

FLORIDA TAXATION AND BUDGET REFORM COMMISSION

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IN RE: Committee Meeting

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Tallahassee, FL

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Susan Story
William Gregory "Greg" Turbeville
Kenneth "Ken" Wilkinson
Brian Yablonski

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 * * *

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Members, let's get
4 started. We are now on committee substitute for
5 Constitutional Proposal No. 26. Commissioner
6 Turbeville, you're recognized to explain your
7 proposal.

8 MR. TURBEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
9 The next proposal is Constitutional Proposal
10 No. 26. It's been described in a lot of different
11 ways. It is a straightforward proposal. It's
12 simple in its application. But sometimes the most
13 straightforward proposals that this Commission has
14 looked at have had the most powerful effects for
15 transparency to process and taxpayer
16 accountability. And I think this proposal will do

17 just that.

18 The last time this Commission met, they
19 proposed a very simple proposal, one that would
20 require a 72-hour waiting period for the budget
21 process. And that process has been adhered to.
22 It's provided taxpayers in the state a lot of
23 transparency. They're able to see the budget,
24 the state budget, and know that -- what's in
25 the budget before the members vote on it. It's

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1 a very complex document. At the same time
2 there's taxpayer accountability. There's a
3 time and a period when members of the
4 Legislature as well as the public can debate
5 the pros and cons of a certain piece of
6 legislation.

7 And I would suggest to you that the
8 budgets in local school districts in the 67
9 school districts are equally complicated, and
10 there's a lack of transparency in that process.

11 A few weeks ago when this proposal was
12 originally in place, before us on the first
13 agenda, we also received Tough Choices, which

14 is a quote that I think most of us have looked
15 at. This is an updated version. And there was
16 one line on page 12 that I think really kind of
17 goes to the heart of this proposal, and it
18 states, quote: "Some school districts are so
19 big that the individual parent may not feel he
20 or she has much of a potential input."

21 And I think this proposal will provide
22 that transparency and accountability that's
23 needed. It requires that 65 percent of
24 operational school dollars will be spent in the
25 classroom. That still provides 35 percent for

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1 administration and other important things that
2 the school district does. But we're going to
3 focus the money on the classroom, 65 percent.
4 So two-thirds of every dollar in education will
5 be spent in the classroom.

6 And, just to lay out some of the proposed
7 details, the Legislature would have to enact
8 the details of this. Based upon previous
9 testimony in committees, we did provide some
10 exceptions and some guidance on exceptions, two

11 important exceptions, transportation services
12 and also food services, because those issues
13 are not really at the discretion of the school
14 district. Those areas are really mandated by
15 the school district. And so we -- we offered
16 or suggested to the Legislature that those
17 should not be included in the formula that's
18 used.

19 But some of the things that are included,
20 teaching personnel, student activities, McKay
21 scholarships, student and instructional
22 support, teacher training, and curriculum
23 development. All these things that are vital
24 to the actual classroom itself would be
25 included.

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1 So that's the main proposal, and I'd be
2 happy to take any questions.

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner
4 Turbeville.

5 MR. TURBEVILLE: Chairman, also at the last
6 committee meeting there were two amendments to
7 that proposal, and if those on record, if there

8 are, those are to be withdrawn and not considered.
9 I offered both of those amendments. So just for
10 clerical purposes, those -- and technical
11 purposes, those amendments will not be offered
12 today and are withdrawn.

13 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner
14 Turbeville having explained his proposal, let's
15 move to the audience participation. First to
16 speak is Mr. Bill Montford. Mr. Montford,
17 welcome.

18 MR. MONTFORD: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN BENSE: We've heard from you a lot,
20 and we appreciate it.

21 MR. MONTFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
22 thank you for the opportunity to be heard today.
23 I thought it was on.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.
25 Thank you for the -- it's not working.

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1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There's a green light
2 there.

3 MR. MONTFORD: It's on. Green light is on.
4 How about if I sing?

5 (Laughter.)

6 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Hold on just a second. Do
7 we need to get this perhaps worked on before we
8 get him? Go ahead, Mr. Montford.

9 MR. MONTFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
10 thank you for the opportunity to be heard today.
11 I'm a little concerned about what being here
12 reminds me of the -- by the way, I'm representing
13 the Florida Association of District School
14 Superintendents, as well as Dr. Wayne Blanton with
15 the Florida School Board Association.

16 Our association, the superintendents'
17 association, several years ago came out in
18 opposition to the class size reduction
19 amendment. That was risky. We took a lot of
20 criticism. Superintendents were accused of not
21 being concerned with classes and so on, when in
22 fact I don't think there's anyone in the state
23 at that time that was more concerned with class
24 size than superintendents.

25 We felt, though, that the amendment as

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1 written may very well have some unintended

2 consequences, which we believe have come to
3 fruition in this last session, but which is
4 being -- last couple years, which is being
5 addressed by the Florida Legislature during
6 this session.

7 I'm reluctant because we do not want --
8 school boards members and superintendents -- we
9 do not want anyone to feel that we are opposed
10 to spending at least 65 percent of our funding
11 in the classroom. That's a legitimate request.
12 It's a legitimate expectation. However, we do
13 believe that it sends the wrong message, and
14 that is, you're assuming, or the public will
15 assume, that we're not spending 65 percent in
16 the classroom today.

17 In your staff analysis that you've
18 received, it references the National Center for
19 Education --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're on.

21 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Let there be sound.

22 MR. MONTFORD: Here in your staff information
23 it's references National Center for Education
24 statistics from the year, I believe it was 2'02,

25 2'03. We have been able to get more updated

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1 information than that. It's certainly not in
2 conflict with your staff report, except for the
3 numbers.

4 The report that we have from 2'05 lists
5 that in Florida we have 65.2 percent is spent
6 in instruction and instructional related, and
7 we can -- this is -- my intent is not to
8 discuss the difference between 65 and 58 and so
9 on. My concern is how the data is used and
10 what goes into the 65 percent.

11 Clearly, the devil is in the definition.
12 Because even with this particular definition,
13 what is not included in the 58 or the 65,
14 whichever -- excuse me -- whichever year or
15 number you'd like to use, what is not included
16 in that are -- is attendance, social work,
17 guidance, health, psychological services,
18 speech pathology, audiology, and other similar
19 student support services. That causes us great
20 concern, because if you're a parent whose child
21 is receiving audiology services, I believe that

22 we would say -- that parent would say, that is
23 part of the instructional classroom services.

24 Again, our intent is to make sure that
25 we -- we want to underscore the importance of

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1 whatever the definition may be. And I guess
2 what I'm doing is first and foremost in making
3 sure that if this passes out of here and it
4 passes in the fall, that we want to be involved
5 in the legislation determining the definition
6 of what the classroom instruction is. That is
7 of great concern to us.

8 Commissioner Turbeville I think mentioned
9 very well too that there are decisions made by
10 the Legislature that will have an impact on us,
11 whether or not it will be included in the
12 65 percent. Through the wisdom of the
13 Legislature they have funded safe schools,
14 which is, those funds are used for services
15 such as resource officers program, supplemental
16 academic instruction -- that's before and after
17 school programs, the reading allocation, which
18 has worked very well.

19 But under the current definition as we
20 understand it, that would not be included in
21 the 65 percent. So it gives us great concern
22 that we need to make absolutely sure we
23 understand what we're saying when we're talking
24 about classroom expenditures.

25 If you read the papers today throughout

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1 Florida, I think what you would see, at least
2 the ones I read, was at issue is whether or not
3 you spend 65 percent in the classroom and the
4 remainder on the administration. So the
5 message that's out there is, if you're not in
6 the 65 percent, it's, quote, administration. I
7 appreciate Commissioner Turbeville's
8 clarification of that just a few minutes ago.

9 But again, we have grave concerns about
10 this passing, the message it is sending, and
11 also what will be included in calculating that
12 65 percent. Mr. Chairman --

13 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Scott, you're
14 recognized for a question of the presenter.

15 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: With some trepidation,

16 because I know you're much more expert than me on
17 this, but I will tell you that this has been a
18 concern of mine since the first time I ran for
19 office. We wanted to get more money for
20 education, especially in south Florida, and a lot
21 of people down there know that I spent a career
22 trying to do that. But it was for teaching and
23 classroom, not administration.

24 Let me just ask you, you refer to these
25 special programs. This would be -- under this

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1 proposal, is it true that this would be up to
2 the Legislature to define what would be counted
3 as classroom instruction?

4 MR. MONTFORD: That's my understanding.

5 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: And are you aware that
6 they have continually shown great deference and
7 consideration to special programs, including just
8 recently this week they're talking more about
9 autism and other special needs? So don't you
10 think they'd be pretty sensitive to what you and
11 the other people in education would say to them
12 when they try to define this?

13 MR. MONTFORD: I would -- I would -- I would
14 hope that they would be sensitive, and in most
15 cases they are, absolutely. But again, I would be
16 remiss if I didn't come today and raise this
17 concern.

18 And while you're asking me, let me slide
19 into something else that I didn't say if you
20 don't mind. Thank you.

21 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: And I don't have a judge
22 to rule you out of order. Go ahead.

23 MR. MONTFORD: Thank you. In these numbers,
24 I neglected to say that in the 2'05, 2'06 school
25 year it was 9.8 percent in administration, which

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1 is less than the national average. And I'm not
2 here defending and supporting administrators.
3 What I'm here for is really supporting the
4 classroom, and to making absolutely sure that
5 we -- that everything that supports that classroom
6 has been counted in the 65 percent.

7 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Right. And the final
8 question, I really -- in recent times, there's
9 always a continuing statement and in things that

10 we considered to keep education funding harmless,
11 whatever. Lately, I haven't heard that from
12 someone out talking about it in the state about
13 trying to make sure that the money goes to
14 classrooms. I wonder if there's anything wrong
15 with getting that message out there to people that
16 we are cognizant of requiring that money go for
17 instruction, not for administration.

18 MR. MONTFORD: I think you would find great
19 support among superintendents and school board
20 members to get the facts and get the truth out. I
21 think that would be great. We would gladly join
22 in that effort.

23 Again, because once we talk about a
24 requirement -- a constitutional requirement to
25 provide 65 percent in the classroom, that

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1 clearly sends a message, that 35 percent is
2 going to administration, which in fact is less
3 than 10 percent, according to the national
4 news. A clarification is what we're really
5 looking for.

6 (Brief interruption.)

7 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: I mean, you brought along
8 your own props?

9 (Laughter.)

10 MR. MONTFORD: Yes, I did. Background music.

11 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Thank you very much.

12 MR. MONTFORD: Thank you.

13 (Continued interruption.)

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: What in the world? Somebody
15 has us on the telephone.

16 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: We want the record to
17 reflect that that's not my law firm advertisement.

18 (Laughter.)

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This time.

20 MR. MONTFORD: That's part of our
21 administrative costs.

22 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Why don't we unhook the
23 telephone?

24 MR. GELBER: Since I couldn't read the bill,
25 I thought this would be just as good.

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1 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Can we instruct staff to
2 just unhook the telephone? Those who have called
3 in will just call again.

4 (Continued interruption.)

5 MS. BARNETT: I want to take advantage of
6 this musical interlude, since --

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Hang on for about one
8 minute, Commissioner. I think we can get her
9 done.

10 MS. BARNETT: I just want to take advantage
11 of the musical interlude, and I apologize to the
12 members of the Commission. I have got to leave.
13 I told Susan last week when we scheduled this
14 meeting for today, as opposed to putting it on my
15 calendar, that I had a long-standing commitment
16 out of town; and I didn't want you-all to think I
17 was leaving because I got mad and packed my bags
18 and went home about the last vote or anything.

19 But I did want to apologize to each of you
20 and thank you for the experience we've had
21 today and throughout this process.

22 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you, Commissioner.
23 You are a very bright person.

24 (Applause.)

25 (Continued interruption.)

1 We really can't conduct business in this
2 environment.

3 All right. Here we are.

4 Okay. Mr. Montford, you were in the
5 middle of speaking, or were you done? I've
6 forgotten.

7 MR. MONTFORD: I think I'm done.

8 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're done?

9 MR. MONTFORD: Thank you, sir.

10 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you, Mr. Montford.

