

In the Matter Of:
CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION

MEETING

May 03, 2017



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7 CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION MEETING
8 DATE : May 3 , 2017
9 TIME : 4:00 to 6:11 p.m. CST
10 PLACE : Gulf Coast State College
11 Amelia Center Auditorium
12 5230 West Highway 98
13 Panama City, Florida 32401
14 REPORTED BY : Lisa Patrick
15 Notary Public
16 State of Florida at large
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1 COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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3 Commissioner Don Gaetz
4 Attorney General Pam Bondi
5 Commissioner Jimmy Patronis
6 Commissioner Bob Solari
7 Commissioner Belinda Keiser
8 Commissioner Nicole Washington
9 Commissioner Sherry Plymale
10 Commissioner Chris Smith
11 Commissioner Carlos Beruff
12 Commissioner Jose Armas
13 Commissioner Lisa Carlton
14 Commissioner Emery Gainey
15 Commissioner Marva Johnson
16 Commissioner Darlene Jordan
17 Commissioner Fred Karlinsky
18 Commissioner Frank Kruppenbacher
19 Commissioner Pam Stewart
20 Commissioner Anna Maria Hernandez Gamez
21 Commissioner Patricia Levesque
22 Commissioner Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch
23 Commissioner Carolyn Timmann
24 Commissioner Hank Coxe
25 Commissioner Arthenia Joyner

MEETING
CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION

May 03, 2017

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1 Commissioner Chris Nocco
2 Commissioner John Stemberger
3 Commissioner Bill Dozier

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1 MR. HOLDNAK: Commissioners, ladies and
2 gentlemen of the audience, my name is John
3 Holdnak, and I have the privilege and honor of
4 serving as the President here at Gulf Coast
5 State College. Welcome to this community's
6 college. Welcome to this community space.

7 This is what democracy is all about, this is
8 what our college is all about, giving an open
9 forum for people that live here, to be able to
10 express their concerns to the folks that have an
11 opportunity to do something about it. So we
12 welcome you to our campus.

13 Visitors, commissioners from all over the
14 state, we welcome you to our campus. If this is
15 your first time on campus, please don't let it
16 be your last. And if you think you might want
17 to be around for a little while, the people will
18 allow you to register your classes before you
19 leave today.

20 So I'm going to turn this over to
21 Commissioner Bill Dozier from our County
22 Commission.

23 MR. DOZIER: Thank you. Hi, I'm Bill
24 Dozier. I'm the Chairman of the Bay County
25 Commission, and on behalf of the Bay County

1 Commission, I would like to welcome you here.
2 And I want to thank you. Thank you,
3 commissioners, for spending the time to come and
4 listen to the voice of the people of Bay County.
5 Thank you, very much.

6 MR. BERUFF: We are convening our first
7 meeting in the Panhandle. Thank you for having
8 us. We, of course, are the panel that's been
9 put together for the Constitution Revision
10 Commission. My name is Carlos Beruff, I am the
11 Chairman. I was appointed by Governor Rick
12 Scott.

13 Tonight I'm joined by -- the list of
14 commissioners isn't here. I think I know
15 everybody. Starting with Commissioner Gaetz,
16 immediately to my right, if you could just go
17 that way, and then we'll come back this way.

18 MR. GAETZ: I'm Don Gaetz.

19 MR. SMITH: Chris Smith.

20 MS. PLYMALE: Sherry Plymale.

21 MS. WASHINGTON: Nicole Washington.

22 MS. KEISER: Belinda Keiser.

23 MR. SOLARI: Bob Solari.

24 MS. BONDI: Pam Bondi.

25 MR. PATRONIS: I'm Jimmy Patronis.

1 MR. STEMBERGER: John Stemberger of Orlando.

2 MS. THURLOW-LIPPISCH: Jacqui
3 Thurlow-Lippisch.

4 MS. CARLTON: Lisa Carlton.

5 MR. KRUPPENBACHER: Frank Kruppenbacher.

6 MR. BERUFF: We'll start with Mr. Coxe.

7 MR. COXE: Hank Coxe.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Margaret Johnson.

9 MS. TIMMANN: Carolyn Timmann.

10 MR. KARLINSKY: Fred Karlinsky.

11 MS. STEWART: Pam Stewart.

12 MS. JOYNER: Arthenia Joyner.

13 MS. GAMEZ: Annie Gamez.

14 MS. LEVESQUE: Patricia Levesque.

15 MR. BERUFF: Thank you, commissioners. We
16 will now all stand and be led in the invocation.

17 UNKNOWN: Almighty God, who made us in thine
18 own image, give us grace fearlessly to contend
19 against evil, and to make no peace with
20 oppression. And that we may reverently use our
21 freedom. Help us to employ it in the
22 maintenance of justice to the glory of Thy Holy
23 Name, Amen.

24 MR. GAETZ: Gill and Johnny Patronis will
25 lead us in the pledge of allegiance.

1 BY ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag of
2 the United States of America, and to the
3 Republic for which it stands, one nation under
4 God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for
5 all.

6 MR. BERUFF: As most of you know that are in
7 attendance this evening, the C.R.C. is a unique
8 process that only occurs once every 20 years.
9 It really is an incredible unique situation that
10 only occurs in Florida where essentially one
11 individual can come forward with an idea. And
12 as a panel, we can take that idea all the way to
13 the November, 2018 ballot, and you can change
14 the Constitution of Florida, and affect
15 generations forever. So it is a very basic
16 process, and what we're doing is going around
17 Florida listening to you. That's all we're
18 going to do until we get the ideas that we think
19 would benefit the future Floridians.

20 I'm going to turn the gavel over to
21 Mr. Patronis, who'll start taking testimony.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
24 thank you to Gulf Coast State College for
25 allowing us to use this fantastic facility, and

1 to our commission for picking Northwest Florida
2 and Bay County as one of our venues.

3 We'll start off with Mr. Harry Scott Boggs.
4 And then after Mr. Boggs, Rex Blair will be
5 right behind him.

6 MR. BOGGS: Well, once again, thank you.
7 Thank you, Board, for reading an email that I
8 sent to you. And in the interest of stopping
9 euthanasia, or what some people call physician
10 assisted suicide or even death with dignity.

11 Now, a couple of weeks ago, my strategic
12 opponents, Mr. Platt and Doddsville down in
13 south Florida has some information that they
14 handed to you. And what they say contradicts
15 their own material. They say that the death
16 with dignity or end of life option plan they
17 have is not taking the life of the other, but
18 right out of their own material, dating as far
19 as back as 1983 it says the Hemlock Society of
20 1983 is a right to die organization that
21 believes in euthanasia. Euthanasia comes from
22 the greek word that means good death, and
23 members believe that if they are asked, they
24 must help a terminally ill person die with
25 dignity.

1 Now, several states, mostly in the west,
2 have passed -- a few states have passed some
3 laws regarding this, and California's law is all
4 Hemlock stuff. The California Medical
5 Association has put out a long lengthy document,
6 14 pages in length, just to explain their
7 Constitutional Amendment. On page three they
8 talk about five new state forms per patient that
9 they have to fill out, five per patient.

10 On page six, this document says that they
11 must stress hospice, but they just said that the
12 Hemlock Society wants to de-stress hospice.
13 They say the cause of death on the death
14 certificate is left to a physician to state as
15 he sees it, and in his opinion, as he wishes to
16 describe it.

17 And lastly, on page 13, there's several
18 immunity provisions that keep any and all health
19 care providers who are involved in a patient's
20 death, strictly immune from any investigation,
21 or a civil or criminal.

22 So when you deliberate later, please
23 consider these things, and look deeply into the
24 origin of California laws. I think you'll be
25 very, very surprised what you see. Thank you.

1 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you for your testimony.
2 Next is Rex Blair, and afterwards Steve Callahan
3 will be up next.

4 MR. BLAIR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 MR. PATRONIS: Yes, sir; thank you.

6 MR. BLAIR: Thank you, Commissioners, I
7 appreciate it. Thanks for the opportunity of
8 speaking on behalf of the unborn. I am pro
9 life. I am a husband, a father, a local
10 resident and a grandfather of 10 grandchildren.

11 I'm here today though to speak specifically
12 about Article 1, Section 23 commonly called the
13 privacy amendment, which I think has been
14 misinterpreted now by the Supreme Court, which
15 now allows the total right to an abortion. I
16 don't believe that had anything to do with it
17 when we voted on it in 1980. I think it was
18 strictly for personal information and private
19 information, not to be extended that far.

20 Our Supreme Court judges are not elected by
21 the people of Florida, they are appointed. I
22 believe all laws like this, when they go this
23 far, have to go through the people and not the
24 Supreme Court.

25 I ask that you would look at this revision

1 of Article 1, Section 23 to only apply to
2 private information, and not the right to an
3 abortion. Thank you.

4 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you for your testimony.
5 And, folks, sometimes we may actually -- you may
6 find yourself needing to go ahead and leave
7 early. We've got a fantastic website. Anything
8 that you feel like needs to be uploaded, shared,
9 will be real time interactive where your methods
10 and ideas can be shared by everybody in the
11 state. So we've got staff here also on hand to
12 take any documentation that you'd like to
13 present to us just in case you find you need to
14 leave early tonight.

15 Mr. Callahan, then we have Michel Stone
16 afterwards.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: I'm Steve Callahan. I'm
18 retired military. I'm also a retired Florida
19 Law Enforcement Officer. Today I'm here in
20 support to advise you and ask of you if you
21 would please revisit this possibility of
22 statutes that are going to be added about gun
23 control. It doesn't need to be placed in the
24 Constitution, it needs to be left in the
25 statutes. Right now we have a three day waiting

1 period. There's no point to a three day waiting
2 period. It doesn't curtail any actions, and the
3 people are going to take some kind of response
4 from that. They're going to come up with a
5 firearm someplace else.

6 I spent enough time as a law enforcement
7 officer to know that the place for this is with
8 our representatives and the people who we
9 elected to pass laws, and not put it as part of
10 the Constitution. It needs to be left out, and
11 it needs to be just part of the statutes. I
12 thank you for your time, and that's all I had to
13 say.

14 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you. Next is Michel
15 Stone, and after that we'll have Andrea De La
16 Vega.

17 MR. STONE: Thank you, Commissioners. I am
18 the local Chairman of the Bay Area of the
19 A.C.L.U. of Florida. On their behalf, I put in
20 a memorandum for you. I didn't bring nearly
21 enough copies, but I'll be glad to give you more
22 copies of various talking points and proposals
23 that the A.C.L.U. favors, and also some that
24 criminal defense lawyers I'm acquainted with
25 favor, and I put them in as well.

1 I realize I've only got two minutes, only a
2 minute and a half now, and as a lawyer, this is
3 killing me. But I just want to go over one
4 point, which is a favorite of mine, and it's
5 really funding parity for the state and the
6 indigent defense in Florida.

7 We have always labored, ever since Giddeon
8 versus Waynewrite under a tremendous imbalance
9 of resources between the state prosecution and
10 the indigent defense. To such an extent that
11 our Supreme Court of Florida has complained
12 bitterly about the case loads.

13 For example in Dade County a few years ago,
14 the Supreme Court sent the cases back to
15 determine if there were too many cases the
16 public defenders were trying to handle, and if
17 so, private lawyers would have to be hired and
18 used. This is something I think the people of
19 Florida should be entitled to know about. And
20 I've got a lot more to say, but I'm not going to
21 have the time. But the people of Florida should
22 examine this and have an opportunity to present
23 their views of what is a real problem in
24 fairness and justice in our state, and most
25 other states for that matter. And I think it

1 could be solved with a simple amendment to the
2 Constitution requiring funding parity between
3 the state and indigent defense. Thank you.

4 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you. Andrea De La
5 Vega, and then after that will be Steve Hough.

