEM, THEY TESTED THIS FROM THE '80s, CLEAR UNTIL THE YEAR 2000, WHICH WAS THE FIRST YEAR THEY DID IT IN THE GENERAL ELECTION.

SO FOR US TO TEST-DRIVE IT IN SUCH A BIG RACE, THAT'S A BIG PROBLEM.

AND THEN MONEY.

NOBODY IS GOING TO PONY UP THE MONEY FOR THIS.

EVEN IF THE DNC DID AGREE TO PAY FOR THIS, THEY HAVE \$3.7 MILLION IN THEIR BANK ACCOUNT RIGHT NOW.

THAT'S ALL THEY HAVE.

IT WOULD DEplete WHAT THEY HAVE.

AND THE STATE DOESN'T HAVE THE MONEY EITHER.

>> JEREMY, WHY ALL THE TALK THEN?

WHY IS CHARLIE CRIST ON TV KIND OF PUMPING THIS UP?

BILL NELSON KIND OF PUMPING UP THIS IDEA.

WE SAW DAN GELBER A MOMENT AGO, HE WAS ON "THE NEWS HOUR"

THIS WEEK, SUGGESTING THIS IDEA IS POSSIBLE.

WHY IS THIS GOING ON?

>> A LOT OF MOTIVATION IS INVOLVED.

CLEARLY, CHARLIE CRIST WOULDN'T MIND FOR THE DEMOCRATS TO BE FIGHTING ABOUT THIS CLEAR UNTIL NOVEMBER WHEN THE ELECTION IS HAPPENING.

THEY DON'T MIND SEEING THE DEMOCRATS FIGHTING EACH OTHER.

THERE IS NOT AN ALTRUISTIC MOTIVE NECESSARILY ON ANYBODY'S

PART.

SURE, DO THEY WANT THE VOTES TO COUNT?

NELSON IS WITH THE HILLARY CLINTON CAMP.

EVERYBODY HAS A POSITION IN THIS THAT'S TALKING ABOUT THIS.

BUT THE REALITY IS, YOU DON'T HAVE THE COOPERATION FROM THE

STATE PARTY TO THE NATIONAL PARTY, OBAMA AND CLINTON'S

CAMPAIGNS ARE NOT GOING TO COOPERATE ON THIS RIGHT NOW.

THEY HAVE DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS INVOLVED IN THIS EITHER WAY

THIS THING CUTS OUT, IF ONE OF THEM IS GOING TO BE UNHAPPY.

THERE IS NO HAPPY MEDIUM RIGHT NOW.

UNTIL THEY FIND SOMETHING WHERE EVERYBODY COULD COMPROMISE,

THEY'RE CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO COME UP WITH THE MONEY.

SIX MILLION DOLLARS.

>> FIRST, I DON'T THINK BILL NELSON IS COMMITTED TO THIS

IDEA.

HE'S ENTERTAINING IT.

BUT HE WANTS TO FIND OUT WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS ARE.

AND THE IMPLICATIONS ARE THAT WE COULD HAVE A TRAIN WRECK.

BECAUSE THERE IS NO WAY TO ENSURE THAT WE WOULDN'T HAVE

FRAUD, WITHOUT USING THE SERVICES, THE DATA FROM THE

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS, WHICH GETS YOU INTO THEIR OFFICE.

THE LARGE COUNTY SUPERVISORS ELECTIONS TO WIT, HILLSBOROUGH,

SARASOTA, WEST PALM BEACH, ARE JUST GETTING THEIR NEW

MACHINES AND GETTING UP IN ORDER.

THAT DATABASE, WITH THE SIGNATURE ON IT, IS NOT IN THE

MACHINES YET.

TO TRY TO GET READY FOR THE PRIMARY THIS YEAR, YOU COULDN'T PUT SOMETHING IN BETWEEN WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH PRIMARY PROCESS.

I THINK THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS WOULD GO THE EDGE OF THIS AND THEY SHOULD.

>> THERE ARE ACTUALLY OTHER ELECTIONS GOING ON RIGHT NOW THEY WOULD HAVE TO WORK AROUND.

IN SARASOTA, THERE IS STILL TWO ELECTIONS IN APRIL -- ONE IN MARCH, ONE IN APRIL, ANOTHER ONE IN MAY.