11 Next up is Maureen Dinnen, Broward
12 County -- Broward School Board vice chairman.
13 Ms. Dinnen, welcome.

14 MS. DINNEN: And I will not be singing.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Or dancing, huh?

17 MS. DINNEN: Or dancing, yeah. Those days
18 are over.

19 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank
20 you, members of the Commission.

21 I have similar concerns on the 65 percent
22 rule that were expressed by Mr. Montford, and
23 that is that the message that it's sending is

24 that school boards like Broward School Board
25 are not being accountable. If you take a look

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1 at our expenditure on administrative costs, it
2 is less than 5 percent.

3 And also we have quite a sense in public
4 hearings. If you've ever been to a hearing in
5 Broward County, nobody is shy, and they have
6 extensive questions about exactly how we spend
7 our money and exactly what we do. So we have
8 as much transparency as you would want to see.

9 Broward County is a county I'm very proud
10 of. For example, it is the largest fully
11 accredited county in the -- of all the big
12 counties in the United States, which means a
13 troop of people, some 1500, came down and
14 drilled down in our county in the construction
15 department as well as the curriculum department
16 as well as the finance department. That's an
17 unusual kind of accreditation.

18 We are also home to the largest number of
19 national board teachers in America, of any
20 school district. And we are up for the

21 competition for the Broad Award -- Brode
22 [phonetic], I'm sorry -- I'm mispronouncing
23 that. The Broad Award is a prestigious award
24 given to the top five -- actually they will
25 choose among the top five school districts in

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1 America of the large 100 school districts. So
2 we're a very substantial school district.

3 And the reason that I'm concerned about
4 the 65 percent is that when this was discussed
5 in the Legislature, there were a number of
6 things that were included in the category
7 administrative, and they were things like
8 school psychologists; they were things like
9 guidance services; they were things like
10 certain people that have technology; they were
11 things like reading coaches.

12 Now, you have conversation, you have
13 language, which accompanies the amendment,
14 which talks about transportation, which talks
15 about food services as a -- I guess, a kind of
16 directive to the Legislature. But the other
17 services are the modern classroom.

18 When I started teaching 35 years ago, it
19 was the teacher in the classroom, and a lot of
20 people have that concept in their head these
21 days, but today it's not like that. If I were
22 to go back in that middle school classroom and
23 start teaching again, I would have to have all
24 kinds of technology. I would have to have all
25 kinds of social services, because those kids

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1 walk in the door with significantly different
2 problems. So those things are a concern of
3 mine.

4 Now, I know that the Legislature, we have
5 said we should trust the Legislature to take
6 care of those concerns, but they didn't when
7 this particular proposal was brought up. The
8 proposal was not amended. Those things were
9 not taken out of it. So that's the basis of my
10 concern here, that we're doing something, we're
11 giving the people an idea of something that is
12 going to be good for public education, where I
13 spent my life; and in actuality, we're causing
14 some real conflicts about administrative versus

15 instructional costs.

16 Nobody would be against putting the
17 majority of money in the classroom, especially
18 not one who has stood in the classroom for 35
19 years. So I do think that we have to be very
20 careful, and that's why I'm opposing this, as
21 my board does, because they are so concerned.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you, Ms. Dinnen. Any
24 questions, members?

25 (No response.)

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1 Thank you again, Ms. Dinnen.

2 MS. DINNEN: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Kevin Watson. Mr. Watson,
4 welcome.

5 MR. WATSON: Good morning. I'm Kevin Watson.
6 I'm with the schoolteachers. I guess you guys
7 have had enough of Ron Meyer so he decided I would
8 draw the short straw and do this one.

9 I rise in opposition, and I do so because
10 I'm a little confused. And I hope to spend a
11 couple of different points that Mr. Montford

12 and Ms. Dinnen have made. I'd like to make
13 sure that we know exactly what we -- what we
14 have here.

15 It says that the committee substitute will
16 seek to amend the constitution to require that
17 65 percent of school funding received shall be
18 spent on classroom instruction rather than
19 administration, and that -- further it goes on
20 to say the Legislature will define classroom
21 instruction and administration in statute and
22 address the differences. I'm not sure if that
23 means they're going to account for it or just
24 going to address differences for administration
25 differences for transportation and food

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1 services across all 67 school districts.

2 That's all the proposal says. But we're
3 not sure what it really means.

4 And I'd like to begin by telling you that
5 the schoolteachers, the FEA, the people that I
6 represent, believe and that data supports that
7 the best public schools rely on all members of
8 our school community. Our teachers, our

9 support professionals, our principals, our
10 administrators, our parents, our students, our
11 elected officials and others, making sure that
12 they all do their part.

13 And we believe that when a school
14 community works hard as a team toward very high
15 goals, and when they are supported with the
16 necessary resources, there is no limit to what
17 our public schools can do. It's just a great
18 thing.

19 This proposal, however, would have you
20 believe that schools can be improved, perhaps
21 without that team, that we might have to
22 shuffle money around, that this one size fits
23 all number for 67 school districts would be
24 adaptable to every local need. We're not
25 convinced that's true.

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1 The staff analysis says that a national
2 organization -- I think it's called First Class
3 Schools -- seeks to enact this legislation or
4 pass ballot initiatives in every state
5 mandating 65 percent of their dollars be spent

6 in the classroom. But it's an undefined term.
7 And it -- as they define it in their national
8 papers, it's very narrow in scope, very narrow.
9 Wouldn't include those things we just talked
10 about.

11 And it looks clear that the Florida model
12 will require the Legislature to do the same
13 thing, but at this point, no one has any idea
14 what would be included in that definition.

15 I would tell you that First Class
16 Education claims, falsely, that such a
17 requirement will reduce school waste while
18 improving student achievement. The group also
19 claims, falsely, that the measure would
20 increase money for schools without requiring an
21 overall increase in spending or taxes.

22 And I'd like to offer a couple reasons why
23 I don't think this is true, for your
24 consideration. You might think intuitively the
25 65 number would eliminate school waste. But

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1 any reasonable definition of most of the
2 so-called waste is anything but.

3 Sixty-five could force cuts in essential
4 school support services that students and
5 teachers rely on. And I can give you one
6 example. For the last couple of years this
7 Legislature's been wrestling with making sure
8 that teachers spend more time on task, and one
9 of the ways they did that was to reduce
10 paperwork. We have volunteers but we also have
11 school staff that help teachers with that
12 paperwork. That is clearly not going to be in
13 the classroom expenditure, by any definition
14 that First Class calls, and I don't know if it
15 will be the Legislature's definition that they
16 would do that.

17 But thinking about some of the other
18 examples that First Class Education would cut,
19 they termed essential school services that
20 support -- that support and sustain the
21 classroom instruction, including libraries,
22 counseling, teacher training, school health
23 care, custodial work, maintenance, and
24 security, all of those are not included in the
25 First Class Education's definition of classroom

1 expenditure. And we have a significant body of
2 research that confirms that these
3 outside-the-classroom expenditures helps us do
4 that work in the classroom.

5 And let me be clear. I say perhaps,
6 because again, we don't know if that will be in
7 the Florida definition.

8 I want to tell you, like the other two
9 speakers, that I'm in strong agreement with
10 Commissioner Turbeville. I have two FTEs in
11 Florida's public schools here in Leon County,
12 both -- one 12 and one 9. I think that we
13 ought to eliminate real waste, Commissioner
14 Turbeville. I really believe that. And I
15 think that we should be encouraging our school
16 districts to spend dollars efficiently.

17 But I'm not convinced that an arbitrary
18 number, one thought up in 2003, 2004 meets that
19 goal. And I'm not sure that it will meet that
20 goal 20 years from now, and that's what this
21 body is here to consider.

22 You might believe that 65 percent

23 initiative will improve student achievement,
24 and I'm not going to read all of this, but let
25 me just tell you that there has been a lot of

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1 analysis with this. Standard reports division
2 looked at this, and what they found was the
3 districts that spend less than 65 percent in
4 the classroom do quite well on state tests, and
5 that there are others that exceed the
6 65 percent solution and do very poorly.

7 The bottom line was: There was very
8 little correlation. And I did the same thing
9 that Bill Montford did. I went and looked at
10 the national data, and then I tried to tie it
11 to the state data by what's known as the red
12 book, the 5,000 and 6,000 level expenditures.
13 The top 20 schools in the state and how they do
14 their expenditures, there were nine As, eight
15 Bs, two Cs, and one D. There is no
16 correlation, and Standard & Poor's bore that
17 out.

18 Moving on quickly, Chairman. Let me just
19 say that the report makes clear that the

20 findings do not suggest that money doesn't
21 matter in the classrooms, but rather that the
22 percentage allocated to instruction may need to
23 vary from one school district to another for
24 very legitimate reasons.

25 For example, some schools may need to

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1 spend a higher percentage of their budgets on
2 outside classroom needs, like nutrition and
3 counseling and teacher training and
4 transportation and maintenance, to ensure that
5 students come to class ready to learn.

6 Moving on, let me just say that perhaps
7 the proposal seems to offer the Legislature
8 enough flexibility to gauge the vast difference
9 in the schools, because we're going to allow
10 the Legislature to come up with these
11 definitions. But I'm not sure that you can
12 define your way out of a floor like 65 percent
13 across all 67 school districts. Again, they
14 have vastly different populations, needs, and
15 out-of-classroom expenses.

16 For example, large, sparsely populated

17 rural districts often have higher overall
18 costs. Small districts at times can't benefit
19 from economies of scale, and small districts
20 often have higher administrative costs simply
21 because have they have fewer students.

22 Districts that serve large numbers of poor
23 children often provide more supplemental
24 services. And older districts, for example,
25 Duval County, which have much older school

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1 buildings have higher maintenance costs.

2 How do we account through 67 school
3 districts for all of these potential
4 definitions?

5 And finally, I think you might want to
6 believe, if you like the number 65, that it's
7 going to increase school resources without
8 requiring an increase in school taxes.

9 And I'll just tell you that that just
10 cannot be true. The measure will do nothing to
11 increase school resources. It simply shifts
12 where a finite -- and I think that you've heard
13 today a generally inadequate amount of

14 education dollars are spent.

15 And, Commissioner Scott, I hope this goes
16 to the heart of what your question is, is do we
17 trust the Legislature. Absolutely. But what
18 you're considering today is a proposal, again,
19 thought up five or six years ago that might
20 have been a good idea then, but you want to put
21 it in the constitution and you want it to
22 operate for the next 20. And it's unsupported
23 by any empirical data that it would improve
24 performance across 67 districts, and it just
25 says we're going to have to shuffle money

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1 around.

2 And specifically to the point was this.
3 But we don't know if it's true because we don't
4 know what the definitions are. Do we trust the
5 Legislature? Perhaps, yes. But the bigger
6 point would be, you're going to be asking
7 voters in November to vote on this on a notion
8 of an arbitrary number, and they're not going
9 to know what the definitions are either.

10 And I think that's the point here, so we

11 would urge a no vote.

12 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you, Mr. Watson.

13 Questions? Are there any questions? Commissioner
14 Levesque for a question.

15 MS. LEVESQUE: Hey, Kevin, how are you?

16 MR. WATSON: About half.

17 MS. LEVESQUE: Do you believe there is a
18 minimum percentage that should go into classroom
19 instruction, that there is a minimum, some level?

20 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Mr. Watson, you're
21 recognized.

22 MR. WATSON: I would really have to think
23 about that. I think the natural answer to your
24 question is sure. I just don't know what it is.
25 And I certainly don't know what it would include,

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1 I mean ...

2 MS. LEVESQUE: Chair, follow-up?

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're recognized.

4 MS. LEVESQUE: Do you believe that there is a
5 maximum that should be spent on administration,
6 percentage --

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Mr. Watson, you're

8 recognized.

9 MS. LEVESQUE: -- that could vary by
10 district, but do you think there is a maximum for
11 administration?

12 MR. WATSON: Sure.

13 MS. LEVESQUE: Follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're recognized.

15 MS. LEVESQUE: Based on the language that's
16 in the proposal that says the Legislature may
17 address differences in administration expenditures
18 by district for necessary services, is it your --
19 is it your argument standing up there that the
20 Legislature can or cannot differentiate between
21 rural and sparse districts and urban districts?

22 MR. WATSON: Oh, I think they could. I think
23 my point was that I would love to know what those
24 differences are. I sit on the school advisory
25 council. I'd love to know now what I'm voting on.