6 MS. DE LA VEGA: Thank you, Commissioners.

7 I'm Andrea De La Vega. I'm here today for the
8 nearly one and a half million Floridians who
9 have paid their debt to society, but cannot
10 participate in our democracy. They live and
11 work in our communities, pay taxes, and raise
12 their families, but they can't vote. Our goal
13 is for returning citizens to successfully
14 reenter society, but instead of bringing them
15 into the democratic process to strengthen their
16 community ties, we place a barrier in front of
17 them, and a stigma upon them.

18 The right to vote is the most fundamental
19 right in our democracy. It safeguards all
20 others. And yet, Florida strips that right from
21 more of its citizens than any other state, more
22 than 10 percent of our voting age population.
23 Of the more than six million disenfranchised
24 Americans, one quarter are Floridians. Florida
25 is one of only four states that permanently

1 disenfranchises all its returning citizens,
2 unless they petition for clemency. Their only
3 path to full citizenship is to complete their
4 sentence, wait five to seven years, petition for
5 clemency, and wait again.

6 Now, from 2011 to 2016, the clemency board
7 restored the rights of less than 2500 citizens.
8 For most, that's tantamount to a lifetime ban.
9 And so I ask you, Commissioners, to use your
10 extraordinary power to place a common sense
11 amendment on the 2018 ballot that would
12 automatically restore voting rights to
13 Floridians with felony convictions after they
14 have completed all terms of their sentences,
15 including parole or probation. Then let the
16 voters decide if Floridians deserve second
17 chances, or if we should continue to spend
18 taxpayer dollars to silence our citizens at the
19 ballot box. Thank you.

20 MR. PATRONIS: After Steve Hough, we've got
21 William Harrison, and then Pam Anderson.

22 MR. HOUGH: Hi, my name is Steve Hough, and
23 I'd like to thank each of you for your service,
24 and thank you for hosting it here in Panama
25 City.

1 I'm representing Florida Fair and Open
2 Primary. We're an all volunteer, non-funded
3 grass roots organization of independence and NPA
4 seeking electoral reform of our primary
5 process. We have had members speak at every
6 hearing thus far, because we simply want to be
7 allowed to vote in the primary without being
8 forced to join a political party.

9 I had a two minute statement prepared, and I
10 opted to print a copy for each of you, and we
11 will be submitting some specific language to you
12 for your consideration at a later date.

13 I would rather spend time talking today
14 talking about some of the people you've already
15 heard from. There's Michael Winebaum who spoke
16 at the first hearing in Orlando. Having only
17 learned about the hearing the day before, he
18 took off work early in order to speak with you.

19 Lester Wright then drove from Homestead to
20 speak in Miami.

21 In Boca Raton, Alex Borden was concerned
22 about bringing his young daughter to the
23 hearing, but she behaved beautifully and stole
24 all our hearts. The Patronis boys are a close
25 second.

1 Christina Forest drove all the way from
2 Navarre to attend the Tallahassee hearing after
3 it was moved to Pensacola.

4 Frank Day drove from Santa Rosa Beach, and
5 Dale Oaks Ladrone drove from Niceville.

6 These three were hoping you could hear their
7 message. They refused to wait for a time and
8 place more convenient for them. I believe Frank
9 and Dale may even be joining us again today.

10 Annie Houston made quite a splash in
11 Gainesville, and Kristen Curenen rounded up four
12 friends to testify in Jacksonville, and they
13 were joined by several others. Among those were
14 Jackie Bone and Carolyn Wood, who drove up from
15 St. Augustine.

16 We are hoping for a good turnout again today
17 because we're compassionate about this issue,
18 and we hope that you will listen carefully.
19 Thank you for your consideration.

20 MR. PATRONIS: The next is William Harrison
21 then Pam Anderson, and then Ray Aguado.

22 MR. HARRISON: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners,
23 my name is William Harrison. Welcome to Panama
24 City. I want to talk about Article 9 just a
25 moment concerning education.

1 My wife and I have -- we have four children.
2 We also have a foster child which gives us a
3 unique perspective with children. Our oldest
4 being 23, our youngest being four.

5 I would encourage you to look deeply at
6 Article 9 concerning how we provide education
7 for all children, realizing that education today
8 is very different than it was when all of us
9 went to school. It is challenging for children
10 who come out of very difficult circumstances.
11 But education is not the most important thing in
12 their lives, but it is one of the safest things.
13 And I would appreciate your consideration to
14 make sure that we are providing exactly what we
15 promise currently in the Constitution for high
16 quality education for all of our students.

17 I would also like to touch on Bright Future,
18 which is I think an important aspect of the
19 Constitution, mainly because it covers the eight
20 years of the lives of a child, from when they
21 begin high school till they finish college. And
22 with my children, the first tuition cost was
23 \$7,500 dollars. Our fourth child, when we got
24 the prepay for her, it was \$18,000, and that was
25 within a 10 year time period. And so I would

1 appreciate your consideration that we have some
2 way to provide a college education affordably in
3 the Constitution so we don't see those kind of
4 increases. Thank you, very much.

5 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you. After Pam
6 Anderson we've got Ray Aguado, and if I'm
7 mispronouncing that, I'm sorry, and James
8 Sowell.

9 MS. ANDERSON: Commissioners, thank you for
10 this opportunity to speak. I'm Pam Anderson.
11 I'm the Cultural Impact Team Chairperson at St.
12 Andrew Baptist Church here in Panama City. I've
13 lived here in Bay County with my husband for 44
14 years, and my daughter, and I have three
15 grandchildren. My husband was born here, and
16 I've been here since 1961.

17 I ask that you restore Article 1, Section 23
18 of the Florida Constitution, also known as the
19 Privacy Statement, to its original purpose
20 because it has been misused by activist judges
21 to protect those wishing to abort their unborn
22 children.

23 The 1978 C.R.C., the Florida legislature and
24 a majority of others in 1980 vote for
25 informational privacy, not an absolute right to

1 abortion. By interpreting the privacy clause as
2 an absolute right to abortion, the Florida
3 Supreme Court has ignored Article 1, Section 1
4 of the Constitution, which establishes all
5 political power in the state must look from the
6 people, not activist judges.

7 The C.R.C. has it within its power to revise
8 Article 1, Section 23 to clarify the intent of
9 this amendment, which is to protect
10 informational privacy, not the right to an
11 abortion, and in doing so, will uphold Article
12 1, Section 1 to ensure the will of the people is
13 above the will of an activist judicial branch.

14 Floridians choose their representatives to
15 the legislature to pass the laws. The Florida
16 Supreme Court is neither an elected body of
17 representatives, nor is it a law making body.
18 It interprets laws, and unfortunately has
19 misinterpreted Article 1, Section 23.

20 Floridians have demonstrated a desire for
21 pro-life policies both through their elected
22 officials, and at the ballot box. And because
23 of the legal legislating from the bench, common
24 sense pro-life laws have been blocked. This
25 denies Floridians, no matter how small, their

1 constitutionally protected right to life.
2 Please seriously consider the request to protect
3 life. Thank you.

4 MR. AGUADO: Good afternoon, and thank you
5 commission members for giving us an opportunity
6 to speak, and for your willingness to listen.

7 My name is Ray Aguado. You got it right the
8 second time. I am the coordinator of the
9 Respect Life Office for the Catholic Diocese of
10 Pensacola-Tallahassee, and I basically would
11 like to say ditto to the previous speaker, but I
12 have a minute and 38 seconds, so I'm going to
13 keep talking.

14 I'm here to ask the commission to restore
15 Florida's Privacy Amendment also to its original
16 purpose, and that was to protect the
17 informational privacy of we, its citizens, to
18 protect ourselves from the government, and from
19 businesses increasing ability to gather our
20 personal information through increasingly modern
21 investigative techniques. Unfortunately, the
22 privacy amendment has been misinterpreted by the
23 court to allow for broader rights with regard to
24 abortion. Abortion was never mentioned or
25 discussed with regard to adopting this

1 amendment. And unwittingly as a result of these
2 misinterpretations, Florida has created a
3 broader right to an abortion, and a fundamental
4 right for a minor to have an abortion without
5 consent of her parents.

6 I am asking the commission to restore the
7 privacy amendment to what it was intended, to
8 ensure informational privacy, and not to grant
9 any greater rights to an abortion than what's
10 allowed in the U.S. Constitution. Thank you.

11 MR. PATRONIS: And after Mr. Sowell, we've
12 got Joan Walker.

13 MR. SOWELL: I'm Jim Sowell, and I'll
14 probably take a little bit of a different tact
15 than some of the previous speakers. I'd like to
16 express an appreciation for the decisions that
17 you have to make, because I equate this to be
18 almost like a hard drive on a computer. You
19 know how they get cluttered up, and occasionally
20 you just need to wipe that hard drive clean and
21 reboot and start over again. And I think this
22 is the opportunity to do that.

23 We've had 20 years of building up amendments
24 and so forth that in my opinion, never should
25 have been placed before the people to begin

1 with. We should have been insisting that our
2 legislatures do their job and not bring this to
3 the people, because they have the liberty
4 ability to evaluate intelligently what our
5 system of law should be. And things get too
6 emotional when it is put into the process of
7 taking it to the people and too easily swayed.

8 I could name some of these amendments that
9 you should seriously consider getting out.
10 Anything that -- any laws that were enacted to
11 support those amendments have already been done,
12 and will stay on the books until the legislature
13 takes them off. But you can get rid of those
14 amendments, and I'd like to see you do that.

15 We do not need a quagmire of laws that
16 amounts to government by the tyranny of the
17 majority in the future. So I'd like to see you
18 in the future to make it very difficult to amend
19 our Constitution. What you don't get right this
20 time, in 20 years our descendants will get it
21 right. Thank you.

22 MR. PATRONIS: After Joan Walker we have
23 Phyllis Bowman, and then Pam Dorwarth.

24 MS. WALKER: Distinguished Commissioners,
25 I'm also speaking about Article 1, Section 23,

1 the privacy amendment. In 1980, the privacy
2 amendment was adopted by Florida voters as a
3 protection from government and other agencies
4 gathering personal information through modern
5 technology. But in 1989, the Florida Supreme
6 Court interpreted the privacy amendment to
7 include privacy in abortion cases, and even for
8 minors who decide to abort their unborn
9 children. Federal law however requires parental
10 notification and consent for minors who seek
11 abortion.

12 I have a form here from Clair's Boutique,
13 and it's requiring parents to fill this out and
14 sign it. You can see a lot of fine print on it,
15 and this is just for a girl to get her ears
16 pierced, or a boy, a minor to get their ears
17 pierced. But parental consent is required for
18 this.

19 I also have a form from the youth director
20 at my Parish, that any time minors are involved,
21 students, children, forms have to be filled out
22 in order for anyone else besides parents to give
23 medication, whether it's prescribed medication,
24 an inhaler, something that they really need, or
25 even just a Tylenol. Parents have to be

1 informed, they have to fill out the forms, they
2 have to sign it, it all has to be done ahead of
3 time. And yet, a minor can go to an abortion
4 clinic and get an abortion without the parents
5 being notified and giving their consent. And
6 this is a very drastic procedure.

7 So I urge you to restore the privacy
8 amendment to its original intent. And I thank
9 you very much for hearing us.

10 MR. PATRONIS: Phyllis Bowman.

11 MS. BOWMAN: Good afternoon. My name is
12 Phyllis Bowman, and I am the mayor of the town
13 of Greenwood, Jackson County, Florida. On
14 behalf of Greenwood's town council and myself, I
15 would like to personally thank each of you for
16 your commitment to Florida, and the 412 cities,
17 towns and villages that encompass the sunshine
18 state. Preserving Home Rule is a top priority
19 for the Florida League of Cities, for the town
20 of Greenwood, and for myself personally. Home
21 Rule gives each town, city and village the
22 flexibility to craft its laws specifically to
23 meet our own uniques needs.