THESE ARE COUNTYWIDE.

SO THEY'D HAVE TO KIND OF SQUEEZE THAT IN. THIS WOULD ALL HAVE TO BE DONE BY JUNE 10TH.

>> SO IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'D HAVE TO HAVE A SIGNATURE ON RECORD OF THE CURRENT VOTERS.

AND THOSE LISTS AREN'T UP TO DATE.

>> WELL, THOSE WERE IN THOSE MACHINES THAT HAVE NOW BEEN TRASHED, AFTER THE JANUARY 29TH.

THOSE WERE -- BY THE LEGISLATURE DECREE SENT TO KURT BROWNING.

EXCUSE ME, THE STATE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS.

HAD TO DISPOSE OF.

SO THEY DON'T HAVE THAT DATA IN MACHINE FORM ANY LONGER.

>> MARY ANN STILES, WHAT'S YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH WHETHER OR NOT LOCAL ELECTION SUPERVISORS WOULD BE UP TO THE TASK OF

PULLING SOMETHING OFF BY JUNE?

>> NOT A FAIR QUESTION.

>> FUNNY I SHOULD ASK YOU THAT QUESTION, RIGHT?

>> I DON'T THINK THAT ANY LOCAL SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS
WOULD BE UP TO THAT TASK.

I THINK THERE WILL BE SO MANY PROBLEMS WITH IT.

I GO BACK TO THE WHOLE FIGHT, IS, WHY DID THOSE CANDIDATES
AGREE IN THE FIRST PLACE NOT TO COUNT FLORIDA?

I UNDERSTAND, I ONLY CARE ABOUT FLORIDA.

>> BECAUSE THEIR DELEGATES WOULDN'T COUNT.

>> THE DNC SAID WE ARE NOT GOING TO SEAT YOUR DELEGATION, SO
DON'T BOTHER GATHERING ANY.

>> ABSOLUTELY CAMPAIGNED ANYWAY.

EVEN WITHOUT THE CAMPAIGNING, LOOK HOW MANY PEOPLE IN
FLORIDA TURNED OUT TO VOTE.

THEY WANTED TO BE COUNTED.

AND I BELIEVE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY DOESN'T FIND A WAY TO
RESOLVE THIS, AND I DON'T SEE HOW THEY'RE GOING TO, I THINK
IT IS GOING TO BE A BACKLASH AT THE POLLS.

DO YOU KNOW HOW ANGRY DEMOCRATS ARE ABOUT THIS IN FLORIDA?

>> HOW ANGRY?

>> WE FEEL LIKE -- WELL, WE'D LIKE TO WATERBOARD HOWARD
DEAN.

>> THE PARTY AND THE CANDIDATES, THEY BROUGHT THIS ON
THEMSELVES.

IF ALL THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES STOOD UP AND SAID NO, YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TELL ME HOW I'M GOING TO RUN MY CAMPAIGN. I AM GOING TO GO DOWN TO FLORIDA.

THE WHOLE GROUP OF THEM AT THE TIME.

ALL DECIDED, WE ARE --

>> BUT NEW HAMPSHIRE AND SOUTH CAROLINA, THEY HAD TO COUNT --

>> IT IS EASY TO SAY THAT NOW.

WHERE THIS RACE WAS BEFORE IOWA, THE WAY OUR SYSTEM IS SET UP, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, I WOULD SAY WORSE PROBABLY, IOWA IS THE GATEKEEPER FOR THE WHOLE THING.

WHEN JOHN EDWARDS WAS PUSHING THIS ISSUE, WE ARE GOING TO CAMPAIGN IN IOWA, WE ARE GOING TO WIN VOTES IN IOWA, OBAMA AND CLINTON WERE LEFT TO SIGN ON OR LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE SNUBBING IOWA.

>> YOU'RE GOING TO STAND UP TO NORTH KOREA, YOU'RE GOING TO STAND UP TO PUTIN AND ALL THESE TINHORN DICTATORS AROUND THE WORLD AND FOLD THEM AND HOWARD DEAN GETS UPSET WITH YOU?

>> THE CONSENSUS OF THIS AUGUST PANEL IS THAT THE REVOTE IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

SO HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF THIS MESS?