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1 I'd love to know now what I'm putting in my
2 Florida constitution. I'd love to know now what
3 that minimum and maximum are. And I think the
4 Florida voters would too.

5 MS. LEVESQUE: Another follow-up,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're recognized.

8 MS. LEVESQUE: I think a lot of the proposals
9 that we had in front of us that we've already
10 passed on conservation easements, on working
11 waterfronts and all kinds of things, the
12 Legislature gets to define and narrow and outline
13 what limitations and restrictions and things are.
14 So not everything that -- I mean, that's the whole
15 purpose of having the Legislature. You don't
16 define those specifics in the constitution.

17 So I just want to clarify that it is your
18 position that there can be a minimum that
19 should be spent in the classroom; there can be
20 a maximum that should be spent on
21 administration and that the Legislature does
22 have the capability of differentiating among
23 differences in districts.

24 MR. WATSON: If that's true, then why
25 wouldn't we do this in the statute? Why wouldn't

1 the Legislature do that now? Why would we

2 handcuff our Legislature and our school districts
3 and our school advisory councils in the
4 constitution for the next 20 years with an amount,
5 with a number that has no empirical data, that's
6 not tied to anything that -- that may or may not
7 account to something that I know you care deeply
8 about, individualized education.

9 And I can give you another example. I
10 think you and I both care deeply about virtual
11 education. My son's taking one of those
12 courses. Right now, under the First Class
13 Education provisions, they wouldn't count --
14 they would count the teacher teaching it, but
15 all of the technology support and the computers
16 wouldn't be counted. And so do we ask the
17 Legislature, you can have all the flexibility
18 you want, but you got to start at 65 percent.

19 And I guess what ends up happening here is
20 not that there's not a minimum or a maximum.
21 It's a line that I've heard before here. It's
22 the old Henry Ford thing. Can we get one of
23 those great new cars in any color? He says
24 yeah, so long as it's black.

25 We're asking the Legislature to do great

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1 things, but we're handcuffing it a little bit.
2 And we'll do the same with our school districts
3 by choosing this number, and the other thing I
4 would tell you is that it's a -- unlike some of
5 the other proposals you've seen, we've seen a
6 lot of maximums, like maximum class size or
7 maximums here. This is a floor, and I worry, I
8 guess because I differ from Mr. Montford a
9 little bit, that they'll just move to the floor
10 in tight times, and we're in one of those
11 times.

12 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner
13 Turbeville for a question.

14 MR. TURBEVILLE: Speaking of prescribed
15 numbers in the constitution, did the teachers'
16 union or the Florida Education Association support
17 the rigid class size proposal that's now in our
18 constitution?

19 MR. WATSON: I did, and we did. And again, I
20 think they're vastly different proposals. This
21 says we're going to have a floor, and that was a

22 ceiling. And generally school districts will move
23 from -- to each of those, and I think that's the
24 difference between the two proposals.

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further questions of the

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1 presenter?

2 (No response.)

3 Thank you, Mr. Watson.

4 Next is Doug Martin. Welcome, Mr. Martin.

5 MR. MARTIN: Thank you.

6 I'm going to be very brief because the
7 previous speakers have covered nearly all the
8 points I wanted to make, but I represent school
9 bus drivers, cafeteria workers --

10 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Mr. Martin, why don't you
11 move that mic right in front of you? Thank you.

12 MR. MARTIN: I'm Doug Martin. I'm here today
13 on behalf of AFSCME, which represents school bus
14 drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians in Duval,
15 Manatee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Polk, Volusia, and
16 Washington counties. And those counties
17 illustrate the great broadness of Florida, because
18 Miami-Dade has more than 400,000 students, while

19 Washington County has fewer than a thousand. And
20 to have one size fits all, one number that you can
21 put on both of those districts and expect that to
22 be meaningful is very difficult to do.

23 The FEFP I think at this point is more
24 than 50 pages. And it takes into account
25 things like rural, you know, the rural

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1 character, transportation, school books, many
2 other things like that, because the funding of
3 schools is so complicated. This 65 percent
4 solution by First Class Schools is funded
5 primarily by the founder of Overstock.com.
6 This is his pet project. This is not something
7 that's coming from Florida; this is not
8 something that necessarily makes sense for
9 Florida.

10 And we would ask on behalf of the people
11 who work in your schools that you not further
12 handcuff the Florida public schools with this
13 idea that's coming from out of state. So we
14 would ask you to please not do this to our
15 public school system. Leave these matters in

16 the capable hands of the Florida Legislature.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BENSE: And the final speaker --
19 it's absolutely appropriate -- is Pat McConnell.
20 I mean, it couldn't be more perfect.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. MCCONNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Mr. McConnell has spoken to
24 us a couple times before.

25 MR. MCCONNELL: Not as many as you would

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1 imply.

2 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Oh, I'm kidding. I'm
3 kidding. we appreciate your activism,
4 Mr. McConnell.

5 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Do you have any diagrams?

6 CHAIRMAN BENSE: He does.

7 MR. MCCONNELL: But these are old ones that
8 I've had in my briefcase for a long time.

9 I am Pat McConnell, and I am deeply
10 concerned about our children and the world that
11 they're going to live in for their education
12 and they're going to compete in.

13 I am blessed and cursed with understanding
14 numbers. I have built, operated, and sold a
15 number of different businesses, every one of
16 them from the ground up. Cable television,
17 cable television construction, wireless, cable
18 Internet, real estate development. I
19 understand numbers. There are a lot of
20 things -- I developed a lot of business plans
21 that I never executed on. Why? Because when I
22 looked at the numbers, the numbers just didn't
23 make sense.

24 So when I looked -- and the TBRC started
25 work, I thought, man, this is an opportunity to

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1 get at the largest expenditure of our state
2 budget, education. So I did a little analysis,
3 and fortunately -- well, after you peel back
4 the layer of the onion, you can start to get to
5 some real interesting numbers. And you-all
6 have seen most of these, but only eight -- in
7 Manatee County, only 18 to 25 percent of the
8 dollars end up for teachers. Now, the balance
9 is overhead. Is that all administration? Of

10 course not. But there's a lot of
11 administration.

12 I would suggest that by -- with what
13 you've seen with Amendment 2 -- with CP2, and
14 with what's going on in the -- in the taxes in
15 the state, people are going to have to start
16 looking at where is the money and where does
17 the money go. If you look at the back, this is
18 what happens. You've got all this bureaucracy,
19 all this bureaucracy. And what I think will
20 happen with this, it will focus people back on
21 how -- what have we built in this bureaucracy,
22 where does the money need to be spent. It will
23 cause us to perhaps reinvent the school system.

24 This is a pro child -- this is a pro --
25 CP26 is pro children. It's pro teachers. It's

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1 pro taxpayers. It's anti bureaucracy.

2 Now, one last thing is when the -- our
3 county got noticed that they had fewer dollars,
4 and they were going to have to make some cuts,
5 did they -- did they propose cutting
6 administration? No. They said, we're going to

7 cut 400 teachers. Well, excuse me. You're
8 going to cut teachers? You're not going to cut
9 any administration? Doesn't make any sense.

10 This will focus -- this will focus us back
11 on how the dollars are spent. Is it perfect?
12 No. But is it a start? Yes. I beg you to
13 vote for CP26. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you, Mr. McConnell.

15 MR. MCCONNELL: My last appearance.

16 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay.

17 (Applause.)

18 That was a positive.

19 MS. MATHIS: We're going to miss you.

20 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. We've gone through
21 public testimony. I think that Commissioner McKay
22 has passed out an amendment. Is there anyone that
23 does not have a copy of the amendment?

24 (No response.)

25 So we'll move to the amendatory process.

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1 Commissioner McKay, you're recognized to
2 explain your amendment.

3 MR. MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman --

4 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Amendment No. 1.

5 MR. MCKAY: Commissioners, as I was reading
6 Commissioner Turbeville's amendment, it seems
7 to -- or it could possibly be read so that in the
8 35 percent that would be remaining, a capital
9 outlay would have to be included, which could be
10 quite problematic given the class size amendment
11 and all of the money -- excuse me -- that is going
12 into construction of schools right now.

13 And while Commissioner Turbeville said
14 that that was not the intent, he didn't think
15 that would occur. In an abundance of caution,
16 I thought we ought to make sure we exclude
17 capital outlay.

18 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Are there questions
19 of the sponsor of the amendment?

20 (No response.)

21 Debate? Commissioner Turbeville, you're
22 recognized in debate.

23 MR. TURBEVILLE: Thank you, Chairman. I
24 completely agree with Commissioner McKay's intent.
25 And the discussions throughout the committee

1 hearings that we've had on this proposal have been
2 about operational expenditures and not capital
3 outlay. This is about the discretionary dollars
4 and certainly capital outlay is not. So I think
5 it's a friendly amendment, and it clarifies the
6 intent.

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Any further debate?

8 (No response.)

9 Are there objections to the amendment?

10 (No response.)

11 Seeing none, show the amendment adopted.

12 That's our last amendment. Let's move to
13 the question phase on this proposal. Are there
14 questions of the sponsor of the proposal as
15 amended?

16 MR. GELBER: Question.

17 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Gelber, you're
18 recognized.

19 MR. GELBER: Thank you. To the sponsor of
20 the amendment, I'd just -- I'd like to know, does
21 this require a statewide average of 65 percent or
22 each school district or each school? Because it
23 says 65 percent of the funding received by school

24 districts.

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're recognized,

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1 Commissioner Turbeville.

2 MR. TURBEVILLE: The intent of the
3 legislation is that each school district would in
4 fact spend a minimum of 65 percent of operational
5 dollars in the classroom, so it's each district.

6 MR. GELBER: It's not a -- to understand,
7 it's not a statewide average. Can county school
8 districts on their own do this if they want to,
9 and can the Legislature do this without this
10 constitutional amendment?

11 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Turbeville,
12 you're recognized.

13 MR. TURBEVILLE: Commissioner Gelber, many of
14 the school districts are currently meeting this
15 minimum threshold. As a matter of fact, if you
16 look at the year 2007, every school district that
17 was high performing, that got a grade of A, was
18 spending at least 70 percent, so some of them are
19 exceeding this. And all of the high-performing
20 school districts are exceeding this, so I hope

21 this would, more than anything, provide
22 transparency and taxpayer accountability so that
23 they know the 65 percent is spent and it's a
24 requirement, a minimum requirement.

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further questions?

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1 Commissioner D'Alemberte, you're recognized.

2 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Can you identify a school
3 district in Florida that you think presents a
4 special problem?

5 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Turbeville,
6 you're recognized.

7 MR. TURBEVILLE: Commissioner D'Alemberte, I
8 think this proposal tries to handle the
9 differences in districts. We do have, as the
10 Tough Choices report presented, there's a
11 perception in the state that some school districts
12 are so large that there's not enough transparency,
13 not enough accountability; and we've seen in fact
14 in previous years sales tax referenda be defeated
15 because voters don't believe that the money is
16 actually going to go to the classroom. They
17 believe it's going to go to the bureaucracy.

18 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Mr. Chairman?

19 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're recognized for a
20 follow-up.

21 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Is there a single district
22 that you would identify as a particular problem?

23 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Turbeville,
24 you're recognized.

25 MR. TURBEVILLE: In all the education debates

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1 that we've had and even on the previous proposal,
2 there were school districts that I thought
3 presented problems and that weren't -- and I did
4 not in those debates identify school districts,
5 out of courtesy; and I just don't think it's
6 appropriate to single out any one school district,
7 when the Legislature is going to have the
8 opportunity to define what is in this formula.

9 And they will, in and of itself, shine the
10 light on any problem districts. So I don't
11 purport to be an expert in each individual
12 district, but I think there's -- there's plenty
13 of discussion, and as we've seen today, plenty
14 of discussion that more accountability is

15 needed.

16 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Rouson, you're
17 recognized for a question.

18 MR. ROUSON: Yes. Commissioner Turbeville,
19 what is the magic behind 65 percent? Why that
20 number as opposed to 70 percent, as opposed to
21 60 percent?

22 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Mr. Turbeville, you're
23 recognized.

24 MR. TURBEVILLE: Well, the magic is that it's
25 two-thirds of every dollar, and 65 is probably

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1 easier than 66. But you mentioned a higher
2 number, and in fact when Governor Crist ran for
3 governor in 2006, he proposed this proposal. And
4 in the out years he thought that 70 percent would
5 be a better number, but starting out at 65, it
6 sets the floor. It allows the Legislature, if
7 they want, to set a higher number.