24 As leaders in our community, our number one
25 priority is the health, safety and welfare of

1 our residents. We understand the unique
2 circumstances within our community, and we are
3 best suited to address them.

4 As mayor of a town of less than 700
5 residents, I personally know each person by
6 name, and if not by name, I know their parents
7 and where they live.

8 I attend church with many of the Greenwood
9 families. I hear their concerns, their desires,
10 their hopes and their dreams. At the local
11 level, residents have a welcoming platform to
12 voice their concerns. Local officials are
13 friends, family and neighbors, people that have
14 a vested interest in the communities they serve.

15 When one level of government forces another
16 level of government to take some action that
17 expands or reduces revenues, or it eliminates
18 citizens rights to decide what happens in their
19 own towns and villages, the state does not like
20 it when Washington D.C. does it. Cities and
21 towns don't like it when the state does it.

22 As you tackle complex issues, please know
23 that the Florida League of Cities has data and
24 statistics that can provide you with a wealth of
25 information about our cities, towns and

1 villages.

2 Thank you for giving me this opportunity to
3 speak to you on behalf of the town of Greenwood
4 and her citizens. Please do not hesitate to
5 contact me if I can be of help to you throughout
6 the process. Thank you.

7 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you. Pam Dorwarth,
8 then we have P.C. Wu, and then Rich Musgrave.

9 MS. DORWARTH: Can you hear me, because I
10 cannot hear me. I'm hearing impaired, and I'm a
11 lip reader. So this makes it difficult, but
12 several of you know me for quite some time, 20
13 years, as a representative of people with
14 disabilities, presidential appointments,
15 gubernatorial appointments out the yin yang.
16 I've been busy for the last 28 years.

17 But anyway, what I'm coming about for two
18 reasons, for myself and other people that had
19 presidential appointments or gubernatorial
20 appointments for the primary election to be not
21 a closed election, but an open election. When I
22 took my oath for the President Bush for the U.S.
23 Access Board, I promised to not participate in a
24 particular party. I represent all people with
25 disabilities. So you have t,o, within primary

1 that are closed in certain states, you have to
2 declare a party or you don't get a ballot,
3 because I do everything by absentee with all my
4 multiple disabilities. We encourage people with
5 disabilities to do that by absentee ballots
6 because it's so difficult to get in to vote.

7 The biggest thing, we had 50 million
8 nonregistered disabled citizens in the United
9 States last year. We could not get them to
10 register because they said primary, I have to
11 declare a party, you told me I had the right to
12 vote, why do I have to declare a party.

13 So I'm asking that Florida make it an open,
14 not a closed for all of the disabled and any
15 other person who feels that they're franchised
16 against for voting, but especially the disabled
17 community, because they don't feel they have the
18 voting rights, and for all people that represent
19 large communities such as the disabled, that ave
20 taken an oath to represent all men not to
21 declare a party. Thank you. Good to see
22 everybody.

23 MR. PATRONIS: Is P.C. Wu here? There he
24 is.

25 MR. WU: Good afternoon, Commissioners. The

1 first thing is I wonder when people look at
2 this, they realize the power and influence that
3 we have assembled here before us. It is really
4 remarkable that you, as busy as you are, are
5 willing to give of your time and effort to make
6 this state a better place to live. This is
7 truly an impressive commission.

8 My name is P.C. Wu, and I'm a councilman
9 from Pensacola, Florida, and I'm here also for
10 the Northwest Florida League of Cities. And in
11 2013, I had the privilege of serving as the
12 President of the Florida League of Cities. And
13 as the mayor so apply said a minute ago, the 412
14 cities, towns and villages in Florida vary in
15 size and shape and personality, from Little Two
16 Egg up the road here, to down in Miami, where
17 you have two and a half million people who live
18 in Dade County. But one thing that is
19 consistent among all these cities, towns and
20 villages is the concept of Home Rule. That is
21 that the people who live there are very close to
22 they're elected officials, the men and women who
23 live right down the street from them, who go
24 grocery shopping with them, who worship with
25 them at the same churches, this is where

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30

1 government is the closest to the people. And we
2 implore you continue with this concept of Home
3 Rule.

4 And I'm going to deviate for just a second
5 and throw in counties as well, because even
6 though I'm here representing cities, the Home
7 Rule applies to counties as well. And Brian
8 (inaudible) who is currently the President of
9 the Nashville Association of Counties, he and I
10 did a video tape, and just a few venues from
11 that is that together we maintain 70,000 miles
12 of road in a city and county. We have 45,000
13 law enforcement officers. We have 500 public
14 libraries, which are frequented by \$87,000,000
15 people, and we have 4,600 polling places where
16 so many people vote.

17 So again, I implore you to please keep the
18 concept of local Home Rule, and I thank you for
19 each and everyone of you for the fine work that
20 you do on behalf of all of us. Thank you.

21 MR. PATRONIS: After Rich Musgrave we have
22 J.B., is it Whitman?

23 MR. MUSGRAVE: Thank you, Commissioners. My
24 name is Richard Musgrave, and for the past four
25 years I've been honored to serve as the mayor of

1 the City of Parker, Florida, one of 412 mayors
2 in this state. I interface frequently with my
3 peers within Bay County, and I've come to
4 appreciate the differences among the cities, and
5 the challenges each of us face daily.

6 It is somewhat puzzling why a county or
7 state government would think centralized
8 decision making was better than decision making
9 at the lowest government level. Socialist
10 states around the globe are chastised for having
11 a government that uses centralized decision
12 making, so I question why many elected or
13 appointed officials would think centralized
14 decision making was better here in our country.

15 There are those issues that certainly are
16 better addressed at higher levels of government,
17 but unfortunately far too often it seems the
18 addition of power tends to dilute the thinking,
19 and disregards the voice of one's constituents.

20 I understand that Home Rule powers have been
21 a part of Florida's Constitution since 1968. It
22 was a wise and perceptive change. I and my
23 fellow city officials have one primary
24 objective, and that is to answer to the needs
25 and the voice of our citizens. Local leadership

1 is hard, but with handcuffs on, the task is
2 overwhelming.

3 I appreciate the honor of addressing you
4 this evening, but I'm also aware that many
5 special interests with different objectives will
6 press on all fronts. Of the people, by the
7 people, and for the people still resinate.

8 Please consider that our ability to make
9 decisions at the local level vital to Florida's
10 future. Please do everything you can to
11 preserve this time proven structure, and embrace
12 Home Rule as the law of the land.

13 If legislatures are really interested in
14 saying what city or county can and cannot do, I
15 would encourage them to run for local office.
16 Thank you for your time and attention.

17 MR. PATRONIS: J.B. Whitman? He's not here
18 yet. Okay, Lee Garner. After Lee Garner we'll
19 have J.D. Peacock, and then Catherine Robinson.

20 Mr. Garner: Good afternoon. My name is Lee
21 Garner, and I'm the City Manager of
22 Chattahoochee, Florida, and I'm out for a couple
23 of hours past, so I have to get back to get in
24 my bed tonight.

25 I would like to begin by thanking each of

1 you for your service. It's no easy task, and I
2 recognize the magnitude of this responsibility,
3 and the commitment you have made to serve
4 Florida's future.

5 As you've heard before, there's 412 cities
6 in the state, and each one is different than the
7 next. But one thing that all cities have in
8 common is a commitment to Home Rule, also known
9 as local control. And I think all of you who
10 have served somewhere, you know how much you
11 like to have local control over what you are
12 doing for your office or where you're at.

13 Preserving Home Rule is the top priority of
14 the Florida League of Cities, which I'm a member
15 of, the Northwest Florida League of Cities, and
16 for the City of Chattahoochee, and especially
17 for me. I've been a city manager now for 35
18 years in various places, and Home Rule, the ones
19 that are closest to the people know what needs
20 to be done. And after this legislative session,
21 I don't know what to look for when this session
22 is (inaudible) and we get all the rules and
23 regulations that they took away from us.

24 From the news reports, now, I don't know how
25 much y'all are aware, I've been up there a

1 couple of times this year, but I'm sure that
2 from all aspects that I can read, we've heard
3 Home Rule has taken a slaying this year. And I
4 know several of you have been up there before in
5 elected positions.

6 So as a member of the Florida League of
7 Cities, Northwest Florida League of Cities, I'm
8 proud to say that our regional and statewide
9 organizations have been a united force for
10 municipal governments for nearly a century. And
11 as you tackle these complex issues, please know
12 that we have the organizations I've mentioned
13 have comprehensive collections of data and
14 statistics.

15 Again, thank you for your efforts, and if I
16 can be helpful to you throughout this process, I
17 pledge you my support. Thank you.

18 MR. PATRONIS: After J.D. Peacock we have
19 Catherine Robinson, and then Robert Gilmore.

20 MR. PEACOCK: Good afternoon. Thank you,
21 Mr. Chair and Commissioners for being here
22 today. I am J.D. Peacock from the Clerk and
23 Comptroller for Okaloosa County, and I want to
24 invite you to Okaloosa County to come and on
25 your road tour, please come see us in beautiful

1 Okaloosa County.

2 It's an honor for me to represent the people
3 of Okaloosa County as their elected trustee.

4 The constitutional role of the clerk and
5 comptroller places us as the keeper of the
6 people's records, the maintainer of court
7 decisions, guardian of the county treasury,
8 which is a big one. Accountability and
9 transparency are core principles under which we
10 operate.

11 The independence, as prescribed by the
12 people's document, the Florida Constitution,
13 gives us the ability to hold government
14 accountable to the people.

15 In addition to the constitutional role we
16 play as the public trustee, your clerks of court
17 provide many public safety roles that serve the
18 residents and visitors to our counties.

19 One of the most important roles is to
20 provide access to information to stakeholders in
21 the court system. Timely and accurate
22 information on criminal cases is instrumental to
23 public safety decisions made by our law
24 enforcement officers, and to our state
25 prosecutors.

1 The clerk's maintain the records related to
2 decisions, to court decisions, and we strive to
3 provide instant access to information in court
4 records in a secure and direct manner. This
5 information derives decisions on bail
6 requirements, sentencing decisions, inmate
7 release processes, inmate classification
8 concerns, all critical to safety, and the safety
9 of our citizens, and to law enforcement officers
10 who serve us.

11 Again, thank you for your time, and for you
12 hearing the concerns of people of the state.
13 And I certainly appreciate your time, and I
14 invite you that all of the clerks of the state
15 are ready to give you any kind of help that you
16 might need throughout the state on things that
17 we manage. Thank you, very much.

18 MR. PATRONIS: After Catherine Robinson,
19 Robert Gilmore, and then we've got Arlene
20 Zacher.

21 MS. ROBINSON: Hi, my name is Catherine
22 Durkin Robinson. I organize the hundreds of
23 thousand of families in Florida who choose the
24 Tax Credit Scholarship Program, the Gardiner
25 Scholarship Program, and charter schools for

1 their children.

2 I am honored to represent these parents who
3 believe it is their fundamental right to choose
4 the best school that works for their kids. I
5 ask you please to consider any amendment that
6 preserves this right. Thank you, very much.

7 MR. PATRONIS: Robert Gilmore?

8 MR. GILMORE: Hi, I'm Robert Gilmore. I'm
9 from Panama City Beach, Florida. This summer,
10 our church really believes in a strong and
11 vibrant democracy, partnered with the NAACP to
12 register voters.

13 We did a really, really sincere and good job
14 at registering earnestly both Republicans and
15 Democrats. We just wanted to be out there to
16 strengthen our democracy.