IF YOU'RE A DEMOCRAT, AND MARY, YOU TALK ABOUT THE ANGER OF FLORIDA DEMOCRATS, HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

>> IT'S GOING TO BE A BACKROOM DEAL, WITH THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY, WITH ALL THE SMOKE, CIGARETTES AND SUPER DELEGATES.

>> WE ARE NOT GOING TO GET THERE.

>> I HOPE WE DON'T.

>> IT MAY NOT MATTER.

>> THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HAPPEN IS IT IS NOT GOING TO MATTER.

AT THIS POINT THE ONLY THING, TO GET THESE DELEGATES BACK, THERE IS A CLEAR PROCESS OF THE DNC HAS SET UP.

EITHER YOU HAVE A NEW ELECTION OR SUBMIT A NEW CAUCUS PLAN, WHICH IS OFF THE TABLE, OR YOU APPEAL THIS TO THE CREDENTIALING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

THAT DOES NOT MEET TILL JULY.

THE RACE IS OVER.

EVERYTHING'S TAKEN CARE OF.

WE ARE NOT GOING TO GET PEOPLE REINSTATED.

THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HAPPEN, CLOCK IS GOING TO RUN OUT.

WE WILL HAVE A NOMINEE AFTER JUNE 10TH.

SOMEBODY IS GOING TO HAVE THE DELEGATE LEAD AND CONTROL WHO GETS IN.

>> YOU THINK THERE WILL BE A CLEAR NOMINEE AND WON'T BE A FLOOR FIGHT AT THE CONVENTION OVER THE DELEGATES GETTING SEATED?

>> EVEN IF THERE IS OR ISN'T, FLORIDA IS NOT GOING TO BE PART OF THAT DEBATE.

WE WILL BE ALLOWED IN AFTER THE FACT, ONCE EVERYBODY ELSE IS SORTED OUT, BECAUSE OF THE ACTIONS THE STATE AND NATIONAL

DEMOCRATS HAVE TAKEN.

A LOT OF PEOPLE BLAME HOWARD DEAN, BUT LOOK, FLORIDA
DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE STATE, AND THE NATIONAL PARTY
MESSED THIS UP.

SO DID THE CANDIDATES.

LIKE YOU SAID, THE CANDIDATES COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING
DIFFERENTLY AND THEY CHOSE NOT TOO.

>> DAN, YOU GET THE LAST WORD.

>> I AM NOT SO SURE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A PROHIBITIVE
WINNER OF THE NOMINATION BY THE TIME WE GET TO THAT POINT.
STILL GOING TO BE A VERY CLOSE RACE.

SO THESE VOTES WON'T MATTER.

>> ALL RIGHT.

WELL, THE STATE OF FLORIDA HAS SEVERE MONEY PROBLEMS.
THE GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST WAS OPTIMISTIC AS HE GAVE THE
STATE OF THE STATE SPEECH THIS WEEK.

STEVE GELLER OFFERED THE SENATE DEMOCRAT'S RESPONSE.

>> LIKE FLORIDA'S FAMILIES, THESE CHALLENGING TIMES WILL
REQUIRE US TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF DECLINING REVENUE.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

BY KEEPING TAXES LOW.

BY CREATING JOBS.

AND FUELING AN ECONOMY THAT RANKS AHEAD OF MOST NATIONS ON
THE FACE OF THE PLANET.

WE WILL SET A MODEL AT WHICH OTHERS CAN MARVEL.

PESSIMISTS SEE PROBLEMS.

OPTIMISTS SEE OPPORTUNITIES.

SPENDING CUTS ALONE WILL NOT PROVIDE THE PROTECTIONS THAT WE NEED HERE IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

IT IS VERY CLEAR TO US, IF WE NEED -- IF WE ARE GOING TO MOVE OUR STATE FORWARD, WE WILL NEED NOT ONLY THE SPENDING CUTS, BUT ALSO THE INVESTMENT AND THE ADDITIONAL REVENUE THAT WE CAN GET BY REQUIRING A FAIRER TAX CODE.

>> MEANWHILE, HOUSE SPEAKER MARCO RUBIO CRITICIZED THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET, WHICH INCLUDES USING NEW GAMBLING REVENUE AND MONEY FROM TRUST FUNDS.