8 But I think the number is one that's been
9 used around the states, and it seems like a
10 reasonable number. When you look at national
11 studies, 65 percent is achievable, and it's

12 reachable. And I don't think there's any
13 school district in Florida that can't meet that
14 threshold.

15 CHAIRMAN BENSE: You're recognized for a
16 follow-up.

17 MR. ROUSON: What do you expect to
18 accomplish? Just help me. I mean, I'm looking at
19 some information here that says that there's no
20 correlation between better student achievement and
21 65 percent being spent in the classroom. I mean,
22 are you aware of that statistic or figure, or do
23 you have some comment on what you hope to achieve?
24 Is it better carpeting? Is it better
25 instructional materials?

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1 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Turbeville,
2 you're recognized to answer the question.

3 MR. TURBEVILLE: I believe you're citing the
4 study that was done by Standard & Poor's, and it
5 really goes to the questions that Patricia
6 Levesque asked of a previous presenter: Is there
7 a minimum standard. And that study that a lot of
8 people cite specifically states that this study

9 believes there is no correlation between any
10 minimum number, so not 5 percent, not 10, not 20.

11 And so I think we all know here in this
12 room that there is a correlation between
13 dollars spent in the classroom and that there
14 can be a threshold that actually matters and
15 gets money, additional money into the
16 classroom.

17 So I think the study is -- while it has
18 many good points and makes some definitional
19 guidelines for the proposal, I think it's way
20 off the mark if they're saying there's no
21 minimum amount that can be spent in the
22 classroom that affects student achievement in a
23 positive way. That to me seems not supported
24 by a lot of the facts we see here.

25 Again, of the school districts in 2007

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1 that received a high performing grade, an A,
2 all of them spent over 70 percent. So there is
3 a correlation in our own numbers that we have
4 in the State of Florida, because we do grade
5 schools; and we can average out for the school

6 districts. So I think there is a correlation,
7 and I would just disagree with that part of the
8 study.

9 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further questions? Further
10 questions?

11 (No response.)

12 Debate? Is there debate? Commissioner
13 Story, you're recognized in debate.

14 MS. STORY: Mr. Watson said that measures
15 like this really don't increase school resources
16 in that it doesn't -- tax increases. And I'm not
17 going to speak from the macro standpoint because I
18 don't have a study here I can cite. However, I do
19 have a specific example in Florida that does
20 actually have a different result.

21 Okaloosa County, when Senator -- now
22 Senator Don Gates was there, was ranked 27th
23 and 28th in the state in terms of performance.
24 He went in and, without raising taxes, he
25 increased teachers' salaries; and they're among

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1 the highest in all of north Florida and
2 probably average for Florida. He gave -- every

3 teacher has a laptop and every student who
4 couldn't read got a -- I hate to use this word
5 after the debate today -- voucher; but it was
6 to use with current teachers that could teach
7 those students to read, or they could go to a
8 Sylvan Learning Center. He didn't raise taxes
9 because he cut administration costs 40 percent,
10 and he put those dollars in the classroom.

11 And within three years Okaloosa County was
12 number one in the state. And it has bounced
13 back between being number one and number two,
14 from 27 or 28, because he thought that the
15 money would be better spent supporting teachers
16 and classrooms than in administration.

17 And if you want more details on that, he
18 has written a paper outlining what he did and
19 the results that he got from that.

20 And I say that because, underlining a lot
21 of our debate sometimes is, you know, if we
22 just put enough money in education, just the
23 total amount of money, that's okay. But three
24 weeks ago there was an article in USA Today
25 that Washington, D.C. schools, they average

1 14 -- over \$14,000 a student, and they have a
2 33 percent graduation rate. And I know that is
3 a very poor area, but they are double, almost
4 double what we do in this state.

5 I have seen studies, and I don't have them
6 cited now. And I apologize for that, and I can
7 get those later. My understanding is that
8 there is more of a correlation of school
9 success and student success on dollars that go
10 to the classroom, not just total dollars,
11 because it goes into teacher quality and the
12 quality of support that teacher has and the
13 ability to use that money.

14 Now, am I going to sit here and debate
15 that I know 65 percent is the right number?
16 I'm not. I can't do that. Because, again, I'm
17 an engineer, and I like facts. And I like to
18 look at what I can touch and concrete. So I
19 can't sit here and tell you that every county
20 in this state will have that effect.

21 But we do have an example in the State of
22 Florida where cutting administration

23 significantly and putting the dollars in the
24 classroom made a difference on the success, it
25 resulted in teacher -- higher teacher salaries,

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1 and it resulted in more assets and resources
2 for teachers and students in that particular
3 county.

4 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further debate?
5 Commissioner Gelber, you're recognized in debate.

6 MR. GELBER: Thank you. This is not a new
7 proposal for me. I've seen it before in the
8 Florida Legislature, and you-all should be
9 wondering why it only required a 50 percent vote,
10 why a Legislature with two-thirds dominance of
11 fiscally conservative Republicans would have
12 demurred to pass a proposal that sounds just like
13 cotton candy, perfect. Perfect.

14 The reason why we demurred was because we
15 believed it was nothing less than a gimmick,
16 and that's all it was. And it's not even a
17 placebo, because while there may be places
18 where it's great and it works, there are places
19 where it doesn't work. And the truth is, the

20 Florida Legislature can do this. The district
21 by district school boards can do it.

22 Why are there differences? Why are there
23 sometimes a correlation where there might be
24 better performance and there might be more
25 money being spent? Well, there's an obvious

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1 reason. If you go to Miami-Dade County, you're
2 going to be able to find middle schools where
3 there have been homicides this year. And guess
4 what? Security officers and metal detectors
5 that are commonplace in Dade County are not in
6 school -- in classroom statistics.

7 That's administrative costs, as are all of
8 the kind of guidance counselors and healthcare
9 officials that come in an area that has
10 incredibly high poverty rate. And Dade County
11 and Palm Beach have areas that have the highest
12 poverty rates in the state.

13 The reason why we demurred to do this was
14 simply because it made no sense to try to come
15 up with a definition that fit everybody. And
16 by the way, you're not coming up with a

17 definition at all. You're simply telling the
18 Legislature, you come up with a definition,
19 which we could have done by a majority vote,
20 but we found it was impossible to do.

21 This amendment doesn't do anything. It
22 really doesn't do anything. It's almost like a
23 Seinfeld episode, because it just says, you-all
24 ought to come up with a definition. If we find
25 a definition that's easy, everybody's going to

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1 be in compliance. And if we find a definition
2 that's very exacting, guess what? Dade County
3 will say well, we can't spend this money on
4 security officers, and we can't have metal
5 detectors. And somebody's going to say well,
6 what the heck was the TBRC giving us this for
7 if it's going to end up causing some counties
8 to treat it differently.

9 You should also ask yourselves not simply
10 why was the Florida Legislature not willing to
11 do this by majority vote, why are teachers
12 themselves not in favor of this? Because if
13 you think about it, in classroom expenses means

14 that maybe they'll get a raise. They should be
15 the first one coming up here and saying we're
16 underpaid and overworked and the classrooms are
17 too big, and give us more money. Spend more in
18 classrooms instead of on administrators. I
19 haven't heard a single teacher tell me to do
20 this. And, in fact, the teachers' union is
21 against it, and they're the ones who negotiate
22 for higher salaries.

23 But this is one of those things that
24 sounds very good, and it is an admirable goal.
25 It should be 70 percent in some districts, but

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1 there may be some districts, perhaps even my
2 own, where we've had homicides in middle
3 schools, where we have metal detectors, where
4 we have kids, huge populations that don't speak
5 English, and come from multigenerational
6 poverty, where the health care -- where the
7 only health care you see is at the nurse who
8 might be at your school but probably isn't.

9 In our county, for instance, we actually
10 implemented an extra tax just to put nurses

11 in -- through the children's health trust into
12 the school system.

13 So my point is: The challenges of each
14 county are different. And I think what Senator
15 Gates did is unbelievable, by the way. And I
16 think he really is a thoughtful person on this,
17 but that I think proves my point. Districts
18 can figure out what to do on their own. Local
19 control should mean something. And if the
20 Florida Legislature wouldn't do this by
21 majority vote, then demanding that they do it
22 by majority vote just means you're going to get
23 a definition that is meaningless.

24 And I think the truth is, the challenges
25 of our school system are far too great to start

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1 submitting placebos, and we need to do
2 something real and this isn't real.

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further debate? Further
4 debate? Commissioner Riley in debate.

5 MS. RILEY: First of all, I'd like to thank
6 Representative Gelber's constituents for loaning
7 him to us all day. I appreciate the fact that

8 he's been here and has brought a lot of debate and
9 excitement to this meeting.

10 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Rubio owes me, I'll tell
11 you.

12 (Laughter.)

13 MS. RILEY: I'm wondering why he's not
14 calling for him back?

15 However, I had a concern when the class
16 size amendment passed, and we were talking
17 about where are we going to get the money to
18 fund this class size amendment.

19 And my concern was they were going to take
20 the money from education and say we can no
21 longer provide our children the type of
22 education that we could in the past, because we
23 have to fulfill this constitutional mandate of
24 class size. We have to have so many classes,
25 so many children.

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1 I believe that this will take away that
2 fear, that the money that's being spent in the
3 counties and in the districts will not be used
4 for the structure of putting the children in

5 there, but it will be used towards their
6 education. And maybe it's not just sitting the
7 children in the classroom. Maybe it is a
8 different way or a combination, and we've
9 talked about that.

10 I'm sorry that this Commission did not get
11 to address many more education concerns for 20
12 years out, but I do believe that this solves
13 one of the big concerns that I had whenever the
14 class size amendment changed, and I'm going to
15 support this.

16 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further debate?
17 Commissioner D'Alemberte, you're recognized.

18 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, if we
19 were to pass this, we're passing a measure that
20 would just clutter up the constitution on the --
21 further clutter up the constitution, for no
22 particular purpose. We can't identify a single
23 school district that we really believe is in
24 violation of this principle today.

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Talk into the mic. Talk

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1 into the mic, as we want to get that into the

2 record.

3 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: I don't think we can
4 identify any school district that's in violation
5 of this principle today. And we're only
6 permitting the Legislature by this amendment to do
7 what the Legislature can already do and, as
8 Commissioner Gelber has already pointed out,
9 Legislature has declined to do.

10 Now, if you'll begin to identify
11 administrative costs, you're going to touch
12 the -- into areas where there will be
13 considerable disagreement about whether
14 something is classroom or administrative or
15 whatever. And what we need to do is to leave
16 to the local school districts the authority to
17 control their own budget. And so far as I can
18 see, they've done a good job of it with very
19 inadequate resources.

20 To put this on the ballot is to suggest
21 that administrative costs are somehow our
22 problem with public school education. And it's
23 not. Our problem with public school education
24 is that we have consistently underfunded it.

25 We have disinvested over the last eight, nine

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1 years. We've disinvested in education in
2 Florida.

3 We've taken money away from public school
4 education, away from universities. And it's
5 been such a tragic policy. And yet by waving
6 this in front of the public, we will saying
7 that they ought to take care of this excessive
8 administrative cost, which does not exist.

9 So I hope we won't do something useless
10 and add another approximately 105 words to the
11 state constitution for no purpose at all.

12 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further debate? Further
13 debate? Further debate?

14 (No response.)

15 Seeing none, Commissioner Turbeville,
16 you're recognized to close on your proposal.

17 MR. TURBEVILLE: Thank you, Chairman.
18 Seinfeld, Commissioner Gelber, is one of my
19 favorite shows, and it was the most successful
20 show in TV history for a reason, because people
21 believed in its great entertainment; but it made a

22 lot of money. And that's what this issue is about
23 is convincing the public that money should be
24 spent in the classroom and that it is happening.

25 And so I would hope today we would, you

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1 know, agree with leaders of the Legislature and
2 the governor of the State of Florida. Adam
3 Hasner, Senator Gates is a great example of
4 leadership at a local level. Okaloosa County
5 spends over 70 percent of their funding and
6 they have a grade A as a school district.