17 I was quite taken by the number of people
18 who came up and said that they could not vote
19 because they had a felony. It's really, really
20 hard for a lot of people who that take this
21 right personally. And I think it's something
22 that we need to address in an amendment, that
23 people that are convicted of a felony should be
24 allowed to fully restore their rights when they
25 finish serving their sentence.

1 Someone already spoke to this about how many
2 states have a similar kind of policy, it's down
3 to three, three other states. It's just not
4 right, the sum of 1.6 million people in Florida
5 that have been disenfranchised of their rights.
6 In order to restore their rights, they have to
7 go through a very long and difficult process.
8 It just needs to be simple. If you serve your
9 time, you are restored your rights, and it
10 should be part of a constitutional amendment.

11 One more thing that I would like to speak
12 to, I'm not sure that it really fits into a
13 constitutional amendment, but I think that we
14 need to have an independent commission that will
15 look into redistricting. And I don't know
16 exactly how that formats in a constitutional
17 amendment, but it's going to be really important
18 that it be independent, that we separate the
19 Republican and the Democratic party in this
20 process, and get done with this journey. Thank
21 you.

22 MR. PATRONIS: After Arlene Zacher, we've
23 got Francis Roegaski.

24 MS. ZACHER: Thank you for this opportunity
25 and for all your work on this. I am simply

1 asking that you consider working to pass the
2 Equal Rights Amendment. I believe it's time.
3 I've been embarrassed to admit to my 13 and 15
4 year old granddaughters that after all these
5 years, we still don't have an Equal Rights
6 Amendment. I appreciate your help and your work
7 towards this passage. Thank you.

8 MR. PATRONIS: Is there a Frances here?

9 MR. ROEGASKI: Yeah, I'm coming.

10 MR. PATRONIS: Okay, because I can
11 definitely read the first name. There you are.
12 Come on down.

13 MR. ROEGASKI: I'm one of those
14 nonpolitically affiliated people.

15 MR. PATRONIS: Me too.

16 MR. ROEGASKI: Okay, and I don't feel that I
17 have to join a party to vote on stuff that's
18 important to me, such things as sheriffs and
19 other things, because I'm locked out. Just
20 because he runs and is elected by his party,
21 there's no opposing one, he should still have to
22 run in the general election. It's due to the
23 fact that if we're locked out, he's not fully
24 elected by all parties.

25 We need an open election in this state, that

1 if I am a registered voter, I could vote any
2 time I want to.

3 As you see, I am a retired military person.
4 And for many years, it all hurts when I come
5 back from this very war, and that's what I was
6 told I was fighting for, to keep people free and
7 able to vote. But if you don't say what party
8 you are, you can't vote in this state. That's
9 all I have to say on the subject.

10 MR. PATRONIS: Well, just for the record
11 then, I butchered it up, tell us your name so I
12 get your last name right.

13 MR. ROEGASKI: Frances Roegaski.

14 MR. PATRONIS: Roegaski. Okay, thank you,
15 sir, for participating today.

16 MR. ROEGASKI: The thing about it is my
17 parents and my grandparents taught me both sides
18 of the whole country. So that's why, and we all
19 served. Thank you, very much, gentlemen.

20 MR. PATRONIS: Margo Fullilove, and then we
21 have Heather Youmans.

22 MS. FULLILOVE: Hi, I'm Margo Fullilove.
23 Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you
24 regarding the Florida Fair and Open Primaries.
25 I'm glad we have a lot of support here today.

1 I have lived in Florida since 2004, but my
2 father is retired U.S. Air Force, and he moved
3 here in '68 and lived in Bay County for 25 years
4 until he passed away in '95. So I have a long
5 attachment to Florida. In fact, my parents were
6 good friends of the Patronis, so it's nice to
7 see you again.

8 MR. PATRONIS: Thank you.

9 MS. FULLILOVE: I retired three years ago,
10 and I had spent 35 years on I.T. I lived in
11 Colorado, I lived in Illinois, and when I came
12 to Florida, and I've always been a registered
13 independent voter, and have voted in every
14 election possible, but have been excluded from
15 primary elections since I've moved here, and
16 it's very frustrating. I wish to be able to
17 vote for candidates of my choice, regardless of
18 party. Therefore, we'd like to see the Florida
19 and other state voting laws revised so the
20 independents can vote in primary elections. I
21 feel that many elections, especially local
22 elections, are decided or significantly
23 influenced by primaries, nonparty affiliated
24 voters have increased to over 64 percent since
25 2004 to 2016.

1 Florida, the average is less than 23 percent
2 turnout in primary elections. In 2016, most
3 open primary states have a much higher voter
4 turnout than Florida.

5 So it is not uncommon for local elections to
6 be single party. Therefore, an independent
7 cannot vote in the primaries, they are denied
8 the right to vote.

9 There are 3.4 million independent and
10 minority parties that can't vote in major party
11 primaries unless they're registered with the
12 party holding the primary. Over half of young
13 voters, millennials identify as independent
14 voters in national surveys. We shouldn't be
15 locking out the next generation of leaders from
16 participating in our political process. Open
17 style primaries averaged over 37 percent in
18 2016.

19 I believe that Florida needs to join other
20 states in growing trends for its open style
21 primaries. Thank you for your consideration.

22 MR. PATRONIS: I'm going to turn the gavel
23 over to Commissioner Gaetz.

24 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, Mr.
25 Chairman, and I join Commissioner Patronis in

1 welcoming my fellow commissioners to Northwest
2 Florida. And I do have an announcement to make,
3 all commissioners other than Representative
4 Patronis may need to check and recalculate their
5 watches, because you are now on central time,
6 which we call correct time.

7 Our next speaker is Heather Youmas, and
8 after Ms. Youmas, Patty Burke. Ms. Youmas?

9 MS. YOUMAS: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman.

11 MR. GAETZ: You're recognized.

12 MS. YOUMAS: Thank you. My name is Heather
13 Youmas, I'm with the American Cancer Society
14 Cancer Action Network, or A.C.S.N. Hi. I
15 appreciate the opportunity to be here with you
16 today, and the opportunities that you've given
17 us throughout the state to speak in support of
18 two constitutional amendments that were tobacco
19 related network, based on the constitution
20 through the citizen initiative process.

21 Article 10, Section 20 of the Constitution
22 passed in 2002, and it prohibits smoking in most
23 indoor work places and restaurants. And Article
24 10, Section 27 passed in 2006, and it mandates
25 that the state allocates a portion of the

1 tobacco sale money for tobacco prevention
2 education. The resulting program from that is
3 housed in the Department of Health and it's
4 known by most as the Tobacco Free Florida
5 Program.

6 I know you've heard from a lot of our
7 advocates and volunteers from around the state,
8 so I'll keep my comments short and just offer
9 A.C.S.N. as a resource to the commission, should
10 you need any additional information. And thank
11 you for your service. Thank you, very much.

12 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. And next we
13 have Patty Burke, and on deck is Cherry I think
14 it's Cam, from 17680 Front Beach Road. Ms.
15 Burke?

16 MS. BURKE: Hello, I'm Patty Burke from Gulf
17 Breeze, Florida. Thank you all for being here
18 and committing your time to the commission.

19 I am here as a wife and mother of three, and
20 a counselor at a crisis pregnant center, and I
21 would like to address Article 1, Section 23. I
22 believe it's very flawed.

23 We, as citizens of Florida, don't have
24 informational privacy. Our Affordable Care Act
25 is collecting info on us. Schools are

1 collecting data on our children, and we don't
2 have any power over that to prevent it. Yet a
3 minor child can access an abortion without
4 parental consent.

5 While abortion advocates claim abortion is
6 safe, statistics have done physical harm to
7 women and girls at the hand of abortionists
8 exist. And these abortionists, in our community
9 in Pensacola, the gentleman comes in from New
10 Jersey. The owner of the facility has been
11 licensed in five or six states and has had his
12 license revoked in those five or six states.

13 So to say abortion is safe is not correct.
14 And it's not just the surgical abortions, but
15 it's also the abortion pill. I suspect that the
16 C.D.C. doesn't have all the statistics when it
17 comes to the abortion pill because hemorrhaging
18 can be related to other things, people can pass
19 out while they're behind the wheel, and other
20 reasons are made for to why a person is damaged,
21 or death.

22 In 2013, nearly 12 percent of abortions were
23 obtained by girls 19 and under. In 2015, 71,748
24 abortions were in Florida. If the rates were
25 the same, then we're talking about 8,600, 19 and

1 under girls obtained abortions without parental
2 consent, and if they were damaged in any way,
3 the parent would have no way of knowing what had
4 occurred. Thank you for your time.

5 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. Next is
6 Cherry, is it Cam? And I apologize if I got it
7 wrong.

8 MS. CRIM: It's all right. It's Cheire
9 Crim.

10 MR. GAETZ: Could you say it again, ma'am?

11 MS. CRIM: Crim, C-r-i-m.

12 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, ma'am.
13 And on deck is Brian Thiele.

14 MS. CRIM: Awesome. Thank you guys so much
15 for coming here today. We really appreciate it.

16 I'm Cheire Crim. I'm actually a small
17 business owner. I just incorporated here in the
18 State of Florida. And I'm also a member of Bay
19 Indivisible, which is really important because
20 I'm a big progressive, and I believe that
21 Florida can be a much better state than what it
22 is. And what we need to do is we need to start
23 talking about equal rights for women, as well as
24 gender equality.

25 Let's be clear, women make 77 to 80 percent

1 of what men make. Women of color make even less
2 than that, and that's very important to
3 understand because this has been the same way
4 all 25 years I've been in business. It's a very
5 sad fact, but it does occur. How does it occur?
6 It occurs by companies allowing it to occur, and
7 Florida can step up and tell companies not to.

8 A great example of how it happened to me, I
9 worked for a company for 15 years. As I was
10 there, I was in a director title, and I saw this
11 awesome man come in. He was great, he was doing
12 what needed to be done, and then all of a
13 sudden, he got promoted to the same level as I
14 am. He has four years of experience, making
15 \$20,000 more than me. I go and I ask human
16 resources, what are you going to do about this.
17 This is not equal pay, we have laws for this.
18 They're like, oh, well, he's got this experience
19 that you don't have. Like but same title. I
20 actually have a lot more direct reports than
21 you do. It doesn't matter, we're just going to
22 let him -- don't worry about it, we'll take care
23 of you one day. Excuse me, I know you're paying
24 him more, and you don't care.

25 So what Florida needs to do, is they need to

1 step up, and they need to stop allowing this
2 type of behavior, whether it is two women,
3 whether it is somebody based on their sexual
4 orientation, which that does happen as well.
5 It's time for Florida to be progressive and to
6 stop allowing these discriminations. Florida
7 needs to make sure that all people are treated
8 equal, and that they are stopping this
9 discrimination across the board.

10 Now, you can step up across the United
11 States and be the one, raise your hand and say
12 we're here, Florida, we're going to stop
13 allowing these discriminations.

14 MR. GAETZ: Next is Brian Thiele. Do I have
15 that right, sir?

16 MR. THIELE: It's Thiele.

17 MR. GAETZ: And next after him is Frank
18 Campis please.

19 MR. THIELE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
20 of the Commission. My name is Brian Thiele.
21 I'm the Panhandle representative for Americans
22 for Prosperity. We're here to offer something a
23 little different than most people. We would
24 like to ask you all to do nothing. That would
25 be our way of protecting Floridians, is for you

1 all to leave it up to your legislatures and your
2 local government. If you guys feel the need to
3 edit anything, we would ask that you look at
4 Article 9 and make school choice a permanent
5 fixture here in Florida. Other than that, we
6 believe the best course for you all is to just
7 leave everything alone. Thank you.