RUBIO CALLS THAT SPENDING MONEY WE DON'T HAVE.

AND A GIMMICK.

MARY ANN, THE GOVERNOR SEEMED VERY OPTIMISTIC.

IS HE OUT OF TOUCH OR ON THE MONEY?

>> I THINK HE IS ON THE MONEY.

I AM AMAZED HOW HE IS BEING CRITICIZED FOR BEING OPTIMISTIC. PEOPLE DID NOT NEED REMINDED HOW HIGH TAXES ARE, HOW BAD OUR PROPERTY ISSUES ARE IN FLORIDA.

WHAT THE -- HOW SOME PEOPLE DON'T HAVE JOBS, SOME PEOPLE HOMES ARE FORECLOSING.

HE IS TRYING TO CUT A CHART, A FUTURE.

AND IT IS TO BE OPTIMISTIC AND FIND A WAY TO GET OUT OF THIS.

AND THERE ARE WAYS TO GET OUT OF THIS. WE HAVE BEEN HERE

BEFORE IN FLORIDA.

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, MARY ANN AND I HAVE PROBABLY BEEN THROUGH ABOUT THREE.

THERE ARE WAYS TO RESOLVE IT.

SITTING AROUND AND BEING POOR, FLORIDA, WE ARE SO BAD, WE ARE NOT EVER GOING TO RESOLVE THIS.

THAT'S NOT GOING TO GET US THERE.

HE IS OUR LEADER.

IF HE COMES OUT PESSIMISTIC, EVERYBODY WOULD CRITICIZE HIM.

>> WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE RESPONSE BY THE DEMOCRATS?

>> I THINK THE GOVERNOR IS TRYING TO PUT A GOOD FACE.

BUT LOOKS LIKE A LITTLE CASE OF THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

CHARLIE'S UNDERWEAR SEEMS TO BE HANGING OUT THERE.

ON THE BUDGET ISSUES.

I DON'T THINK -- I DON'T THINK THAT THE GAMBLING, EXPANDED GAMBLING IS GOING TO PASS BY THE LEGISLATURE, UNLESS THEY GET DESPERATE.

AND THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO DO THAT FROM TIME TO TIME.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE CUT SOME OF OUR MOST STABLE TAXES.

I WOULD TAKE ISSUE WITH MARY ANN'S STATEMENT ABOUT EVER GETTING THOSE ABOUT HIGH TAXES.

OUR TAXES ARE HIGH ON PROPERTY AND THAT'S WHERE IT ENDS.

WE ARE VERY LOW ON ALL THE TAXES.

TOTAL BURDEN OF TAXES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA PUTS US AT

ABOUT 43RD I THINK NOW.

>> BUT LOOK WHO PAYS THOSE TAXES.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY PERSONAL INCOME TAX HERE.

MOST OF THOSE TAXES ARE ON CORPORATIONS.

EVERYBODY SAYS, YOU TOOK THE TAX OFF BUSINESS, AND

THEREFORE, YOU TOOK, PUT IT ON THE RICH, OR GAVE THE RICH A
BREAK.

>> WE DID WHEN WE REPEALED THE INTANGIBLE TAXES.

>> IT CREATES MORE COMPETITION.

CREATES MORE JOBS.

AND GIVES THOSE BUSINESSES THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THAT MONEY
BACK INTO THEIR BUSINESS.

>> MARY ANN, SOME DEMOCRATS SUGGESTED WE REINSTATE THAT
INTANGIBLE TAX THAT WAS DONE AWAY DURING JEB BUSH'S
ADMINISTRATION.

>> NO, ABSOLUTELY NOT.

I DISAGREE.

>> DAN, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WAS THE GOVERNOR RIGHT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

>> I MEAN, YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, HE'S GIVING THE STATE OF
THE STATE SPEECH ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE LEGISLATIVE
SESSION.

THAT IS NOT A TIME TO SAY WOE, WE ARE DOOMED.

YOU EXPECT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OPTIMISM FROM A SITTING

GOVERNOR AT A TIME LIKE THAT.

BUT THE FACT, WE HAVE HUGE FINANCIAL STRESSES AND STRAINS THAT THIS LEGISLATURE IS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH.

\$3 BILLION IN SPENDING CUTS.