7 So with the proper leadership -- proper
8 leadership that's clued into taxpayers and
9 what's going on in that locality, it can occur.
10 And this sets just the minimum threshold. I
11 hope you'll support what I believe is a good
12 proposal and provide the voters an opportunity
13 to spend 65 percent of every dollar in the
14 classroom.

15 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Turbeville
16 having closed on CP26, committee substitute for
17 CP26, the question recurs on first passage of CS
18 for CP26 as amended. Nancy, call the roll.

19 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.
20 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yes.
21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.
22 MR. BARNETT: Yes.
23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Bostick.
24 MR. BOSTICK: Yes.
25 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.

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1 MR. CORCORAN: Yes.
2 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.
3 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: No.
4 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.
5 MR. HOGAN: Yes.
6 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.
7 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.
8 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.
9 MR. KYLE: Yes.
10 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.
11 MR. LACASA: Yes.
12 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.
13 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.
14 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.
15 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.

16 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.
17 MS. MATHIS: Yes.
18 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.
19 MR. MCKAY: Yes.
20 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.
21 MR. MCKEE: Yes.
22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.
23 MR. LES MILLER: No.
24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.
25 MR. RANDY MILLER: Yes.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.
2 MR. MOORE: No.
3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.
4 MS. RILEY: Yes.
5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Rouson.
6 MR. ROUSON: No.
7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.
8 MS. STORY: Yes.
9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.
10 MR. TURBEVILLE: Yes.
11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.
12 MR. WILKINSON: Yes.

13 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.

14 MR. YABLONSKI: Yes.

15 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.

16 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN BENSE: And by your vote the

18 proposal passes by a 20 to four vote.

19 Members, we are now going to take about

20 a -- let's take about a 30-minute recess.

21 The Styling and Drafting Committee is

22 going to meet and order up -- do what the

23 Styling and Drafting Committee does. They'll

24 also work on a new order of appearance since we

25 have two new proposals that have been put

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1 forth.

2 If you can come back between 12:15 and

3 12:20, I think that would be helpful. And we

4 will then take up the Commission -- the

5 committee's report, and then we'll have final

6 passage of committee substitute for CP40 and

7 committee substitute for CP26.

8 MR. ROUSON: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner Rouson?

10 MR. ROUSON: Mr. Chairman, I want to take a
11 point of personal privilege. We've worked real
12 hard through this whole process, all of us as
13 commissioners, to do what we thought was best. I
14 was quoted in the paper recently as criticizing
15 two commissioners by name, and I think I owe
16 Commissioner Story an apology for the quote.

17 When she explained her vote and her
18 rationale and why she did what she did
19 yesterday, it reminded me of what she had said
20 a long time ago, and she was consistent on it.
21 And so I want to offer Commissioner Story an
22 apology for that -- that quote on the record.

23 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you. Okay.

24 MR. RANDY MILLER: Mr. Chairman?

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Miller?

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1 MR. RANDY MILLER: Could I request a lunch
2 break?

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. We'll come back at
4 12:30. Well, we do have planes to catch. But
5 let's try to get back at 12:15 if you can. And --
6 but the Style and Drafting Committee will meet in

7 here -- you got a plane ticket? The Styling and
8 Drafting Committee will meet in here right now.

9 MS. STORY: Is it 12:15?

10 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Let's try to get back at
11 12:15, members.

12 (Lunch recess was taken.)

13 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Nancy, could you call the
14 roll so we can find out who all's here, please.

15 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.

16 MR. BARNETT: Here.

17 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martha --
18 Commissioner Bostick.

19 MR. BOSTICK: Here.

20 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.

21 MR. CORCORAN: Here.

22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.

23 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Here.

24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.

25 MR. HOGAN: Here.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.

2 MS. JOHNSON: Here.

3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.

4 MR. KYLE: Here.

5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.

6 MR. LACASA: Here.

7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.

8 MS. LEVESQUE: Here.

9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.

10 MR. MARTINEZ: Here.

11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.

12 MS. MATHIS: Here.

13 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.

14 MR. MCKAY: Here.

15 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.

16 MR. MCKEE: Here.

17 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.

18 MR. LES MILLER: Here.

19 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.

20 MR. RANDY MILLER: Here.

21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.

22 MR. MOORE: Here.

23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.

24 MS. RILEY: Here.

25 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Rouson.

1 (No response.)

2 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.

3 MS. STORY: Here.

4 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.

5 MR. TURBEVILLE: Here.

6 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.

7 MR. WILKINSON: Here.

8 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.

9 MR. YABLONSKI: Here.

10 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.

11 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Here.

12 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.

13 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Here.

14 So we are missing Commissioner Rouson and
15 Commissioner Martha. Okay.

16 All right, members, welcome back. We're
17 going to move to the report of Style And
18 Drafting. Commissioner Levesque, you're
19 recognized.

20 MS. LEVESQUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Members, you should have in front of you CS for
22 CP40, first engrossed. Does everyone have a copy
23 of that? CS for CP40, first engrossed? It may be

24 up on the counter here, so you can see it.

25 There were -- the amendments that were

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1 adopted in the Commission meeting this morning
2 were engrossed into CP40, so you can see on
3 lines 23 through 27 Commissioner Barnett's
4 amendment to restore current language in the
5 constitution, as well as Commissioner Martinez,
6 that all of that language now is current
7 constitutional language.

8 And then on lines 27 through 29 is the
9 incorporation of Commissioner Martinez's new
10 language regarding the entitlement.

11 So there were no changes made from Styling
12 and Drafting based upon the engrossed version
13 that came to us. If you want to turn to the
14 ballot summary on lines 79 to 86, I'll read the
15 ballot summary for you.

16 "Minimum, nonexclusive duty for the state
17 to adequately provide for the education of
18 Florida's children. Provides that the
19 constitutional requirement to provide Florida's
20 children with a 'uniform, efficient, safe,

21 secure, and high quality system of free public
22 schools' is a minimum and nonexclusive duty.
23 Reverses legal precedent prohibiting public
24 funding of private school alternatives as part
25 of the state's school choice programs."

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1 And that's the recommendation from the
2 Style and Drafting Committee on CS for CP40,
3 first engrossed.

4 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. To get the proper
5 posture, is there a motion to adopt the report
6 regarding -- regarding -- to adopt the report and
7 recommendation of Styling and Drafting on CP40?
8 Commissioner Scott moves --

9 MS. MATHIS: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN BENSE: -- and Commissioner Mathis
11 seconds.

12 Are there questions of the report? Any
13 questions?

14 (No response.)

15 Is there debate?

16 (No response.)

17 Do we call the roll or we do vote voice?

18 Call the roll, please. It takes a majority
19 vote. Call the roll, please, Nancy.
20 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.
21 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yes.
22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.
23 MR. BARNETT: Yes.
24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Bostick.
25 MR. BOSTICK: Yes.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.
2 MR. CORCORAN: Yes.
3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.
4 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Yes.
5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.
6 MR. HOGAN: Yes.
7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.
8 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.
9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.
10 MR. KYLE: Yes.
11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.
12 MR. LACASA: Yes.
13 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.
14 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.

15 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.
16 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.
17 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.
18 MS. MATHIS: Yes.
19 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.
20 MR. MCKAY: Yes.
21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.
22 MR. MCKEE: Yes.
23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.
24 MR. LES MILLER: No.
25 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.

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1 MR. RANDY MILLER: Yes.
2 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.
3 MR. MOORE: Yes.
4 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.
5 MS. RILEY: Yes.
6 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.
7 MS. STORY: Yes.
8 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.
9 MR. TURBEVILLE: Yes.
10 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.
11 MR. WILKINSON: Yes.

12 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.

13 MR. YABLONSKI: Yes.

14 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.

15 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN BENSE: By your vote, the motion to
17 adopt the report and recommendation of Styling and
18 Drafting on CP40 is approved, 22 to one.

19 Commissioner Levesque, you're recognized
20 to continue on the report.

21 MS. LEVESQUE: And, members, you should have
22 CS for CP26, second engrossed, in front of you.
23 Second engrossed.

24 And as can you see on lines 25 through 26,
25 Commissioner McKay's amendment that was adopted

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1 earlier in the Commission has been engrossed
2 into this version of the CS for CP26, and I'll
3 read the ballot summary for you, beginning on
4 line 42.

5 "Requiring sixty-five percent of school
6 funding for classroom instruction. This
7 proposed amendment to the state constitution
8 generally requires that sixty-five percent of

9 school funding received by school districts be
10 spent on classroom instruction rather than on
11 administration as defined by law."

12 And if you want me to make the motion now
13 and then we can have questions?

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Is there a motion?
15 Commissioner Levesque has explained the -- what
16 the Styling and Drafting Committee did. Is there
17 a motion to approve it? Commissioner Turbeville
18 moves and Commissioner Mathis seconds.

19 Are there questions of the chairman of the
20 Styling and Drafting Committee? Are there
21 questions regarding CP26?

22 (No response.)

23 Is there debate?

24 (No response.)

25 Seeing none, please call the roll on the

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1 approval and adoption of the report of -- and
2 recommendation of Style and Drafting Committee
3 on CP26. Please call the roll.

4 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.

5 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yes.

6 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.
7 MR. BARNETT: Yes.
8 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Bostick.
9 MR. BOSTICK: Yes.
10 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.
11 MR. CORCORAN: Yes.
12 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.
13 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Yes.
14 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.
15 MR. HOGAN: Yes.
16 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.
17 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.
18 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.
19 MR. KYLE: Yes.
20 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.
21 MR. LACASA: Yes.
22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.
23 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.
24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.
25 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.
2 MS. MATHIS: Yes.

3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.
4 MR. MCKAY: Yes.
5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.
6 MR. MCKEE: Yes.
7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.
8 MR. LES MILLER: No.
9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.
10 MR. RANDY MILLER: Yes.
11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.
12 MR. MOORE: No.
13 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.
14 MS. RILEY: Yes.
15 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Rouson.
16 (No response.)
17 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.
18 MS. STORY: Yes.
19 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.
20 MR. TURBEVILLE: Yes.
21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.
22 MR. WILKINSON: Yes.
23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.
24 MR. YABLONSKI: Yes.
25 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.

1 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Yes.

2 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Twenty-three -- 22 to one.

3 And by your vote, you have adopted the report and
4 recommendation of Styling and Drafting Committee
5 on CP26, by a 22 to one vote.

6 Commissioner Levesque, you're recognized.

7 MS. LEVESQUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Members, during Style and Drafting we had a
9 discussion of whether or not the two proposals
10 should be combined. Commissioner Hogan made the
11 motion to combine the two since they're both
12 related to public education, and they're both in
13 article IX. So the Style and Drafting Committee
14 adopted the recommendation to combine the two
15 proposals. So you should have in front of you CS
16 for CPs 26 and 40, second engrossed. And I'm
17 going to walk through the combination of the
18 proposal for you.

19 There were absolutely no changes made
20 between 26 and 40. They were just both
21 engrossed into the same constitutional
22 proposal. But we did have to work on the

23 ballot summary, so I'll have to read the entire
24 for you.

25 "Requiring 65 percent of school funding

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1 for classroom instruction; state's duty for
2 children's education. Requires at least 65
3 percent of school funding received by school
4 districts be spent on classroom instruction,
5 rather than administration; allows for
6 differences in administrative expenditures by
7 district. Provides the constitutional
8 requirement for the state to provide a
9 'uniform, efficient, safe, secure and high
10 quality system of free public schools' is a
11 minimum, nonexclusive duty. Reverses legal
12 precedent prohibiting public funding of private
13 school alternatives to public school programs
14 without creating an entitlement."

15 And that's the ballot summary to combine
16 the two proposals.

17 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Is there a motion to
18 combine the two proposals? Commissioner Hogan
19 moves and Commissioner Mathis seconds.

20 Are there questions regarding the
21 combination of 26 and 40? Are there questions?

22 (No response.)

23 Is there debate? Commissioner Moore,
24 you're recognized in debate.

25 MR. MOORE: I -- I will object to the

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1 combining. I think it's two totally different
2 subjects. One has to do with administrative
3 expense, classroom expenditures. The other one
4 clearly limits the voucher issue. I think the two
5 should -- I believe they both should be rejected,
6 but at least they should go separately.

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further discussion? Further
8 discussion?

9 (No response.)