8 MR. GAETZ: Thank you. Mr. Campis, and
9 after Mr. Campis, Frank Day.

10 MR. CAMPIS: Yes, my name is Frank Campis.
11 I'm a retired engineer. And let me say I'm
12 proud to be an American. This is great that
13 anybody can come in here and just voice their
14 opinion. And some of these things are
15 important, but compared to the rest of the
16 world, I think we're way ahead. I'm happy 99
17 percent of the time.

18 I've just got two little issues. I was born
19 as a resident of Alabama. For most of my life
20 I'm been a Democrat, I've been Republican, and
21 then I was independent. I'm independent now. I
22 try to vote for the person, okay.

23 When I was in Alabama on preliminary or
24 primary, I could go in on the day of election,
25 you just declare if you're a Democrat or a

1 Republican and you get your vote, okay. And I
2 don't know how many states that's done. I was
3 really shocked when I voted the first time as a
4 resident of Florida 15 years ago. And I'm not a
5 felon, I got two speeding tickets 30 years ago,
6 okay, and that's about it. I'm not a mayor, I'm
7 just an average old retired guy, and there's
8 going to be a bunch of other people coming down.

9 The culture has changed, the Democrat and
10 Republican parties I agree to disagree at times.
11 I don't think it's fair to me that I can't vote
12 in the preliminary. That's all I'm saying.
13 Y'all don't let Alabama be a better state than
14 Florida. Maybe on the football field.

15 MR. GAETZ: There's going to be a problem
16 with that now, sir.

17 MR. CAMPIS: That's it. Then I'll mention
18 one other thing as an independent, an old guy
19 for the economy and jobs, y'all need to let the
20 citizens vote on the casinos. Open it up. Open
21 it up. There's plenty there. Thank you.

22 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, sir. Next is Frank
23 Day, and following Mr. Day, Karen Schoen.

24 MR. DAY: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and
25 Commissioners. Thank you, very much. Bear with

1 me, my voice is a little off.

2 I'm speaking again on behalf of open
3 primaries. We've had several speakers tonight
4 addressing this. Having spoken in Tallahassee,
5 I realized when I got home that I hadn't
6 provided any concrete information. So today I
7 did a public records request of my Supervisor of
8 Elections, and I'll provide this to staff. As a
9 perfect example of the abortion of our election
10 process, where a candidate comes in and
11 qualifies the last hour of qualifying, as an NPA
12 in what would ordinarily be a universal primary
13 and locks everyone else out of the process. So
14 if you're not a member of that party, you're
15 totally locked out.

16 Now this particular candidate, a very
17 wealthy business owner, comes in, as I said, in
18 the last hours of qualifying, makes one campaign
19 contribution to her account the entire season,
20 campaign season, writes one check, then the
21 supervisor, realizing they've overcharged this
22 candidate, reimburses \$800 dollars of that back.
23 And then a series of 13, 13 waivers, absolutely
24 no campaign activity whatsoever, and has in
25 effect aborted the majority of the citizens'

1 rights to vote.

2 Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. You need
3 to address and correct this problem.

4 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Day. Karen
5 Schoen? And after Ms. Schoen, Pam Robbins.

6 MS. SHOEN: Today we are addressing a
7 Constitution which is not really followed
8 anymore in Florida. Article 1, Section 8 says
9 that English is the official language of
10 Florida, and yet when you go into one of the
11 larger schools in south Florida, one would
12 hardly know that.

13 Article 2, Section 3 says that no person
14 belonging to one branch of the government shall
15 resist highest power over another branch.

16 Section 5 says that you cannot hold an
17 office in two branches, yet we have attorneys
18 who are part of the Bar who answer to the
19 judiciary who are now legislatures. And then
20 people cannot read the amendments.

21 Statute 876.01 addresses communism, which is
22 also known as globalism, and yet today in
23 Florida schools we have globalism being taught,
24 and our children are being coached to become
25 global citizens, not American citizens.

1 We have the radical Islamic charter schools,
2 nine of them, under the umbrella of FATIH 1 with
3 different names all over Florida, teaching from
4 a foreign country, American history. How does
5 that work? Why are Florida's children not being
6 coached in books that comes from Florida, or
7 from American authors and American publishers.

8 We have books, we have teachers who are not
9 American, and yet our children are expected to
10 learn that in America.

11 There is no doubt in my mind that this is
12 going on because all of a sudden, America became
13 a democracy. America is not a democracy.
14 America is a Constitutional Representative
15 Republic. If America was a democracy, we
16 wouldn't have elected officials, we'd have
17 appointed officials. And yet our children know
18 nothing about that.

19 We're being guided into the fact that if we
20 change the location and change the school, then
21 that will change the children. It will not.
22 The problem is with the curriculum.

23 And the other problem, and a problem which
24 can be fixed, is when local communities take
25 back the curriculum.

1 In addition, we have on Article 9, Section

2 --

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Time's up, time.

4 MR. GAETZ: Excuse me, the Chair will
5 conduct the meeting and not the audience. Ms.
6 Schoen, can you wrap it up, please? Thank you.

7 MS. SCHOEN: We have a commission that is
8 appointed by the governor, and they in turn
9 elect the Commissioner of Education. It would
10 be a good idea if the Commissioner of Education
11 was elected by the people. Thank you.

12 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Schoen. Next is
13 Pam Robbins, and then J.D. Whitten.

14 MS. ROBBINS: Good afternoon. I'm Pam
15 Robbins. I'm not an expert in this field, but I
16 don't believe it's fracking, and I hope none of
17 you will allow onshore or off shore drilling.

18 Our environment is what makes Florida great,
19 and if we lose our water, it gets polluted from
20 all the drilling, then we will be worse off than
21 Flint. And I can't think of a worse thing than
22 to have to move away from Florida right now.
23 Thank you, very much.

24 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much. J.C.
25 Whitten? I'm sorry, J.D. Whitten? Since Mr. or

1 Ms. Whitten isn't here right now, because our
2 recorder has to recalculate and make sure that
3 her machine is working, and take a break for her
4 hands, and all of this is being recorded for the
5 record, we'll take a five minute break now and
6 then we'll come back, and everyone else that's
7 here will have the opportunity to address the
8 commission. We stand in recess.

9 (Recess Taken)

10 MR. GAETZ: We'll do one final call for J.D.
11 Whitten from Crestview. Then our next speaker
12 is Henry Lawrence, and following Mr. Lawrence,
13 Candis Harbison. Mr. Lawrence, you're up, sir.

14 MR. LAWRENCE: Good afternoon. My name is
15 Henry Lawrence and I represent the Green Party
16 of Florida today. And the issue I want to bring
17 up is with regards to what regards voting,
18 preferential voting, which in some instances
19 called ranked choice voting, which is called
20 instant runoff voting, which basically allows
21 the voter to make more than one choice. In
22 other words, if Jimmy and the four or five of
23 y'all are up for the same seat, I get to rank
24 you one, two, three, four by choice. I get to
25 pick my best choice, but ultimately I get to

1 pick my second choice. I get to pick to third
2 choice, and even my fourth choice if there's
3 that many candidates running. So what it does,
4 it kind of it's an equalizer for the populous.
5 The people who vote, their vote means more to
6 them as they have more choice in the vote.

7 Just a quick little thing off the internet
8 here. There are many types of preferential
9 voting with several used in government
10 elections. Instant runoff voting is employed in
11 Australia at the state and federal levels. In
12 Ireland, for its presidential elections, and
13 some cities in the United States also use it.

14 In the United Kingdom, that is even the
15 single transferable vote is used for national
16 elections in the Republic of Ireland, the
17 Australian Senate, for regional and local
18 elections in northern Ireland, for all local
19 elections in Scotland, and for some local
20 elections in New Zealand and the United States.

21 So it's not a new idea, it's something we
22 could do. It would empower the voter, the
23 citizen, to help them understand and feel that
24 their vote really, really matters.

25 So thank you for considering ranked choice

1 voting. I did a little research, I've got a
2 hand out on it.

3 And also real quick, I've got 12 seconds.
4 Voting rights. Once you finish your time, you
5 should have the right to vote. I did four
6 years, I did my parole, I could vote. The laws
7 changed after I got my rights back. So I would
8 like other convicted felons, who are free and
9 clear of their responsibilities, their parole,
10 to have the right to vote. That should be in
11 the Constitution.

12 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Lawrence. Candis
13 Harbison is next, and Brandi De Ruiter is
14 following Ms. Harbison.

15 I'm an advocate for Susan Sizemore, who at
16 the moment is the last person who signed up to
17 speak. That means that we do respectfully ask
18 that you respect the two minute time limit, so
19 that we can hear those who have signed up, and
20 who still would like to have an opportunity to
21 address the commission. So with that, Ms.
22 Harbison.

23 MS. HARBISON: You folks will be the ones
24 deciding, among the ones deciding what kind of
25 Florida your children and grandchildren are

1 going to live in. Do you want them to have
2 clean drinking water and places to fish, and be
3 able to go to a clean beach? Do you want
4 tourists to continue coming here to fuel our
5 economy? If you do, then you must protect our
6 natural resources. There are natural resource
7 protections in the Constitution, and I am
8 certainly hoping that you will keep them there,
9 and perhaps even enhance them. Thank you.

10 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much. Ms. De
11 Ruiter, and following her, Maggie Hewitt.

12 MS. DE RUITER: Good after, Commissioners,
13 Commissioner Gaetz. My name is Brandi De
14 Ruiter, I'm the V.P. of Governmental Affairs at
15 the Bay County Chamber of Commerce.

16 First I would like to take a moment to thank
17 you all for being here tonight, and your
18 willingness to serve in this capacity. It will
19 help form significant and lasting changes to our
20 accommodational document to the Florida
21 Constitution. We recognize that this is no
22 light undertaking, and we support you in your
23 efforts.

24 I'd like to speak on the point of taxes, and
25 more specifically keeping them predictable.

1 There's been a lot of talk lately on the growing
2 assisting business interacting new business.
3 Whether they're related to our number one
4 tourist industry, tourism, or one of the
5 industries that we were trying to attract, to
6 help (inaudible).

7 The ground work for a business friendly
8 climate is stability. One of the most important
9 factors in planning for growth and development
10 is predictability. Whether it is the cost of
11 doing business in Florida, or new business
12 operational startup, consistency is key to
13 success, and we want all businesses to succeed
14 and be profitable.

15 We ask that when you address Article 7 of
16 the Florida Constitution, as it relates to
17 finances and taxation, that you please keep tax
18 burdens consistent and predictable. Thank you
19 all again for your service, and thank you for
20 being here tonight.

21 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, Ms. De
22 Ruiter. Maggie Hewitt is next, and following
23 Ms. Hewitt, Katherine Merrit.

24 MS. HEWITT: Hi, my name is Maggie Hewitt.
25 I'm from Panama City. Previously I lived in

1 Oregon. I am a physician, and I was involved
2 with patients who were involved with Oregon's
3 Death with Dignity Law, and I would encourage
4 that here in Florida.

5 I will tell a brief story. I had a patient
6 with a Melanoma that was metastatic. He and his
7 wife, who was an oncology nurse, knew that he
8 had metastasis to his brain and that he would
9 soon die within the year. He was suffering
10 immensely. He hung on for a very long time. He
11 and his wife decided that his end point would be
12 when he could no longer function as an
13 individual. At the time of his death, he could
14 only move his left arm, and he had lost all
15 other capabilities. He loved his wife very
16 much. His wife loved him. His family gathered
17 around him, and he had a very peaceful death.

18 It is an opportunity to end suffering for
19 some individuals, and it is certainly not right
20 for everyone. But I would encourage Florida to
21 consider it in the future.

22 MR. GAETZ: Thank you. Katherine Merrit,
23 and following Ms. Merrit, John Robert Jackson.
24 Katherine Merrit? Once, twice, three times.
25 Well, we'll come back to Ms. Merrit, she had to

1 step out for a moment. John Robert Jackson, and
2 following Mr. Jackson, Ruby Faust.