TALK ABOUT FLORIDA BEING A SHINING CITY ON THE HILL WHEN IT IS A DOUBLE WIDE DOWN BY THE RIVER WITH THE ECONOMY THAT WE HAVE.

SO, YOU KNOW, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE AN OPTIMISTIC GOVERNOR. MUCH BETTER THAN THE DOUR PREDECESSOR.

>> GOING INTO TRUST FUNDS AND TAKING MONEY OUT OF TRUST FUNDS, TO FUND THIS YEAR'S BUDGET?

>> I THINK SOMETIMES IN DIRE TIMES, YOU NEED TO DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.

BUT I ALSO THINK, I FIRMLY AGREE THAT GAMBLING REVENUE IS A PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE WAY TO GO.

AND TO EXPAND, WE SHOULD HAVE GAMBLING ALL OVER THE PLACE.

>> IS HE TALKING ABOUT THE RAINY DAY TRUST FUND, I TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH GOING INTO THAT.

ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THAT WE DO HAVE A HURRICANE BURDEN AND THAT WE ARE OVERCOMMITTED.

>> THERE ARE TRUST FUNDS THAT THEY'RE GOING AFTER, NEED TO LOOK AT THE HISTORY.

ONE OF THE THINGS THEY'RE GOING AFTER WORKERS' COMPENSATION TRUST FUND, EMPLOYERS PAID INTO THAT.

IF THEY HAD REDUCED THE ASSESSMENT, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE HAD

THE PREMIUMS THEY PAID ALL THOSE YEARS.

NOW THE STATE IS GOING TO PULL \$90 MILLION OF THAT.

>> DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE ROLE RUBIO PLAYS.

HE PRESENTED A DOOR FORECAST.

I HAVE HEARD HIM TALK ABOUT THIS IN THE PAST.

HE BELIEVES THE GOVERNOR PLANS TO USE THE CASINO MONEY OR OTHER GAMBLING MONEY AS GIMMICK THAT WON'T PRODUCE THE MONEY WE NEED.

JUST A SMALL AMOUNT.

SO HE'S PRETTY MUCH COMMITTED TO A DIRECTION WHERE IT IS GOING TO BE A LOT OF CUTTING AND SLASHING.

THE ECONOMY'S IN BAD SHAPE.

BUT YOU ALMOST EXPECT THAT.

BECAUSE AT THIS POINT THE GOVERNOR, AS GOVERNOR HE GETS TO BE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SESSION, IT IS THE PEP RALLY.

ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL?

THE FLORIDA ECONOMY IS GREAT. EVERYTHING'S FINE.

BUT IT IS UP TO RUBIO AND PRUITT, WHO ARE LEFT WITH THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS HE SENT OVER TO FIGURE OUT, HOW DO YOU SQUEEZE THIS INTO THIS KIND OF A BUDGET?

>> GO AHEAD.

>> WHAT IS WRONG THOUGH WITH GOVERNMENT WHEN BUDGET'S TIGHT, START CUTTING?

INDIVIDUALS DO IT.

WE DO IT.

BUSINESS DOES IT.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH GOVERNMENT MAKING SOME CUTS IN ITS SPENDING?

AND AGENCIES THAT DO THE JOB OF TWO WHEN THEY -- ONE PERSON WOULD BE DOING THE JOB.

THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT.

>> I DON'T THINK ANYBODY IS ARGUING THAT.

I THINK WHAT WE ARE HEARING, HOW YOU CUT AND WHERE YOU CUT. CERTAINLY, THERE ARE PLANS TO FIND NEW REVENUE.

IT IS HARD WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD NEW REVENUE AND NOT SAY NEW TAX.

THEY DON'T WANT TO SAY THAT WORD, SO THEY TRY CASINO, LOTTERY FUNDS, TRUST FUNDS.

BUT IN THE END, THOSE PIES WON'T PRODUCE THE REVENUE THEY NEED.

THEY ARE WAY UNDER.

>> JEREMY, SPEAKING OF BUDGET CUTS, LET'S MOVE ON TO OUR NEXT SEGMENT.

LAWMAKERS COMMENCED THEIR SESSION THIS WEEK AND IMMEDIATELY TOOK UP THE TASK OF BUDGET CUTTING.

BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE BEGAN CUTTING MONEY FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PROSECUTORS, PUBLIC DEFENDERS AND MEDICAID.

MORE THAN A HALF BILLION DOLLARS IN ALL.

MARY, THESE BUDGET CUTS, THESE AFFECT JUST THIS FISCAL YEAR ALONE THAT ENDS AT THE END OF JUNE.

NOW, WE ARE WAITING FOR THE OTHER SHOE TO DROP.

THERE WILL BE MORE CUTS.

THE LEGISLATURE WILL CUT MORE, MAYBE UP TO TWO BILLION DOLLARS FROM THE BUDGET.

>> WELL, A COUPLE INTERESTING THINGS.

LAST YEAR THE LEGISLATURE USED NONRECURRING MONEY.

THAT IS TO SAY LOTTERY MONEY THAT, THIS IS AN EXAMPLE.

LOTTERY MONEY THAT OCCURS WHEN YOU GET A BIG JACKPOT, SO YOU GET MORE MONEY.

THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT MONEY IS GOING TO REOCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

SO THEY SPENT MONEY THEY DIDN'T HAVE IN EFFECT LAST YEAR.

THEY SPENT NONRECURRING MONEY ON RECURRING EXPENSES.

THAT'S ONE THING FROM LAST YEAR.

THE OTHER THING FROM LAST YEAR WAS THIS.

DOES ANYBODY REMEMBER THE DEBATE ON THE FLOOR IN THE SENATE WHEN MEMBERS STOOD UP AND ASKED THE QUESTION, WELL, AREN'T WE GOING TO CUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IF WE, IF WE PROMOTE THIS AMENDMENT ONE IDEA?

AND GUESS WHAT?

EVEN THOUGH THE RESPONSE WAS NO, NO, THE SCHOOLS WILL BE HELD HARMLESS, LIKE THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.

THE FIRST PART OF THAT IS A LIE.

AND THE SECOND PART OF THAT IS A LIE TOO.

THE SCHOOLS HAVEN'T BEEN HELD HARMLESS BEFORE AND THEY'RE

NOT GOING TO BE HELD HARMLESS NOW.

>> THAT WAS ONE OF THE CUTS MADE THIS WEEK, SOMETHING LIKE \$55 PER STUDENT ACROSS THE STATE.

>> THEY'RE SPENDING THAT TOO.

I HAVE TALKED TO SEVERAL REPUBLICANS UP THERE THIS WEEK, THEY'RE SAYING THESE AREN'T CUTS.

WHAT THIS IS, YOU KNOW, ALREADY INCREASE IN THE BUDGET FOR THESE.

THERE STILL WAS FOUR PERCENT INCREASE THEY'RE SAYING FROM LAST YEAR'S EDUCATION TO THIS YEAR'S EDUCATION BUDGET.

>> SO IT IS A REDUCTION RATE OF GROWTH?

>> EXACTLY.

WE ARE NOT REALLY SLASHING THE BONE HERE, THIS IS JUST MONEY.

>> AND YOU CAN BET YOUR BOTTOM DOLLAR THAT YOU'RE REQUIRED LOCAL EFFORTS, THAT IS TO SAY WHAT YOUR COUNTY HAS TO PUT UP AS MATCH FOR WHAT THE STATES SEND DOWN TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IS GOING TO INCREASE.

THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

THAT'S AN INCREASE IN TAXES.

>> MARY ANN, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE BUDGET CUTTING THAT'S GONE ON ALREADY THIS WEEK?

>> I THINK WHAT WE HAVE TO LOOK AT IS, IT STARTED OVER IN THE HOUSE.

AND THE SENATE CUT THE SAME THING THIS TIME, DIDN'T THEY?

YEAH, THE SENATE DID THE SAME THING.

I DON'T THINK WE ARE THROUGH.

WE HAVE A LONG 60 DAYS.

AND THE PROBLEM I HAVE WITH TAKING MONEY FROM THE TRUST FUND IS AGAIN, FUNDING WITH NON-REOCCURRING REVENUE.

>> WHERE ELSE DO YOU GET IT?

>> YOU FACE THE ISSUE, I THINK GAMBLING IS A GOOD ISSUE.

I THINK REDUCING THE EXPENSES.

I PERSONALLY WOULD SUPPORT ANOTHER PENNY SALES TAX.

