

Advocate

ELECTIONS

08



Cover Story

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ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

Political Operations

Ways to Get Involved

As this publication will show, there is a lot going on in Florida as it relates to politics and electing members of the Florida Legislature. It is most important that you are involved in that process as the decisions they make affect your daily lives. Due to term limits or the pursuit of higher office, there is a perpetual reshuffling of the Florida Legislature which demands a concerted effort by Florida business to be “in the know.” AIF provides its members several ways to become involved in the political process.

First, you can join the **AIF Political Council (AIFPC)**. The mission of the Political Council is to provide information and access for its membership on election news and information, candidates, polls and the overall political environment in Florida. It is not an entity used to engage in endorsements, electioneering communication or election activities. AIFPC is a way for its members to take an active role in the political process by providing them the information necessary to make educated decisions in all of Florida’s races and help business owners determine the best placement of their campaign contributions for endorsing pro-business candidates.

Second, you can contribute to the **Associated Industries of Florida Political Action Committee (AIFPAC)**. The AIFPAC is comprised of AIF members who pool their political resources together to support incumbents who have proven business-friendly voting records and pro-business candidates to the Florida Legislature. AIFPAC is led by a Board of Directors; and after consideration of candidate questionnaires, incumbent voting records and political analyses of the districts, they determine who receives contributions and endorsements from AIFPAC.

Third, you can sign up for the **Florida Prosperity Project**. AIF has partnered with BIPAC, based in Washington D.C., to offer this educational tool to its member companies. The Florida Prosperity Project provides businesses with organization tools and information to help educate their employees and associates about public policy issues and to motivate them to take part in the election process in a non-partisan manner. It is an internet-based program, with no cost to you.



To learn more, please contact Michelle Mattox, AIF’s Chief Political Officer, at 850-224-7173.



By Barney T. Bishop III

Important Decisions

November 4th is going to be one heck of an election! To help you be prepared for this monumental election, we have filled this issue with electoral information, polling information and political endorsements. Every two years AIFPAC endorses both in the primary and general election cycle; and this summer, after our political council's exhaustive six-city tour interviewing 83 candidates, our PAC has announced its preferred candidates for the Florida Senate and House, and you will find them detailed herein.

In addition, for what we believe to be the first time in our 88-year history, AIF has endorsed federal candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives. To help guide us in our deliberations we turned to the **National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)** and the **Business Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC)**, of which AIF is the state affiliate for each organization.

We also have made a recommendation in the race for President of the United States. Our choice is U.S. Sen. **John McCain** as he had a far superior record on key business issues when his voting record with NAM and BIPAC was contrasted with the Democratic nominee.

Our recent statewide poll shows that the number one issue for Floridians is jobs and the economy, and the second is holding the line on taxes. That's one reason that AIF and 20 other business associations supported and advocated for an **Economic Stimulus Package (ESP)** which was funded at decent levels given our state's budget constraints. The other reason was to put Floridians back to work! By building roads, water projects, and schools, and investing in the private side of our ports, our Space program at Cape Canaveral, and our new research institutes, we can bring sales tax dollars from the goods and services they will use and produce into the state's coffers. By using non-recurring revenue for infrastructure projects, we can help our economy so that when we exit this downturn, Florida is ready to grow. And that's why AIF and the other business associations will be proposing ESP 2.0 for the 2009 legislative session.

We also have in this issue information about several proposed constitutional amendments. AIF is generally loath to support amendments to our governing document; however, once they are on track to be considered for the Constitution, we research them to see if they should be supported. This year, the AIF Board of Directors voted at our summer board meeting to make a recommendation to you; and so you will find that inside these pages as well.

We hope this political information will be helpful to you and your employees as they decide who should lead us in the future. In Florida you no longer have to have an excuse to request an absentee ballot, and so you can vote in the comfort and privacy of your home without having to wait in the long lines that will surely be the case with the expected record turnout this fall. You also have the right to Early Voting which begins in advance of Election Day, so we encourage you to make your voice heard. As "*The Voice of Florida Business Since 1920*," we too expect to have our voice heard and it is what we do day in and day out of every year. An enlightened voter will make the best choices; please vote — it's your patriotic duty!