10 Okay. Commissioner Scott, you want to say
11 something?

12 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Well, just that the
13 discussion is that they're both in the same
14 section of the constitution and they both really
15 relate to a continued and general subject of
16 basically improvements. I mean, choice, no matter

17 how anyone feels about it, a premise of this going
18 back to charter schools and whatever, going back
19 when we passed the charter school law in the
20 Legislature, is that choice is basically an
21 improvement.

22 And I think that they're both in the same
23 section, and they're both relating to basic
24 efforts of emphasizing improvement in education
25 and teaching versus administration.

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1 MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman?

2 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Moore, you're
3 recognized.

4 MR. MOORE: Would then someone explain to me
5 why the provision for 65 percent solution comes
6 first as opposed to the provision on the
7 entitlement, which comes second, when in fact in
8 the constitution they're in reverse order.

9 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Levesque, I'll
10 let you comment on that.

11 MS. LEVESQUE: Sure. Thank you, Chairman.
12 This was actually something that was a
13 recommendation from bill drafting when we looked

14 at combining them, that the new language was the
15 65 percent solution versus the -- an amending of
16 the current article, so the chief purpose was the
17 new language. And so there was a recommendation
18 from bill drafting to include them in this
19 particular order.

20 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further debate?

21 Commissioner D'Alemberte, you're recognized.

22 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I just
23 observed that we're continuing logrolling. I
24 never understood what logrolling actually meant,
25 but I do understand what bait and switch means.

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1 And the difficulty when you combine measures and
2 throw two different measures out to the voters and
3 give them only one chance to vote, you're not
4 giving them a chance to vote against something
5 that they don't like, if there's something in
6 there that they do like.

7 And that's the reason we avoid trying to
8 combine these things in normal practice, and
9 why we ought to avoid it here, so I urge that
10 we not approve -- not join the two.

11 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Further debate?
12 (No response.)
13 Seeing none, the question recurs on the
14 motion to adopt the report and recommendation
15 of the Styling and Drafting Committee to
16 combine CP26 and CP40, second engrossed, for
17 placement on the general electoral -- general
18 election ballot. Nancy, please call the roll.
19 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.
20 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yes.
21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.
22 MR. BARNETT: Yes.
23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Bostick.
24 MR. BOSTICK: Yes.
25 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.

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1 MR. CORCORAN: Yes.
2 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.
3 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: No.
4 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.
5 MR. HOGAN: Yes.
6 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.
7 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

8 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.
9 MR. KYLE: Yes.
10 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.
11 MR. LACASA: Yes.
12 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.
13 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.
14 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.
15 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.
16 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.
17 MS. MATHIS: Yes.
18 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.
19 MR. MCKAY: Yes.
20 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.
21 MR. MCKEE: Yes.
22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.
23 MR. LES MILLER: No.
24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.
25 MR. RANDY MILLER: Yes.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.
2 MR. MOORE: No.
3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.
4 MS. RILEY: Yes.

5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.

6 MS. STORY: Yes.

7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.

8 MR. TURBEVILLE: Yes.

9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.

10 MR. WILKINSON: Yes.

11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.

12 MR. YABLONSKI: Yes.

13 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.

14 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN BENSE: And by your vote the motion
16 passes by a 20 to three margin.

17 Next we will take up -- we will entertain
18 a motion to adopt the report and
19 recommendations for the Style and Drafting
20 Committee to place combined 26, 40 as No. 7 on
21 the general election ballot. Commissioner
22 Levesque, you want to take this?

23 MS. LEVESQUE: Sure. Thank you,
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 Members, the Style and Drafting Committee

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1 in reviewing the order of ballot placement that

2 we had already recommended to you earlier in
3 the docket yesterday, we recommend that you
4 just add CP -- CS for CP26 and 40 to the bottom
5 of the order. So we're recommending to you now
6 an amended order for ballot placement, which
7 would replace CS for CP 26 and 40 as No. 7, so
8 it would be at the bottom of the order that
9 we've already adopted.

10 So I move to adopt the recommendation of
11 the Style and Drafting Committee for the
12 amended order and placement on the ballot
13 that's in front of you.

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Move it as the -- as No. 7
15 in the final on the ballot?

16 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.

17 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Who -- there's a
19 motion by Commissioner Levesque, second by
20 Commissioner Scott.

21 Is there -- are there questions?

22 (No response.)

23 Is there debate? Any debate?

24 (No response.)

25 Seeing none, the question recurs on the

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1 motion to adopt the supplemental report and
2 recommendation from the Styling and Drafting
3 Committee to place combined CP26 and CP40 as
4 No. 7 on the general election ballot.

5 Nancy, please call the roll.

6 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yes.

8 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.

9 MR. BARNETT: Yes.

10 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Bostick.

11 MR. BOSTICK: Yes.

12 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.

13 MR. CORCORAN: Yes.

14 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.

15 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: No.

16 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.

17 MR. HOGAN: Yes.

18 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

20 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.

21 MR. KYLE: Yes.

22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.
23 MR. LACASA: Yes.
24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.
25 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.
2 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.
3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.
4 MS. MATHIS: Yes.
5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.
6 MR. MCKAY: Yes.
7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.
8 MR. MCKEE: Yes.
9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.
10 MR. LES MILLER: No.
11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.
12 MR. RANDY MILLER: Yes.
13 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.
14 MR. MOORE: No.
15 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.
16 MS. RILEY: Yes.
17 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Rouson.
18 (No response.)

19 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.
20 MS. STORY: Yes.
21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.
22 MR. TURBEVILLE: Yes.
23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.
24 MR. WILKINSON: Yes.
25 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.

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1 MR. YABLONSKI: Yes.
2 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.
3 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Yes.
4 CHAIRMAN BENSE: And by your vote the measure
5 passes by a 20 to three -- what's the number?
6 MS. FRIER: Twenty to three.
7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: By a 20 to three measure.
8 Members, one clarification. While we have
9 them numbered one, two, three, four, five, six,
10 seven, that may not be the exact numbers that
11 they will be on the ballot, but in terms of
12 what we submit, it will be in that order. Just
13 so we clarify that.
14 Finally, we're going to move to final
15 passage of the combined CP26 and CP40. Is

16 there a motion out there?

17 MS. LEVESQUE: Motion on final passage.

18 CHAIRMAN BENSE: There is the 17 vote. That
19 was the order. I need a motion.

20 MS. LEVESQUE: Motion to the final passage of
21 CS for CP26 and 40.

22 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Is there a second? Okay.
23 Commissioner Levesque moves, Commissioner Scott
24 seconds to take up the combined CP26 and CP40 for
25 final passage. This requires 17 votes.

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1 Are there questions?

2 (No response.)

3 Is there debate?

4 (No response.)

5 Seeing none, the question recurs on the
6 motion by Commissioner Levesque, seconded by
7 Commissioner Scott, to take up and pass
8 combined CP26 and CP40 for final passage.

9 Nancy, please call the roll.

10 MS. FRIER: Chair Bense.

11 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yes.

12 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Barney Barnett.

13 MR. BARNETT: Yes.
14 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Bostick.
15 MR. BOSTICK: Yes.
16 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Corcoran.
17 MR. CORCORAN: Yes.
18 MS. FRIER: Commissioner D'Alemberte.
19 MR. D'ALEMBERTE: No.
20 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Hogan.
21 MR. HOGAN: Yes.
22 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Johnson.
23 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.
24 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Kyle.
25 MR. KYLE: Yes.

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1 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Lacasa.
2 MR. LACASA: Yes.
3 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Levesque.
4 MS. LEVESQUE: Yes.
5 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Martinez.
6 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.
7 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Mathis.
8 MS. MATHIS: Yes.
9 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKay.

10 MR. MCKAY: Yes.
11 MS. FRIER: Commissioner McKee.
12 MR. MCKEE: Yes.
13 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Les Miller.
14 MR. LES MILLER: No.
15 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Randy Miller.
16 MR. RANDY MILLER: Yes.
17 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Moore.
18 MR. MOORE: No.
19 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Riley.
20 MS. RILEY: Yes.
21 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Story.
22 MS. STORY: Yes.
23 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Turbeville.
24 MR. TURBEVILLE: Yes.
25 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Wilkinson.

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1 MR. WILKINSON: Yes.
2 MS. FRIER: Commissioner Yablonski.
3 MR. YABLONSKI: Yes.
4 MS. FRIER: Vice Chair Scott.
5 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Yes.
6 CHAIRMAN BENSE: And by your vote the motion

7 for the final passage of combined CP26 and CP40
8 passes by a 20 to three vote.

9 Okay, members, let's move to -- we're just
10 about done -- discussion of procedures and time
11 frame for transmittal of TBRC proposals to the
12 Secretary of State.

13 I will recognize Susan Skelton, Dudley
14 Goodlette, and Tom Cibula. Ms. Skelton, do you
15 want to open up?

16 MS. SKELTON: Mr. Chairman, just a brief
17 overview. Our staff has been meeting with the
18 Secretary of State's office on the method of
19 transmittal. The method of transmittal will be a
20 letter from the Chair recognizing the work of the
21 Commission and placing the ballot order as the
22 Commission has voted for. And that letter of
23 transmittal will be submitted as soon as we're
24 able to complete that in the next couple of days
25 and will be transmitted to the Secretary of State.

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1 Secretary of State will then take them and
2 place those items on the ballot in the
3 numerical order that we have recommended,

4 following the items that are already on the
5 ballot. And that is the procedure.

6 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner Scott,
7 you have some comments on that?

8 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: No, none on that. I don't
9 have any comments on that.

10 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Mr. Goodlette or
11 Mr. Cibula, on that process, you're okay? Okay.

12 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: And I'm just going to say
13 as soon as possible.

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Yeah, I agree. How about
15 a -- Ms. Torian, are you ready for the next
16 section, which is the staff update on the final
17 report of 2007/2008 Taxation Budget and Reform
18 Commission? You're recognized.

19 MS. TORIAN: First let me start by saying,
20 hurrah.

21 (Laughter.)

22 The final report of the Commission will
23 contain no new information. It will simply be
24 a final document reflecting all the substantive
25 work of the committees. It will include all

1 the reports that came out of the Governmental
2 Services Committee. They had six reports on
3 the six various high level topics. Those will
4 also be included in the report.

5 It will also give an overview of the
6 number of meetings that were held, the hearings
7 around the state as well the procedure and the
8 rules overview as well.

9 That document will then be transmitted to
10 the Governor's Office, the speaker of the House
11 and the president of the Senate. It will also
12 be posted onto our website, which will be
13 maintained going forward so people will have
14 access to that 20 years from now. And the next
15 Commission can look back on those details both
16 in hard copy as well as through a -- an
17 archived version of the website.

18 CHAIRMAN BENISE: Okay. Are there questions
19 of Ms. Torian?

20 (No response.)

21 Let's move on then to some thank yous. I
22 think folks that we need to thank in this
23 process. First of all, the -- I want to thank

24 the Florida House of Representatives and the
25 Florida Senate for meeting space. And also all

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1 the staff support. Bill drafting. I could go
2 on and on, but both chambers were very helpful
3 in moving us through this process. And it got
4 a little ticklish from time to time, but I
5 think the last Commission got unfunded about
6 halfway through their process, so at least we
7 didn't have that done to us.

8 I want to thank the Governor's Office for
9 staff support. They took the ball initially
10 and got this Commission formed. Ms. Carolyn
11 Timmann was very instrumental in getting us
12 started and really helped get us through the
13 first 45 days.

14 I want to thank Stephanie Kopelousos, from
15 the -- who's Secretary of the Department of
16 Transportation, to thank her for her letting us
17 use their facilities and letting their --
18 allowing their staff to help us. I really
19 appreciate that.

20 And I also want to thank the FSU Academic

21 and Professional Program Services for all their
22 work on our website, for the use of their
23 furniture and their computers. They really
24 came through for us at the right time, which
25 was at the beginning, and they've been most

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1 helpful throughout this process.

2 We want to thank the Department of Revenue
3 for their assistance in actually setting up
4 this Commission. They could have been an
5 obstacle; they were helpful. And I
6 appreciate -- we all appreciate what they did
7 to help us.

8 The Office of Legislative Services, OLS,
9 for member and staff support. I think they
10 really helped Susan especially and staffers.
11 And they paid our travel, which I think we're
12 out of money for travel I hear since they cut
13 the -- we did get wracked pretty good, though,
14 in the budget cuts.

15 I want to thank the Office of Legislative
16 Information Technology Services for their
17 computer support service, which was very

18 helpful throughout our entire process.