3 MR. JACKSON: Yes, hi. I grew up here in
4 Panama City. Actually, you know, with the
5 economic downturn, I had to move around a lot.
6 A long story, but I was working with
7 Mr. Lawrence on the right choice voting. I'm
8 not political about it, you know, I'm not a
9 Democrat or a Republican.

10 I actually mailed out to (inaudible)
11 already, and there's some more going in the mail
12 tomorrow with the FairVotes information. It's a
13 national organization. It addressed some of the
14 concerns, you know, like the Democratic Governor
15 in California, he rejected a measure to, you
16 know, implement locally saying it would confuse
17 voters. They did a study and found that they
18 understood it better, and had more satisfaction
19 and greater turn out, you know.

20 I mean basically we've got to get the fear
21 out of voting, you know. This all spoilers,
22 wasted votes. I mean you hear it from
23 Republicans and Democrats, you know. Let people
24 vote their values, you know, and have, as he
25 said, you know, your second and third choice

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1 that your vote, you know, just goes down to it.

2 If the top one, you know, isn't viable.

3 And then I addressed in the letters it has
4 the potential to save a lot of money as well, it
5 could eliminating runoffs and possibly, you
6 know, the primaries altogether in some cases.

7 If you'll take a look at that, I have some
8 copies with me today, that I want to make sure
9 the rest are in the mail tomorrow. So thank
10 you.

11 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. Next is
12 Ruby Faust, and then following Ms. Faust, Paul
13 White.

14 MS. FAUST: Paul had to leave early, so you
15 might announce the next person.

16 MR. GAETZ: All right. Thank you for that
17 information. Alvin Peters.

18 MS. FAUST: My name is Ruby R. Faust. I
19 live in Lynn Haven, and I appreciate your coming
20 here. I like the slogan you have up there. I
21 wish we could depend on it a little more fully.

22 I'm concerned about the fact that many
23 people across the state get out and work very
24 hard to create citizens initiated amendments,
25 that then go to the legislature, and the

1 legislature doesn't seem to understand them,
2 they don't seem to agree with them, and they
3 don't always do what the amendment clearly says.
4 The horrible example being most recently the
5 Fair Districts Amendment, and it's long path
6 through the legal system.

7 Can we put some teeth in the Constitution so
8 that the legislature is bound to honor
9 amendments passed by citizen's initiative? I'd
10 like you to consider that. Thank you for giving
11 me a moment to complain, and I apologize for
12 that, too.

13 MR. GAETZ: No apology. Thank you. Alvin
14 Peters, and following Mr. Peters, Cecil Scoon.

15 MR. PETERS: Good afternoon, good evening.
16 We don't always necessarily agree, but I'm sure
17 Commissioner Patronis and I agree that he should
18 have you over to his place for dinner tonight.
19 Check with council on who has to pick up the
20 tab, all right?

21 I was thinking about all the issues that are
22 important to Florida from a long range point of
23 view, and I thought about the resegregation of
24 Florida's education system that's been
25 aggravated by the charter school system. I

1 thought about the need to restore felon rights.
2 But as I contemplated those challenges, it
3 occurs to me that climate change is the
4 fundamental challenge to Florida's very
5 existence. I recognize that climate change has
6 become a bit of a political football, but
7 whether you're a Republican or Democrat, if you
8 were born between 1940 and 1990, I would suggest
9 to you that we have a moral obligation, and you
10 as policy makers have a legal obligation to
11 safeguard the state for generations to come.

12 So let's take a moment and review peer
13 review science. Since the industrial
14 revolution, CO₂ has risen from 280 parts per
15 million to now 410 parts per million.

16 Sea level has risen approximately three
17 quarters of a foot since 1900. By 2100, our
18 children and grandchildren's life spans, peer
19 review science says that we can expect two to
20 five feet more in sea level.

21 Oceans are also becoming more acidic, about
22 30 percent more acidic so far. Red Tide,
23 harmful algae blooms will find these water
24 acidic waters more friendly, but fish and
25 shellfish will not.

1 So what can you do? You can commit Florida
2 to reduce its CO₂, similar to what the United
3 States did in the Paris Climate Treaty. You can
4 encourage a renewable portfolio standard common
5 in other states. You could consider a
6 constitutional answer to the economic chaos that
7 will occur as sea levels rise. The overwhelming
8 majority of Florida's economic taxable values
9 are on the coast, and vulnerable to sea level
10 rise.

11 Right now the government is funding beach
12 renourishment on Panama City Beach, or of course
13 you could do nothing. But my final point is
14 that you open your mind to the peer review
15 science, and that you prepare yourself for your
16 grandchild's question, what did you do about
17 climate change in the early 21st century.

18 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, sir. Cecile Scoon,
19 and following Ms. Scoon, Nicholas I believe it's
20 Beninate or Beninate. Ms. Scoon, you're
21 recognized.

22 MS. SCOON: Thank you, sir. Thank you, and
23 welcome. My name is Cecile Scoon, and I'm
24 president of the Bay County League of Women
25 Voters, and I'm speaking on their behalf, and

1 I'm also speaking as myself as a citizen. And I
2 would like you all to establish your procedures
3 a little bit more clearly.

4 One of the things that I'm concerned about
5 is that we want to be able to comment on any
6 proposals that you bring forth. So like you're
7 hearing from us today, which is good, but when
8 you develop your own proposals, we need to be
9 able to comment on everything that you guys come
10 up with. Will you establish also that we can do
11 that, and then you can come back around again?

12 The other thing that I'm concerned about
13 with the rule making process is that there's
14 been some rules that have been proposed that
15 will allow your different members to speak to
16 each other outside of the public, and we feel
17 that this is a very public concept. You want to
18 hear from the people. Please adhere to the
19 Sunshine Laws, as they're well established.

20 We're also concerned that there is no
21 prohibition on any of the legislators from
22 receiving campaign contributions from people who
23 may be lobbying them, and there should be some
24 rules that prohibit that.

25 With regards to content, I came here to

1 really speak about several things, but having
2 heard the comments, I want to speak as a woman
3 and a mother myself. I was raised Catholic,
4 and, you know, what the Pope says about, you
5 know, life. But having been pregnant once,
6 several times, with several kids, it is such a
7 big deal to carry life, and it's such a big deal
8 for a woman to put herself in that situation. I
9 fully believe that no other person should tell
10 another person what they should do with their
11 bodies, and that we should protect a woman's
12 right to choose. That is my fundamental, it
13 needs to be done.

14 I'm also concerned about our waters, so I'm
15 completely against fracking and anything like
16 that. We should go for solar. We need an
17 amendment that allows people to put solar in
18 their homes, so that they can reduce the costs
19 and we can protect our environment. Thank you,
20 very much.

21 MR. GAETZ: Thank you. Next is Nicholas
22 Beninate, and please correct me if I'm wrong,
23 could you pronounce your name, sir?

24 MR. BENINATE: It's Nicholas Beninate.

25 MR. GAETZ: Beninate, okay. And following

1 Nicholas, Mayor Scott Clemons.

2 MR. BENINATE: Good evening. I'd like to
3 talk to you for a minute about the Sunshine Law.
4 I've had the pleasure throughout my career to
5 work around Sunshine boards pretty consistently,
6 and recently I've been appointed to Sunshine
7 work for the first time. I expect that almost
8 all of you share that background, and have a
9 good understanding of the Sunshine law.

10 The rules can be challenging to say the
11 least, and can be expensive for taxpayers for
12 the local agencies to follow.

13 The Sunshine Laws typically thought of as a
14 statutory law, but the underlying rule is
15 actually provided by the Florida Constitution.

16 The Sunshine Law's well intentioned body of
17 law that's functioned well for many years. In
18 the internet age however, it has fallen out of
19 step with the way most people engage political
20 discourse, and consume political information.

21 Adjustments to the Sunshine Law to allow
22 elected and appointed officials to use certain
23 online public forms to communicate with one
24 another about public business would allow our
25 public officials to more efficiently and

1 effectively conduct business, while making these
2 communications completely available and
3 preserved for (inaudible).

4 The reality is that most working people,
5 parents and disabled people struggle to attend
6 public meetings, and would view this kind of
7 injustice in the Sunshine Law is casting more on
8 the way public business is conducted in Florida.
9 In addition, it would likely save money for
10 taxpayers around the state. Thank you, very
11 much.

12 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, sir. Mayor Clemons?
13 Scott Clemons? Suelllyn Vanderslice.

14 MS. VANDERSLICE: Vanderslice, yes. I
15 didn't sign up to speak, but I can.

16 MR. GAETZ: I have a card here for you. So
17 apparently if you don't wish to speak, there's
18 no penalty.

19 MS. VANDERSLICE: No, I will. I thought we
20 needed to do it to document that we're here.
21 Can people hear me?

22 I want to speak and support what Mr. Gilmore
23 said and Mr. Lawrence said about the rights to
24 prisoners returning after they served their time
25 that they've been given, and have come back into

1 the community, the ability to vote and to be
2 involved. Voting is one the basic rights that
3 we have.

4 I have recently provided 40 years of
5 experience, either at the certified masters
6 level or licensed at the doctorate level. And
7 as a clinical psychologist, I've worked as a
8 clinical psychologist in the air force, at the
9 Department of Defense, and also took a
10 sabbatical and consulted to the Department of
11 Defense in San Antonio a few years ago regarding
12 to the Medical Evaluation Board.

13 I'm now working part-time in private
14 practice, and been taking short term
15 assignments. I recently did four months in the
16 Department of Prisons, or Department of
17 Corrections, and with over four facilities, plus
18 100 bed inpatient psychiatric program. My job
19 was to evaluate the treatment plans. I had 20
20 therapist that I was over.

21 What shocked me, as I would be reading each
22 individual's charges, was the amount of
23 discrepancy from one county to another, and from
24 one judge to another. I know that there are
25 laws, and there's training for our judges to all

1 be in line. The reality is they are not.

2 I've got a number of individuals who, and I
3 work with the top five to 10 percent of the
4 people who basically failed all the other people
5 to go to these facilities. But some very minor
6 -- people were in some very minor times. And I
7 want to support them once they paid their debt
8 to societies, that they become whole and able to
9 participate in our process.

10 MR. GAETZ: And thank you, ma'am. And
11 before you leave the podium, would you state for
12 the record your pronunciation of your name,
13 because I got it wrong?

14 MS. VANDERSLICE: Okay. It's Vanderslice.

15 MR. GAETZ: Vanderslice?

16 MS. VANDERSLICE: Right.

17 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, ma'am.

18 MS. VANDERSLICE: Like slicing cheese.

19 MR. GAETZ: Next is Frank Sewell, followed
20 by Harriett Myers. Mr. Sewell?

21 MR. SEWELL: Hello, I'm Frank Sewell. I'm a
22 resident of Panama City Beach, and I thought I'd
23 be working today, so I didn't come as prepared
24 as I'd like, so please forgive my stuttering,
25 stumbling, and I'm really not an idiot. It

1 might come out that way, but I have some very
2 good points.

3 I'm a United states Veteran, like I said, a
4 resident of Panama City Beach, and just a couple
5 of things I'd like to bring up. I'd really like
6 to thank y'all for the opportunity of doing
7 this. This is really a great forum. I wish it
8 was done more often actually.

9 But I'd like to talk about one thing in
10 particular, concealed carry permits. In the
11 State of Florida, you have to go through the
12 Department of Agriculture on the state level,
13 and the process takes months. Or instead, I'm a
14 United States Veteran, I can get it fast
15 tracking, but still it costs me \$140 dollars.

16 Now, I grew up in Louisiana, and it's a
17 simple process there. You go to the sheriff,
18 \$20 bucks, they do a background check on you,
19 and if you're not a felon, or you're not able to
20 own guns, boom, you get it right there, you're
21 good in 36 states.