>> TAX INCREASE?

>> \$1.4 BILLION.

>> DAN, ONE OF THE CUTS THAT WAS INTERESTING THIS WEEK IS MEDICAID BEING CUT.

THEY'RE CUTTING REIMBURSEMENT RATES TO MEDICAID.

A LOT OF DOCTORS ALREADY SAY THEY DON'T ACCEPT MEDICAID PATIENTS BECAUSE THE STATE'S REIMBURSEMENT RATE IS TOO LOW. SO A LOT OF LOW INCOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING WE ARE ALREADY HAVING A HARD TIME GETTING TREATMENT.

>> WE ALWAYS PUT THE ONUS ON THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE LEAST AMOUNT OF JUICE.

WHEN EVERYBODY LIKES TO TALK ABOUT BUDGET CUTS.

GOT TO CUT GOVERNMENT.

THAT'S GREAT UNTIL YOUR HOUSE IS BURNING DOWN AND THERE IS NO FIRE DEPARTMENT TO COME PUT IT OUT.

OR YOU'RE, YOUR STORE HAS BEEN ROBBED AND THE COPS CAN'T GET

THERE BECAUSE THERE IS NOT ENOUGH COPS.

SO AT SOME POINT YOU HAVE TO SIT DOWN AND SAY, IT COSTS MONEY TO RUN A GOVERNMENT, .

WE ARE THE FOURTH LARGEST STATE IN THE UNION.

IT COSTS MONEY TO RUN THIS PLACE.

AND YES, WE NEED TO CUT IT.

WE NEED TO BE RESPONSIBLE.

WE DON'T WANT TO BE FRIVOLOUS WITH THE TAXPAYERS DOLLARS.

BUT AT SOME POINT, THE PUBLIC EXPECTS AND DEMANDS CERTAIN, BASE LEVEL OF SERVICES.

AND THAT'S WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD.

>> THE PUBLIC HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THINK THAT YOU CAN DO THAT ON THE CHEAP.

AND YOU CAN'T DO IT ON THE CHEAP.

>> OUR LAST TOPIC.

SOME LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE CONSIDERING MOUNTING CAMERAS AT DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS TO CATCH DRIVERS WHO RUN RED LIGHTS.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY APPROVED SUCH A PLAN AND BRADENTON, CLEARWATER, AND PORT RICHEY ARE AMONG THE COMMUNITIES ALSO

CONSIDERING ALLOWING PRIVATE COMPANIES TO PUT UP CAMERAS.

CONTRACTED COMPANIES WOULD ISSUE THE TICKET.

THE CIVIL CITATION AND EITHER EARN A FLAT FEE OR KEEP A SHARE OF THE FINE.

EVERY YEAR 100 PEOPLE ARE KILLED WHEN DRIVERS RUN RED LIGHTS.

JEREMY, WE HAVE ABOUT 20 SECONDS FOR THIS STORY.

>> WELL, THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON ABOUT FOUR YEARS.

STATE LEGISLATURE IS PUSHING ANOTHER BILL TO SET THIS UP, TRYING TO ALLAY THE CONCERNS THAT THIS COULD BE AN INVASION OF PRIVACY.

THEY WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT, WHEN PEOPLE GO THROUGH THESE LIGHTS, THEY'RE GETTING WIDE ANGLE SHOT.

CAN'T SEE WHO IS IN THE SEAT AND WHAT THEY'RE DOING IN THEIR SEAT IF THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE ILLEGAL.

THEY JUST WANT TO GET PEOPLE WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH THESE RED LIGHTS, SEND THEM A CITATION AND MOVE ON.

THE LEGISLATION IS MOVING ON AND FINALLY GETTING SOME LEG BEHIND IT.

ALTHOUGH I JUST HEARD ON THE WAY UP HERE THAT AAA IS HAVING SOME ISSUES WITH IT.

AND COULD BRING THIS THING.

>> WE WILL HAVE TO REVISIT THAT STORY.

FINALLY, EACH WEEK WE ASK OUR PANELISTS ABOUT ANOTHER STORY WHICH AFFECTS PEOPLE IN WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA.

DAN, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> RONDA STORMS IS AT IT AGAIN.

BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTED TO ACTUALLY ALLOW SCIENCE, THE SCIENCE OF EVOLUTION TO BE TAUGHT IN SCIENCE CLASS.

IMAGINE THAT.

IMAGINE THAT. BUT THAT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR RONDA.

INTRODUCED LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD ALLOW TEACHERS WHO DON'T AGREE WITH EVOLUTION TO TALK ABOUT THE WIZARD IN THE SKY THEORY.

>> IS THAT GOING ANYWHERE?

>> I HOPE NOT.

>> JEREMY, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> DISTRICT 55, STATE LEGISLATOR SEAT THAT STRETCHES FROM ST. PETERSBURG, CLEAR DOWN INTO SARASOTA.

THE FIELD IS SET IN THAT RACE NOW.

THEY'RE GOING TO DO THIS, THIS SHOTGUN SPECIAL ELECTION SO THEY CAN GET TO THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS SO THEY CAN VOTE FOR THE BUDGET AND GO BACK FOR THEIR ELECTION.

THE CANDIDATES ARE DARRYL ROUSON, EARNEST WILLIAMS AND CHARLES MCKINSEY JUNIOR, ALL FIGHTING FOR THE SEAT.

IT IS GOING TO BE AN INTERESTING RACE.

INTRIGUE.

ROUSON WAS A REPUBLICAN, SWITCHED OVER TO BEING A DEMOCRAT.

AND THAT'S GOING TO CREATE.

>> IS IT A LOCK FOR ROUSON TO WIN?

>> ABSOLUTELY NOT.

THIS IS A CRAZY RACE.

40% OF THAT DISTRICT IS SOUTH OF ST. PETERSBURG.

AND CHARLES MCKINSEY HAS A LONG HISTORY IN SARASOTA CERTAINLY TRYING TO CAPITALIZE.

>> HE IS A BIG NAME IN THE SARASOTA BRADENTON AREA.

>> THEY KNOW HIM DOWN THERE.

>> MARY, YOUR OTHER BIG STORY?

>> OUR BIG STORY THIS WEEK, ONE MORE TIME IS BRIAN BLAIR,
THANK GOODNESS FOR BRIAN BLAIR, WHAT WOULD THE NEWS PEOPLE
DO?

>> TALKING ABOUT COMMISSIONER BRIAN BLAIR OF THE
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY COMMISSION, WHO HAS AN ETHICS CHARGE
AGAINST HIM REGARDING INTERFERING WITH THE EPC.

IT'S QUITE CLEAR THAT HE'S OVERSTEPPED THE POLICYMAKING ROLE
THAT HE HAD NOW, WHETHER THAT'S AN ETHICS CHARGE OR SOME
OTHER KIND OF CHARGE, AND PROBABLY DAN COULD THINK OF NAMES
FOR THAT.

BUT, STAY TUNED, BRYAN BLAIR IS GETTING LOTS OF GOOD REASONS
TO VOTE FOR COUNTY MAYOR IN THE FALL.

>> OKAY, MARY ANN STILES?

>> COUNTY MAYOR, IT IS ON THE BALLOT FOR THE GENERAL
ELECTION.

THE OPPOSITION HAS COME OUT.

SO IT SHOULD BE GETTING INTERESTING.

>> YOU'RE ONE OF THE BACKERS OF THE COUNTY MAYOR IDEA.

>> ABSOLUTELY.

>> WELL, THANK YOU JEREMY WALLACE, THANK YOU MARY FIGG, MARY
ANN STILES AND DAN RUTH.

AND THANK YOU FOR WATCHING "FLORIDA THIS WEEK." WRITE US OR

CALL US WITH YOUR FEEDBACK ABOUT THE PROGRAM.

OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IS FTW@WEDU.ORG.

AND OUR TOLL FREE LINE IS 1-800-335-9338. YOU CAN WATCH
THIS SHOW ON LINE BEGINNING EARLY NEXT WEEK.

YOU WILL FIND IT AT WEDU.ORG.

AND PLEASE SHARE THAT ADDRESS WITH YOUR FRIENDS AROUND THE
STATE WHO CARE ABOUT STATE AND LOCAL POLITICS.

"FLORIDA THIS WEEK" RETURNS PLEDGE-FREE NEXT FRIDAY AT 8:30
AND SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT 12:30.

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