19 I want to thank the Florida Channel for
20 their statewide coverage and fair coverage of
21 our meetings.

22 I want to thank our consultants, Dave
23 Zachem, who helped us in the area of property
24 tax. Ava Parker, who was very helpful, if you
25 recall, in our public hearings, to make sure we

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1 had a good balance of turnout at all of our
2 public hearings. And I also want to thank John
3 Phelps. Is John still here? Where is John?

4 John Phelps -- by the way, he is a
5 volunteer -- voluntary parliamentarian. As we
6 began to get deep into the weeds a few weeks
7 ago, if you'll recall, on the -- on the
8 spending cap initiative, he really helped guide
9 us out of the weeds. And I really do thank
10 John. John is the greatest -- was -- is and
11 was the greatest person to ever make sure that
12 the Florida House was run properly as its
13 clerk. So, John, thank you so much again for
14 your help. You've always been there.

15 And Richard Hixson, our styling and
16 drafting attorney, as I mentioned at a meeting
17 earlier this year, I was able to persuade him
18 to come out of retirement to help us when I was
19 speaker of the House, and he's fair player.
20 He's been around this process for a long time.
21 And Richard, we -- Susan and I begged him to
22 come back to help us through this Styling and
23 Drafting part, which is very critical. And
24 he's done it, and he could do it in his sleep.
25 And I feel comfortable that what we've done

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1 from here on out with respect to transmitting
2 it to the Secretary of State's office couldn't
3 have been prepared and overseen by a better
4 person. He's a good man.

5 And last but not least, in terms of our
6 consultants, Dudley Goodlette, I've always said
7 that when I was speaker I was probably about a
8 five and a half on a scale of one to ten. I
9 would have been a three and a half if it
10 weren't for Goodlette to get things done.

11 (Laughter.)

12 So he's very good. He's cordial, and I
13 think he was accessible to everyone. And I
14 hope that everyone felt that way. And you-all
15 can all chime in later if you like, but I'll
16 get through these and we can -- you can add,
17 embellish on.

18 I want to thank Danielle Freeze, our court
19 reporter. You can write your name down.

20 (Applause.)

21 You did a -- you were very patient.

22 And Paul Soberenlort [phonetic] our summer
23 intern. He was very helpful to us and a lot of
24 research for us.

25 And our staff. Nancy Frier,

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1 administrative assistant, who was always there.
2 Just wonderful. We had a great staff. You're
3 as good as your -- as the folks that you
4 surround yourself with, and they sure made all
5 of us look good.

6 Chandra Godwin, also an administrative
7 assistant. Did a super job, Chandra. We
8 really appreciate what you did.

9 Rob Shave. Rob worked like a Trojan, and
10 we appreciate all your hard work.

11 Ann Gordon, who I've worked with in the
12 past. There's Ann. Ann's just a wonderful
13 person. She gets the appropriations process.
14 Helped train me a few years ago in the
15 appropriations process, so -- and a very loyal
16 person.

17 Tom Cibula, our general counsel and senior
18 policy person. Probably one of the brightest
19 persons I've met in a long time. And -- where
20 are you, Tom? I mean, you get it. I mean, he
21 rocks.

22 (Laughter.)

23 He -- I don't always understand what you
24 say, Tom, because you're on a higher level than
25 I am, but I know it's good.

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1 (Laughter.)

2 And Kathy Torian, who we were able to get
3 from the Governor's Office, and I thank
4 Governor Crist for letting us have her. She
5 was our deputy executive director and our

6 communications person and just a joy to be
7 around. I mean, Kathy is just -- you know, in
8 life you can go through it and just, you know,
9 look at terrible things or you can go through
10 life and think how wonderful it is, and it's
11 just a joy to be around Kathy. We traveled to
12 the public hearings a day ahead of time to kind
13 of let the press know what we were doing there.
14 So, Kathy, it's great to work with you.

15 And last but not least is Susan Skelton.
16 I've known Susan Skelton since the Dempsey
17 Barron days when she was an aide to Senator
18 Barron. And having grown up in the same area
19 that Senator Barron grew up in, I campaigned
20 for him when I was in high school. So -- and I
21 learned a lot from Dempsey, some what not to do
22 and some what to do. Right, Susan Skelton?
23 You knew him very well.

24 (Laughter.)

25 But he's a great mentor. But Susan is

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1 a -- in fact, until we were -- you were here, I
2 thought you were a Democrat. Nothing personal.

3 (Laughter.)

4 But I think it shows -- I think that
5 shows -- she came in because of her talents,
6 her qualities and abilities, not her political
7 affiliation. And she's one of the most
8 knowledgeable people in Tallahassee, and her
9 integrity is beyond reproach. And her
10 knowledge in guiding me through some of the
11 pitfalls I almost got in. I know now why you
12 survived for 25 plus years, Susan. You were
13 wonderful.

14 And I don't know what your next challenge
15 will be, but whoever -- wherever you end up, it
16 will be to their benefit, I can assure you of
17 that. It was wonderful.

18 So having gone through all that, Senator
19 Scott, you got some -- a few things to say?

20 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Well, yeah. Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman. I also want to chime in about our
22 staff. Just tremendous. And I also, as you well
23 know, I've known Susan probably as long as you
24 have or longer. And we worked together in -- as
25 far back as the 1980 to '82 reapportionment

1 matters, where she was staffed in reapportionment,
2 which is always an interesting venture as those in
3 and out of the Legislature well know.

4 And the other members of our staff, just
5 been excellent. As we all know, this was kind
6 of like -- probably like what -- a little bit
7 like it was after Pearl Harbor was bombed. We
8 had to go and get going.

9 And not only that, if you'll remember,
10 we -- our Chair is very -- we were very
11 courteous and deferential to the legislative
12 sessions and special sessions and even matters
13 that they put on the ballot on some of our
14 issues that were of great concern to a lot of
15 the state. And so we've really been in the
16 90-day wonders, really, when you think about
17 it, in the last three months.

18 I want to also mention the Style and
19 Drafting Committee and Patricia Levesque, who
20 I've known but never really worked with. Just
21 tremendous, patient, knowledgeable, and also
22 very fair on issues, no matter how she may or

23 may not personally have felt about them. We --
24 it's just been a tremendous leadership. I
25 think that was evident from the way she's

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1 handled the final reports the last two days.

2 And the other members, tremendous Martha
3 Barnett, who's -- I didn't quite -- I was
4 somewhere where she was leaving, but I want to
5 mention that this is like the second -- several
6 of us have served with Martha on prior
7 commissions. I know Barney Barnett at
8 something. I served on the Constitutional
9 Revision with her. She did great.

10 And the other members of the committee,
11 and I don't want to leave any out.

12 And Commissioner Miller, invaluable. His
13 experience in the Legislature and his additions
14 to the Style and Drafting. And Commissioner
15 Hogan. And I don't know who I'm leaving out,
16 Chair Bense.

17 Let me get to -- let me get to Chairman
18 Bense. When he said he'd known Dempsey Barron
19 since high school, I've known him since high

20 school; and he's really the same age I am, I
21 think. I must have been elected to the Senate
22 when I was 16.

23 (Laughter.)

24 It's truthful that I remember being in
25 Panama City, and I want to say he was working

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1 in a gas station. But you had something to do
2 with a gas station over there when he was -- a
3 long time ago in a campaign with Senator Barron
4 in like 1980 or '82 or something.

5 CHAIRMAN BENSE: That would be the '70s.

6 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Oh, no. That couldn't be
7 the '70s.

8 (Laughter.)

9 In any event, when we started this
10 Commission, I will tell you that I was asked to
11 be on it, and I -- I debated about it some. I
12 mean, but when I had an idea who was going to
13 be on it -- and that goes for all of you. Many
14 of you I've worked with for years and known and
15 others it's been a pleasure to get you to know
16 you better.

17 But Chair Bense, when it was discussed
18 about who would be chair. It certainly made my
19 mind up that this is where I wanted to be, and
20 I'm happy that -- to have been vice chair with
21 him.

22 And I want -- I know all the members have
23 such great respect for you, the way -- when you
24 were in the Legislature and now the way you've
25 conducted this, with the fairness and the

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1 consideration for the public and for every
2 speaker and for the members and all of their
3 issues. Just tremendous.

4 I hope -- all the members, let's give him
5 a big round of applause.

6 (Applause.)

7 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you all very much. I
8 do appreciate it. Commissioner Story.

9 MS. STORY: I also want to add my thanks to
10 the staff. I've worked in a lot of different
11 organizations throughout the Southeast. And I've
12 worked in a lot of voluntary and nonvoluntary.
13 And I've never seen a team of people more

14 dedicated, great at what they do. I mean, I don't
15 think many of us even know how many birthdays went
16 by without them being with their families, or how
17 many anniversaries or their kids' ball games.

18 I mean, we don't realize, but all I know
19 is every time I called, they were there. And
20 I -- they're just the A team. They're the
21 national champs, and I just want to say that.

22 For Chairman Bense, I want to echo
23 something that Commissioner Scott said. Great,
24 great leaders have a vision of what they want
25 to be, a vision of good. They have a passion

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1 to get there; that nothing is going to stop us;
2 that you gives you more courage.

3 And they have a mission, which means the
4 vision is great and the passion is great; but
5 if you don't put it into work clothes, if you
6 don't think of a way we can get there that is
7 honest and fair and inspires people, then the
8 rest of it doesn't happen.

9 And you are one of those rare and unique
10 people who have all three of those. You have

11 vision. You have a passion for what is right
12 and what is good and what we need in the state,
13 and you also are able to say, here's what it's
14 going to take to get there. And I admire you
15 so much, and your service on this Commission
16 has just been extraordinary. And I'm glad I
17 was able to witness it and work with you.

18 And the last thing I want to say is to
19 every single commissioner -- the ones in the
20 back too.

21 (Laughter.)

22 VICE CHAIR SCOTT: Even Barney.

23 MS. STORY: Even Barney, who slammed Auburn
24 engineers a few minutes ago.

25 But, again, I've worked in a lot of

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1 groups. One thing when I came down, I knew
2 some of you but not many of you. Every person
3 on this Commission is such a patriot. I mean,
4 you're an American patriot, and you love this
5 state.

6 And Martha Barnett said something earlier
7 that I agree with a thousand percent. She

8 said -- I know that's not technically, it's
9 100 percent. But she said, we all want the
10 right thing. We all want to do the right
11 thing.

12 We may differ on how to get there, but,
13 you know, I never ever questioned any
14 commissioner on this Commission who truly and
15 honestly was giving these hours, these days,
16 these months to make Florida a better place,
17 not just for today and those of us sitting here
18 or even your own children, but every single
19 commissioner was so thoughtful about saying,
20 how can I make sure that my children, my
21 grandchildren, but even more importantly, every
22 child in the future in this state has a great
23 place to call home.

24 And I never ever doubted that that was the
25 goal of every commissioner. And I will tell

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1 you that I've not always participated on groups
2 where I can make that statement.

3 So I want to thank you for what you've
4 done for me, encouraging me, and knowing that,

5 in this day and time with so much cynicism and
6 so much stuff out there and so much crap, that
7 you can get a group of people together who can
8 disagree and debate and -- but we know that we
9 all want the same thing, and that's what's best
10 for this great state and this country. And I
11 thank you for that.

12 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Lacasa, you're
13 recognized.

14 MR. LACASA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too
15 want to thank the members of the Planning and
16 Budget Committee and the staff. Ann Gordon, thank
17 you so much for tolerating me. I want to thank
18 Commissioner Story for setting the standard in how
19 to do a committee report. I always tried to
20 follow your lead. They were excellent reports. I
21 always knew what was going on in your committee.

22 I want to thank you, Chairman Bense, as
23 well. We served together in the Florida House,
24 but I didn't have the pleasure of serving while
25 you were speaker. And I'm thankful to Speaker

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1 Marco Rubio for appointing me so I could have

2 that.

3 I want to thank all of you, my fellow
4 commissioners. It's been a true joy to serve
5 on this particular type of institution. Having
6 served in the Legislature, the dynamic here was
7 very different, and I too saw the patriotism
8 and the fervor for being a Floridian. And I'm
9 very grateful for that.

10 Commissioner Scott, thank you for also
11 guiding me and helping me in this process.
12 Susan, thanks.

13 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner Hogan,
14 you're recognized.