22 It's also the same way when I lived in the
23 State of Alabama. It was also the same way.
24 And it gives the power to the sheriffs to do
25 that.

1 The sheriffs know their citizens better than
2 anybody else. It's going to be a lot harder for
3 the citizens that the sheriffs know, to lie on
4 these applications. And I think it would save
5 the state a lot of money and give better control
6 to everybody else at the local level.

7 And also, the Home Rule thing, I really
8 wasn't going to bring this up, but for some
9 reason I've become very aware of local politics,
10 especially Panama City Beach. And I was all for
11 keeping the Home Rule, but seeing what's been
12 going on over there, and the council is ignoring
13 state laws such that they've been sued and have
14 lost, and then they're trying to go after
15 businesses, in particular scooters. The state
16 courts, the high courts have already said that
17 they are legal to have, and now they're talking
18 about an all broad band.

19 Now the city's going to be sued, they're
20 going to lose again, they're going to lose tens
21 of millions of dollars on that lawsuit. So
22 that, and also we have council over there that's
23 basically trying to make Panama City Beach the
24 largest homeowner association in all of Florida
25 by saying how many cars you can have in your

1 driveway, on your land, you have can have a boat
2 or an R.V. or a jet ski in your yard, but not
3 allow any parking on side roads. So if somebody
4 wants to come visit you at your house, they're
5 not able to. So because of that, I'm kind of
6 more in favor now of doing away with Home Rule,
7 because obviously a lot of these local
8 politicians are not paying attention to the
9 state law. I know I'm over time, and I
10 appreciate it.

11 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, sir. Next
12 is Harriett Myers, and then Maurice Hargrove.

13 MS. MYERS: I'm Harriett Myers, can you hear
14 me?

15 MR. GAETZ: If you can pull the microphone
16 down just a little bit, just pull it down.
17 Well, there you go, that will work. And then
18 just step a little closer.

19 MS. MYERS: Thank you for being here to hear
20 me today. I'm an activist in a number of
21 activist organizations, none of which I'm in
22 prepared to represent today. I will suspect
23 that they would all agree with me, but I'm
24 speaking as an individual.

25 I believe that the language in the

1 Constitution, the privacy language in the
2 Constitution is very clear, not being
3 misinterpreted at all. I see no reason to make
4 any changes.

5 I believe very strongly as a mother, I
6 believe very strongly in my private right to
7 make my own decisions about my reproductive
8 care. At my age, it's not so relevant anymore,
9 but I have children and grandchildren, and many
10 other people that I wish to have freedoms and
11 the privacy rights as far as abortion and birth
12 control is concerned.

13 And I've got a few minutes left, so I just
14 want to add one thing. I just want to clear up
15 that the vast majority of young people do go to
16 their parents before they have an abortion, many
17 take their parents with them or one local
18 parent. And then they have to go -- if they are
19 afraid of talking to their parents, afraid
20 they'll be kicked out, they have to go before a
21 judge to get the right to an abortion. So I'm
22 out of time.

23 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. Next is
24 Maurice Hargrove, followed by Audrey Gail
25 Johnson.

1 MR. HARGROVE: Good afternoon.

2 MR. GAETZ: Good afternoon, sir, and if
3 you'd bring the microphone up a little bit
4 please? Thank you. There we go. Thank you.

5 MR. HARGROVE: Well, I'm here, I have three
6 kids. I'm here to support the step up for
7 student program. I am very concerned about the
8 public schools that my kids are attending now.
9 I would like to have them, if they have the
10 opportunity to have a school choice of their
11 own. And I hope that I guess there's an
12 amendment in front of you all for the school
13 choice of the children, to have the opportunity
14 to pick what school they want to better their
15 education in would be great, especially when
16 they're not benefiting in the public school.
17 And you have a private school or a catholic
18 school or whatever to better achieve their
19 academics, and work towards moving forth in
20 life. And I think that's a good opportunity for
21 the commission to consider.

22 And I also, sometimes you have people that
23 qualify under the A.D.A. Act, which there's
24 programs out there that benefit for those ones
25 that qualify under the American Disability Act,

1 which I think the State of Florida sometimes
2 don't apply to their law, as it has been
3 implemented to the state, for someone that falls
4 in that category, but no abiding by the law of
5 the A.D.A. when someone falls again in that
6 category. And I think it's wrong.

7 And also when you have somebody that's under
8 the A.D.A., and trying to make ends meet as far
9 as their mortgage and their utilities, and
10 you've got the companies really just trying to
11 drain them out of as much money as they can.
12 There ought to be some programs out there to
13 help those people, as far as solar panels.

14 I'm doing some research, and I see where a
15 bill passed for the solar panels for business,
16 and I want y'all to try to consider the people
17 that are homeowners, that it could help benefit
18 them in this matter. Thank you.

19 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, sir. Audrey Gail
20 Johnson, and following Ms. Johnson, Jamie
21 Shepard.

22 MS. JOHNSON: I'm Audrey Gail Johnson, and I
23 live in Panama City. Thank you all for coming
24 and listening to ideas to try to make Florida a
25 better place to live.

1 And on that note, I'd like to discuss
2 licensing measures for naturopathic doctors in
3 Florida. This is important to me because I am
4 graduating from high school this spring, and I
5 plan to study medicine in college, and then
6 enroll in a naturopathic doctor program after
7 that. And I want to come back to Florida to
8 practice medicine, but right now I can't do
9 that.

10 Now, naturopathic medicine is a form of
11 preventative care that addresses the whole
12 patient and their individual concerns with
13 non-evasive treatments. Naturopathic doctors
14 are as qualified as their conventional medical
15 doctor counterparts. They receive similar
16 training, in addition to extensive training in
17 nutrition and obtainable medicines. In this
18 way, many naturopathic doctor students often
19 have a heavier course load than conventional
20 medical students.

21 Now, the naturopathic doctor profession is
22 unregulated in Florida right now, and people can
23 pose as professionals and give unprofessional
24 care to people. So this is a public safety
25 issue.

1 Secondly, if naturopathic doctors were
2 allowed to practice in Florida, they would
3 relieve some of the burden from other healthcare
4 professional practitioners, so patients can get
5 efficient and quality care.

6 And lastly, patients should be allowed to
7 have the right to choose their own healthcare,
8 and right now they're not able to do that. If
9 they want to go to a conventional medical
10 doctor, they should be free to do that. And if
11 they want to receive alternative care, they
12 should be able to do that also.

13 So for all those reasons, I urge you to
14 consider allowing naturopathic doctors to
15 practice medicine in Florida so qualified
16 healthcare professionals are free to practice,
17 and patients have the right to choose their own
18 healthcare. Thank you.

19 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much. Jamie
20 Shepard, and following Ms. Shepard, Maggie
21 McKinney.

22 MS. SHEPARD: Good evening and welcome to
23 Panama City. I'm Jamie Shepard, and I live in
24 Panama City Beach.

25 I, like Harriett Myers, rise to encourage

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1 you to respect the woman's right to privacy.

2 How many of you ladies in particular have ever
3 had to face this decision to have --

4 MR. GAETZ: I'm sorry, ma'am, just a point
5 of order, the commissioners are really not in a
6 position to raise their hands, or answer
7 questions.

8 MS. SHEPARD: It's a thought.

9 MR. GAETZ: Okay. We're here to listen, and
10 you're here to speak.

11 MS. SHEPARD: Indeed. The decision, that
12 decision is a private one, and should remain
13 private. It should not be a decision of the
14 state to make this painful decision. It should
15 be the decision of the woman, her family
16 hopefully, and whoever her spiritual advisers
17 hopefully will be. The state needs to stay out
18 of that, and to leave that choice to the woman.
19 It's not often a very popular position to take,
20 and I, like Harriett Myers, am no longer faced
21 with that consideration, but our children and
22 our grandchildren are. And I speak as a mother,
23 I speak as a person of faith, and I speak as a
24 veteran.

25 So I encourage you to consider supporting

1 and maintaining our rights to privacy as regards
2 to this issue, and I thank you for your service
3 to our state.

4 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, ma'am.
5 Maggie McKinney, and following Ms. McKinney,
6 Sahara Peters please.

7 MS. MCKINNEY: My name is Maggie McKinney.
8 I want to thank you for being a part of this
9 commission. As a member of a pioneer family in
10 the State of Florida, seven generations, I want
11 to address our natural resources and our state
12 parks.

13 First of all, the state parks were set aside
14 by the people of the State of Florida to
15 preserve for future generations, the wonderful
16 attributes we have here. You need to protect
17 our state parks. You need to do whatever's
18 necessary to keep those available, and to keep
19 them free from oil and timber, and all of the
20 different things they're trying to do to make
21 them self sufficient. They're already self
22 sufficient. They bring tourists here. They're
23 available to the people who are from here, so
24 that we can actually enjoy a little piece of our
25 Florida.

1 So many developers have taken over so much
2 of our property, that at least we have those
3 little jewels. We need to protect them. If
4 people set aside money, which we've done, to
5 protect them, those need to be used for that.
6 They don't need to be self sufficient, they're
7 already self sufficient.

8 The whole process of trying to make them pay
9 for themselves is ridiculous, because they're
10 already paid for. People in the State Florida
11 put that money aside to save those pieces of our
12 land for us, and we need to keep that pristine
13 Florida piece of our little paradise, for us,
14 for our future generations, for all of the
15 tourism that we get, for all of that.

16 You need to make sure that our state parks
17 are taken care of, and that we preserve that,
18 and that we preserve our natural resources, no
19 fracking, no hunting, no all the different
20 things that they're proposing to do to try to
21 make them pay for themselves. Those aren't
22 necessary. They're already there, and we need
23 to preserve our water and our resources and all
24 the wonderful things that we already have.
25 Don't let them take that away from us. They've

1 taken so much already.

2 MR. GAETZ: Thank you. Sahara Peters, and
3 following Ms. Peters, Audrey Tobias.

4 MS. PETERS: Hello. My name is Sahara
5 Peters. I'm a budding public speaker, so please
6 don't judge me too harshly.

7 I want to speak on behalf of in support of
8 abortion rights. As a woman and as an employee
9 of Planned Parenthood, I don't speak on their
10 behalf, I speak as an individual, but I just
11 want to let you know I am informed about this
12 issue. I have assisted in various abortion
13 procedures. I have seen woman make the tough
14 choice, and I've counseled them through that
15 choice, okay. I want y'all to understand that's
16 very serious, and most women do that extremely
17 seriously.

18 On that note, one in four women, so in
19 between one in four, three women had at least
20 one abortion in their lives. So that means the
21 next time you go in the grocery store, every
22 fourth woman you pass has had an abortion. That
23 is not a made up statistic, that is real. That
24 means that abortion rights are important. And
25 keeping it legal is also important. It's one of

1 the safest procedures you can get when it's
2 legalized. And when it is illegal, the danger
3 rate goes up drastically.

4 I also just want to remind you that this is
5 not something I'm just here to talk about, it's
6 actually a constitutional right, the decision
7 made by the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade which
8 states that the right to privacy extends to a
9 woman's body, and her choice in what she does
10 with that body.

11 I think that the state government actually
12 should do more. I think that we should double
13 up and have a state amendment that, you know,
14 adds protection for a woman's rights to choose.
15 And I would encourage you just to think about
16 this choice is maybe not as important to you,
17 but it's very important for the 25 percent of
18 women in our state. So I just want to remind
19 you to think about them when you're making these
20 choices. Thank you.

21 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much. Audrey
22 Tobias, and then on deck, Susan Sizemore.