15 MR. HOGAN: Yes. I would move that we
16 reconsider CP --

17 (Laughter.)

18 In truth, Chairman Bense, I'd like to
19 first -- I'd like to first thank Senator -- I,
20 mean president of the Senate Pruitt for
21 appointing me to this Commission. It has been
22 a very wonderful opportunity to have met some
23 great folks.

24 I thought I would never move away from

25 Jacintha Mathis. Every time we were in a

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1 meeting for probably the first seven or eight
2 meetings I sat next to Jacintha. And what a
3 sweet lady she is and how great her insight is
4 about all issues. I'm amazed. I'm sorry we
5 didn't get to consolidate the State of Florida
6 into one government, but I know you tried.

7 And, Senator McKay, I voted for your bill
8 three times and only against it once, so that
9 should count for something. The last time I
10 voted against it, I think I voted for it. I
11 told you that you must have had a facelift, but
12 the last time the staples came out, so I had to
13 change my vote on that, but I gave you plenty
14 of forewarning. I didn't submarine you.

15 And then to get to meet the father of Save
16 Our Homes. That's a pretty good treat.

17 To serve with a fellow despised tax
18 collector like McKee was a great opportunity.

19 And then there were so many. I felt like
20 I was the village idiot at a MENSA meeting.

21 (Laughter.)

22 The intellect on this committee, with
23 maybe the exception of Senator Scott --
24 (Laughter.)
25 -- was amazing to me. Julia Johnson, I

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1 don't know who I would choose for a lawyer, you
2 or Martinez, if I ever had to go to court. I
3 love your style of debate, and I love your
4 thoughtful way that you present your ideas.

5 And, Sandy, I'm going to have to tell my
6 cousin about you. We've never voted the same
7 the entire time we were here, and so I don't
8 know if he'll disown me or disown FSU. I think
9 he'll get rid of me first.

10 Finally, it's good to work with instead of
11 be lobbied by Randy Miller.

12 (Laughter.)

13 And, Jade, I don't know if you had
14 anything to do with the commercials but, shoot,
15 my campaign manager tells me that the next
16 campaign I'm in he's going to be able to reduce
17 our costs by about 50 percent. My name was
18 mentioned every day for three weeks about my

19 vote on the Blaine amendment.

20 MR. MOORE: I had nothing to do with that.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. HOGAN: Oh, I know. I'm just saying, I
23 want to thank you if you did, because it was a --
24 he told me that we'd save a lot of money on the
25 next campaign.

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1 To the staff, they are the A team. I've
2 been around a lot of staffs, both in
3 legislative bodies and Southern Bell, but I
4 would put you up against anybody. Cibula was
5 always here. And, folks, if we don't thank him
6 for anything else, we should thank him for the
7 45 amendments that he drafted for CP35.

8 (Laughter.)

9 And, Susan, you're great. I think Susan
10 took ownership to that bill almost as much as I
11 did. She was kind of a mother hen at times,
12 worried about all the strange things that were
13 going on with amendments around it. So I
14 appreciate your support.

15 And, Dudley Goodlette, you're always

16 number one in my mind. You were a great rules
17 leader in the House, and so it's great to serve
18 with you again.

19 As well as Carlos Lacasa. He was the
20 appropriations chair my first two years there.
21 Fortunately, I roomed with one of his close
22 friends, and so I got everything I wanted at
23 last minute. But you're also a very deep
24 thinker, and yet have a great deal of common
25 sense.

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1 And, Bense, I didn't get to serve with you
2 as leader of the House. I did vote to
3 designate you that. I hope you remembered
4 that, and so it's been a pleasure to serve with
5 you again.

6 And all of you, those I didn't mention,
7 I've got something from every one of you. And
8 it was a great opportunity to serve with each
9 of you, and I wish you the best in life.

10 Nancy Riley, I want to say one other
11 thing. You never had to guess what Nancy was
12 thinking.

13 (Laughter.)

14 She would tell you straight up. And I
15 really enjoyed the frankness of her debate and
16 discussions involving issues that she was very
17 passionate about.

18 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner Riley,
19 since your name got mentioned.

20 MS. RILEY: Yes. Thank you. I also would
21 like to echo, what a great privilege it's been to
22 serve on this Commission. I would like to thank
23 the governor for appointing me to the Commission.

24 I'd like to echo the accolades of the
25 staff. They were terrific. They were patient.

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1 And most of the time, they had the answer; and
2 if they didn't have the answer, they got it,
3 and they did call back. I didn't have to make
4 a second call to find out.

5 And to all of you, it has been truly an
6 honor to represent the citizens of the State of
7 Florida. And I know that's what we were doing.
8 We were here representing the citizens, and I
9 felt like each and every one of you, in your

10 comments, on your votes, in your participation,
11 always had the citizens of Florida in your mind
12 and in your heart. So it has truly been an
13 honor.

14 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Anyone else? Commissioner
15 Rouson.

16 MR. ROUSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry
17 I missed some of the earlier comments, but I too
18 want to echo them to the extent that they
19 complimented staff for everything that you did for
20 us, your courtesy, your professionalism, even some
21 of the personal things like the Aleve for
22 headaches.

23 Chairman Bense, it's been a pleasure
24 serving with you. You've taught me a lot. One
25 of the things you taught me is I got to stop

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1 trying to kick in doors and let the process
2 work and be a little more patient about things.

3 To the entire Commission, oh, Lord,
4 you-all have no idea how you prepared me for
5 what I never thought I'd be doing.

6 (Laughter.)

7 But because of some of the struggles that
8 we have gone through as a Commission, because
9 of me having to learn some Robert's Rules of
10 Order, on-the-job training, and some other
11 things, I feel like I'm already a veteran over
12 there across the way. And you prepared me for
13 that, this whole process. And I never even
14 thought I would run for the Legislature until
15 maybe two months ago, two and a half months
16 ago. I didn't realize the value of this
17 experience in doing that.

18 But I too have to thank Governor Crist.
19 Ten years, one month, and eight days ago, when
20 I was in Hazelton in West Palm Beach, you could
21 not have written this script for me, that I
22 would have believed, that I would be in some of
23 the settings, building some of the
24 relationships, having the opportunity to impact
25 government and the State of Florida like this

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1 process, like Governor Crist and some others
2 have allowed me, and I'm very grateful.

3 I'm grateful that Senator McKay allowed me

4 to be a co-sponsor on his bill, and I got to
5 work with a master, you-all, in terms of
6 getting something through this process. And
7 watching Martha Barnett operate, and even
8 realizing that -- I hope my Republican friends
9 aren't still angry with me. They keep telling
10 me I'm becoming more and more of a Democrat.

11 This process -- that the older you get the
12 more you're in it I guess you realize it's
13 really about doing something good and not so
14 much about party lines.

15 But I truly am grateful for everybody on
16 here. Mr. Martinez, having met you some years
17 ago when we served on transition, the attorney
18 general's transition, consummate professional,
19 well-read, he taught me how to be prepared.
20 And so I too just want to say thank you to
21 everybody.

22 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay. Commissioner, thank
23 you. Anyone else? Randy Miller.

24 MR. RANDY MILLER: It's just been a pleasure.

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Okay.

1 MR. MCKAY: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I'd like
2 to --

3 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Senator McKay.

4 MR. MCKAY: -- along with this process,
5 everything we've accomplished here without a doubt
6 would not have been possible without your
7 leadership. You brought -- while I've been out of
8 the political process for a while and didn't have
9 the pleasure of serving you close up as speaker of
10 the House, you certainly, from what I read in the
11 papers and my occasional observation, you
12 certainly brought great dignity and honor to that
13 body.

14 And I think you've done the same thing
15 here. Without your leadership, I think this
16 bumpy road that we have traveled down would not
17 have been possible. So thank you very much.

18 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you. Commissioner
19 McKee.

20 MR. MCKEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't
21 typically have much to say, and I'll keep it that
22 way here. But I do want to thank the staff for
23 all their hard work. And I want to thank the

24 commissioners for allowing me to be part of this
25 process and thank the governor for appointing me.

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1 You're just a tremendously distinguished
2 group of people, and I really feel honored to
3 have been able to work with you for the past
4 year and for that I shall always be grateful.

5 I knew nothing about what to expect.
6 Senator Scott gave me some insights into what I
7 could expect, and most of it came true.

8 (Laughter.)

9 Mr. Chairman, thank you for your
10 leadership and for a little bit of mentoring
11 along the way. I learned a great deal.
12 Thanks, everyone.

13 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Thank you.

14 I just want to make a few more closing
15 remarks. You know, we -- we passed two
16 milestone issues, the bill we passed today as
17 well as CP2 yesterday. And I -- as you look at
18 who won and who lost, I think somebody won one
19 of the two. I don't think anyone went oh for
20 two on the two big issues that we voted out.

21 So no one walked away empty-handed, so to
22 speak.

23 And I've said before, I would rank this as
24 probably the most distinguished commission or
25 board I've ever served on. Today the debate,

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1 for example, between Dan Gelber and Bob
2 Martinez was like watching the finals of
3 Wimbledon. I mean, it was -- they were in a
4 different league, and I was -- and I can assure
5 you that.

6 And that just sort of to me exemplified
7 the talent on this Commission and how bright
8 everyone is.

9 And it was just a -- and Senator Scott,
10 you know, you've been my mentor for a long
11 time, and I've always admired you and your
12 leadership skills. And I think we made a
13 pretty good team. We calmed each other down
14 from time to time, which was good.

15 And I think Richard Corcoran made a
16 comment to me earlier. You know, you should at
17 least be 50 years old before you, you know,

18 because really age does tend to calm you down a
19 little bit. You don't -- as we say in the
20 Panhandle, you don't just tear your shirt off
21 or take your shirt off when you're getting
22 ready to get into a fight. You just calm down.
23 You just calm down.

24 But -- and I also want to thank Martha
25 Barnett. I wish she was here. Because I'll --

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1 I'll close on this. When I was speaker
2 designate, it was about June of 2004, five or
3 six months before I was going to become
4 speaker, and I had dinner with her and some
5 other folks, and -- but they were getting my
6 ear on an issue. And we were chatting. I
7 didn't know Martha that well.

8 She said, well, you know, what's your --
9 what's your big thing going to be? What are
10 the areas of public policy that you really want
11 to have an influence on when you're speaker?

12 And I said I just, you know, I want to
13 reduce the size of government. Not a good
14 answer, quite frankly.

15 And she said, that's a pretty shallow
16 approach. This is someone that was -- I mean,
17 I was pretty powerful then.

18 (Laughter.)

19 I mean, I'm nobody now, but I was powerful
20 then. And it -- but I -- it made me reflect,
21 because I really hadn't thought -- I had
22 been -- I had worked so hard to become speaker
23 that I'd been -- I was a dog that finally
24 caught the tire. You know, I had it in my
25 mouth and didn't have -- now what am I going to

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1 do with it.

2 And it really made me reflect hard for
3 five or six months upon, okay, where are we
4 headed. And I spoke to her -- I hadn't seen
5 her in a couple of years, and I spoke to her
6 last year when we were appointed. And I
7 reminded her of that. She said, you know, I
8 couldn't sleep that whole night. I was afraid
9 I'd blown it with you forever in the Florida
10 House.

11 (Laughter.)

12 But I have -- and I don't always -- you
13 know, and she made just a wonderful point that
14 Susan Story said this morning. All of us were
15 here for the right reasons. Some of just think
16 there's a different road map and a different
17 road to travel. And I'll respect anyone for
18 that. I'll never agree with everyone on
19 everything. But I think that really sort of
20 sums up in a nutshell this Commission.

21 Having said that, folks, it's been great.
22 We'll have a reunion sometime. We'll put that
23 on our calendar. Any further remarks?

24 MR. RANDY MILLER: I move we rise.

25 CHAIRMAN BENSE: Commissioner Miller moves we

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1 rise.

2 (The proceedings concluded at 1:24 PM)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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6 STATE OF FLORIDA)

7 COUNTY OF LEON)

8

9 I, LISA D. FREEZE, Notary Public, certify
10 that I was authorized to and did stenographically
11 report the proceedings herein, and that the transcript
12 is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

13 I further certify that I am not a relative,
14 employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties,
15 nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'
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18 WITNESS my hand and official seal this 25th
19 day of April, 2008.

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