23 MS. TOBIAS: Am I in the right spot?

24 MR. GAETZ: You're in exactly the right
25 spot, and you're recognized, ma'am.

1 MS. TOBIAS: All right. My name is Audrey
2 Tobias, and I was born in Palm Beach County, on
3 the poor side of the county, in a migrant camp.
4 And I have a perspective that I think gets
5 ignored. And I have tremors, so I may not be
6 able to read my own writing here, but I'm going
7 to do my best, for my grandma and all the other
8 people that I saw living this life.

9 Physical labor is required for human
10 survival. Someone must do it. All work should
11 be honored and respected, including manual labor
12 and service work, especially to provide the food
13 that we all need, from the field to the table.
14 And these workers deserve to be compensated with
15 a fair wage, a living wage. No one should be
16 allowed to be exploited for the benefit of
17 another, regardless of sex, religion, race or
18 ethnicity, and it should be stated clearly in
19 the Constitution.

20 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. Ms. Sizemore,
21 and then following her, we have Diane, and I'm
22 just going to spell this, M-o-u-s-k-o-u-n-e. I
23 won't even try. Ms. Sizemore, you're
24 recognized.

25 MS. SIZEMORE: Hi. Thank you, very much.

1 I'm really so glad you guys are here, and that
2 this was well publicized so that we knew that we
3 could come and share our thoughts.

4 I'm a Bay County resident. I am the
5 community liaison person for PFLAG. Some of you
6 may not have heard of PFLAG. It's Parents,
7 Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. And
8 I'm here today to speak to you about this really
9 serious problem we have in our state of
10 protecting LGBT people for their employment, and
11 their public accommodations.

12 Right now when I talk to people about this
13 issue, so many people think that the Civil
14 Rights Act of 1965 covers everybody, but it does
15 not cover people that are gay, lesbian or
16 transgender.

17 In our state, we have a patchwork of
18 protections. We have 60 percent of our
19 population is covered by either county
20 ordinance, or county or city ordinances, all
21 right. So 40 percent of our LGBT population can
22 get married on a Friday, and come to work and
23 put their wedding picture on their desk, and be
24 fired for no other reason. That is true right
25 now in Florida.

1 For 10 years we've tried to get a statewide
2 law passed to provide the protection, and I
3 think only year did we even get it to the
4 committee.

5 And so I think it's really important for you
6 guys to think about leveling the playing field,
7 so that all 100 percent of citizens in Florida
8 have the right to work, and the right to
9 apartments, and the right to go out to dinner,
10 and not be discriminated against because of
11 their gender orientation or their sexual
12 orientation. Does that make sense what I'm
13 saying, my words?

14 MR. GAETZ: Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. SIZEMORE: Sometimes I get tongue tied.

16 MR. GAETZ: Your testimony is
17 understandable.

18 MS. SIZEMORE: Thank you.

19 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, very much, ma'am.
20 Diane, with apologies. When you get to the
21 microphone, would you state your name for the
22 record please?

23 MS. MOUSKOUNE: It's Greek. It's Mouskoune.

24 MR. GAETZ: Well, that's okay with
25 Representative Patronis. He's fine with that.

1 MS. MOUSKOUNE: I didn't come prepared to
2 speak today, but I have two issues that I will
3 address.

4 MR. GAETZ: And would you articulate your
5 name?

6 MS. MOUSKOUNE: Diane Mouskoune.

7 MR. GAETZ: Is that okay, Mr. Patronis?
8 He's the only who did, but go ahead.

9 MS. MOUSKOUNE: Anyway, I just have two
10 things that I'm going to talk about today real
11 quick. One is the woman's right to choose, and
12 then having all information regarding her
13 medical history remain private. It should be
14 covered under HIPAA, but I'm not sure how that
15 works in the amendment.

16 It's not an easy choice. I can remember the
17 days when there weren't any choices, and I don't
18 think that we want to go back to those days
19 because it's never going to be abolished.
20 That's number one.

21 Number two is, I've lived in Florida since I
22 was three years old. It's been a while. I've
23 always been very much in tune with the natural
24 resources, especially the beaches, since I've
25 always lived on the coast. And I was here when

1 Deep Water Horizon happened, and I would really
2 hate for that to happen again. And I don't care
3 how many assurances we get from the oil and gas
4 companies that fracking and drilling is safe, it
5 is not, and it's proven in history with all the
6 spills and disasters that have happened. So we
7 need to just stop allowing it, and that's it.

8 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. Our host,
9 President John Holdnak from Gulf Coast State
10 College. Dr. Holdnak, thanks again for allowing
11 us to be here. You make the best chicken salad
12 in Bay County.

13 MR. KRUPPENBACHER: Mr. Chairman, right now
14 I want to know if he is ranked number one in the
15 state universities as it relates to serving us
16 food. It was the best in the state.

17 MR. GAETZ: Knowing Dr. Holdnak, he's going
18 to wish that we were appropriators.

19 MR. HOLDNAK: Funny you should mention that,
20 sir. Commissioners, I am speaking now not as
21 the president of the college, but as a native
22 Floridian, a native of Bay County, born in
23 Panama City. Last time we checked, six
24 generations of family that lived in Florida.

25 60 years ago this week, the legislature

1 passed a bill that created the Florida's System
2 of Public Community Colleges. All strategically
3 located within a short commuting distance of the
4 citizens of Florida. That bill was subsequently
5 signed into law by then Governor Leroy Collins.
6 Gulf Coast Junior College was one of the first
7 five of these new colleges, community colleges
8 in the state.

9 I'm a second generation college employee in
10 Florida's college system. In fact for 54 of the
11 systems 60 years, there's been a Holdnak working
12 at one the colleges in Northwest Florida.

13 This week the legislature is considering a
14 bill that will change the governing structure of
15 our now 28 college systems serving over 800,000
16 credit students. These changes will go into
17 effect in less than 60 days, as the bill is now
18 written, and I'm not here to debate that bill,
19 that's a legislative matter. But I do believe
20 at this point in time, it will pass, and it's
21 also included in the budget that it has passed,
22 or is about to pass.

23 This restructure of governments will undue
24 changes implemented by legislative action 17
25 years ago. Those changes 17 years ago modify

1 changes in governments made eight years before
2 that, they modify changes approximately 10 years
3 before that, and subsequently modify changes 19
4 years before that. Any earlier, my father and I
5 can't remember.

6 In spite of the changes being made, in spite
7 of change being the only seemingly certain
8 certainty in our statewide government structure,
9 Florida remains the home of arguably and
10 demonstrably and measurably the best college
11 system in the country. We are the exemplar
12 other states measure their success against.

13 The cornerstone of success has always been,
14 and I believe should always be, local economy.
15 Our gubernatorial appointed local district board
16 of trustees set the direction and policy of the
17 college to best support the needs of the
18 citizens in our 28 respective service districts.
19 These trustees hire people like me to run their
20 colleges, and fire people like me when we fail
21 to adequately and effectively do so. That keeps
22 me, the faculty and staff and our trustees
23 responsive and responsible to those we are
24 honored and honor bound to serve. I fear that
25 with every round of government's restructuring

1 over the decades, this basic tenant that
2 underpins the very success of our system, has
3 been eroded. I believe it is now time, it has
4 now come time to take this newest generation of
5 legislative intent, and demoralize it in the
6 state's Constitution once and for all.

7 As exists for the state's other two public
8 educational delivery systems, universities and
9 K-12, please provide recognition of and
10 protection for what has been described by many
11 in all levels of state government, including
12 many of you in this room, as one of the state's
13 best and most powerful economic governing
14 agents. Thank you.

15 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, Dr. Holdnak. Wanda
16 Horne is our next speaker, followed by Karen
17 Johnson. Ms. Horne? And, Ms. Johnson, if
18 you'll be on deck, please.

19 MS. HORNE: Yes, I'll not well prepared. I
20 just found out about this meeting like right as
21 I got off work. But my issues are with private
22 property rights, and government abuse, and I'm
23 very nervous. So anyway, bear with me.

24 Private property rights are being infringed
25 upon when the government dictates what I can and

1 cannot do on my own property. Such as, if I
2 have access to public utilities, such as water
3 and sewage, I cannot install my own well and
4 septic. I found this out because of an issue
5 that came up with unincorporated Bay County, and
6 basically our sewage bills tripling in
7 unincorporated.

8 We thought it was all up in unincorporated,
9 we found out it was only 2700 in unincorporated
10 that this situation was put upon.

11 I found out I could not install my own well
12 and septic tank to avoid these high costs of
13 water and sewage. I've been in my home for over
14 23 years. My water bills have been \$70, \$80
15 dollars a month for 22 years. My highest one,
16 once this happened, was like \$234 dollars for
17 one month of water and sewage.

18 This has been going on for several years
19 now, and I'm running out of time. But I believe
20 that law needs to be abolished, because my
21 situation, unbridled government fees that they
22 can charge me anything they want at any time
23 they want.

24 Also, the Flint, Michigan situation is
25 another reason. Terrorism is another reason.

1 People, the terrorists can come in, they can,
2 you know, poison our whole water supply for an
3 entire community. Things have changed, times
4 have changed. The law needs to be abolished.
5 And if I want my own well and septic, I should
6 be able to install it.

7 I found out that government abuse happens
8 when there are no checks and balances. We
9 appealed all of this to the highest level of
10 government officials recently, to no avail. And
11 I feel that government officials, when it's
12 brought to their attention, should be obligated
13 to investigate and show evidence of that
14 investigation to the people who requested it,
15 and then to take appropriate action to rectify
16 situations such as my own. Thank you for your
17 time.

18 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. And now Karen
19 Johnson. Ms. Johnson? Is Karen Johnson here?

20 MS. JOHNSON: I'm right here.

21 MR. GAETZ: There you are, okay. Thank you.
22 You're recognized, ma'am.

23 MS. JOHNSON: I'm Karen Johnson. I'm from
24 Port St. Joe, Florida, and I'm just here in
25 support of the environment, and Bear Warriors

1 United. We don't have a bear hunt for over two
2 years and I'm thrilled of that in Florida, and I
3 hope it stays that way.

4 Also, I just want to say I do not want
5 fracking in Florida, and I would prefer a lot
6 more solar. And keep Florida wild, keep it
7 clean water, no more oil spills on our coast,
8 and that's about all. Thank you.

9 MR. GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. Mayor
10 Clemons, are you here, and Katherine Merrit? If
11 not, Commissioner Beruff, Chairman Beruff, thank
12 you very much for coming to Northwest Florida,
13 and the gavel is returned to you, sir.

14 MR. BERUFF: Thank you, Commissioner Gaetz.
15 The chair will entertain a motion for
16 adjournment.

17 I'd like to take a second and thank
18 everybody who came out this evening to share
19 your thoughts with us. I know it is a
20 commitment to take time out of your lives and
21 out of your family's life to come visit with us.
22 But that's what this is all about, us making
23 ourselves available to you, making it easy.
24 We're going to try to meet all Floridians within
25 an hour of their home, an hour's drive. That's

1 the goal of this commission. Thank you, so
2 much.

3 MR. GAETZ: The meeting is adjourned.

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF FLORIDA)

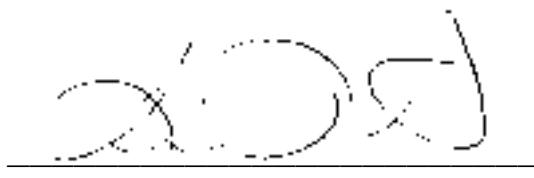
3 COUNTY OF BAY)

4

5 I, Lisa Patrick, Court Reporter, do hereby certify
6 that I was authorized to and did report the
7 foregoing proceedings, and that the transcript,
8 pages 1 through 97, is a true and correct record of
9 the proceedings to the best of my ability.

10

11 Done and dated this 26th day of May, 2017, at Bay
12 County, Florida.



13 LISA PATRICK

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