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Don't Forget About the Florida Legislature

On Election Day, November 4, 2008, no matter what your personal preference may be, history will be made when the votes are cast and counted for the President and Vice President of the United States. I heard someone state recently that this election year has allowed politics to be “cool” again. People are discussing politics at work, at home around the dining room table, and with friends in social settings. There will be many new voters this year, many will choose to participate in early voting, and it is expected to be a record-setting voter turnout as the nation decides who will serve as their next President and Vice President. All of this made me wonder why that excitement can't be translated to the Florida Legislature? Why is there not much attention paid to these races that set the climate of Florida's economy?

By Michelle Mattox

The members of the Florida Legislature set the laws that affect your pocketbook and your business's bottom line. They can vote to place items on the ballot as Constitutional Amendments. They establish the budget of the state of Florida and decide how the state's money is spent. They set the regulations that affect how you operate your business. In one simple statement ... they have all the power. Or is that so? Really, you have the power. You have the right to vote and contribute to the incumbents and candidates that will best represent your personal beliefs and your business sense. Until we understand and exercise that power, we allow others to control what happens to us.

In this article I will give you an overview of the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives. Who has the majority and what is the make-up? What races are the ones that you need to pay close attention? And throughout this publication you will be able to review AIF's recommendations and who we, as an association, are supporting because they will best represent the business community in the Florida Legislature.

The Florida Senate

Currently there are 26 Republicans and 14 Democrats that make up the Florida Senate. In the 2008

Election, there are 14 incumbents up for re-election and there are seven open seats. It is unlikely the make-up of the Florida Senate will change, despite a couple of attempts to do just that.

It seems that the race to watch for the business community is the re-election of Sen. Gary Siplin (D-Orlando). He has been targeted by Florida's trial lawyers, who spent a great deal of money in his primary election to unseat him because they claim he is a friend to business. Sen. Siplin scored a 90% AIF voting record for the 2008 legislative session. Several business groups came to his aid in his primary election to help him win; but there is no guarantee they will continue their support in his general election against his Republican opponent Belinda Ortiz (R-Orlando), someone who has public policy experience, is the CEO of her own public relations firm, and is touting herself as the pro-business candidate. This is certainly a race to follow because he has been targeted by the trial lawyers as well as the Republican Party of Florida, which wants to change the make-up of the Florida Senate to 27 Republicans and 13 Democrats.

In the open seats, the successors are practically already chosen, either by their win in the primary election or their expected win in the general election. However, the race to succeed Sen. Lisa Carlton (R-Osprey) is the race that is up for grabs and anybody's guess as to what will happen. The Republican candidate is former Rep. Nancy De-tert (R-Venice); and despite her fundraising disadvantage, she has proven time and time again that she has a core group of supporters and can win with their help. During her time in the Florida House she also proved herself as a friend of business with a 94% AIF Historical Voting Record.

The Democratic candidate is Morgan Bentley (D-Sarasota), a business litigation attorney who is popular within the district and who interviewed well with AIF's Political Council members. He presented himself as a pro-business Democratic Senate candidate, someone who represents businesses on a daily basis. This may be the Democrat's hope of switching the numbers to 25

Why is there not much attention paid to these races that set the climate of Florida's economy?

Republicans and 15 Democrats. Or if they lose the Sen. Siplin seat, the numbers could remain the same. Odds are, it's more likely for the Democrats to pick up a seat than for the Republicans.

The Florida House

The Florida House of Representatives is an entirely different creature than the Florida Senate in its partisanship, its numbers and its elections. Currently there are 77 Republicans and 43 Democrats in the Florida House and 34 of those seats are open in the 2008 General Election. Since 2006, the Democrats have gained nine seats; and in this election year they are hoping to gain a few more seats. They are hoping to take advantage of the nationwide trend of anti-incumbent, especially if you have an R behind your name, and the momentum that the Democrats have in the presidential election and getting out the votes.

There are a lot of races to follow this upcoming election year, and several could produce big wins for the Democrats as they hope to reshape the Florida House. It is our estimation that the Democrats could pick up as many as five seats this year. Now, this is not to say that the Republican Party isn't on the offensive as well, as they are targeting several Democratic incumbents in hopes of taking back some of the seats they have lost since 2006. And to their credit, they are doing it with good candidates that are friends to the business community and, may pick up one or two seats in the Florida House. ■

Michelle Mattox is Chief Political Officer for Associated Industries of Florida (e-mail: mmattox@aif.com)

2008 Election by the Numbers

Current Florida Senate
26 Republicans
14 Democrats

After Primary
17 Republicans
8 Democrats

November Elections
15 Districts up for Grabs

Current Florida House
77 Republicans
43 Democrats

After Primary
23 Republicans
20 Democrats

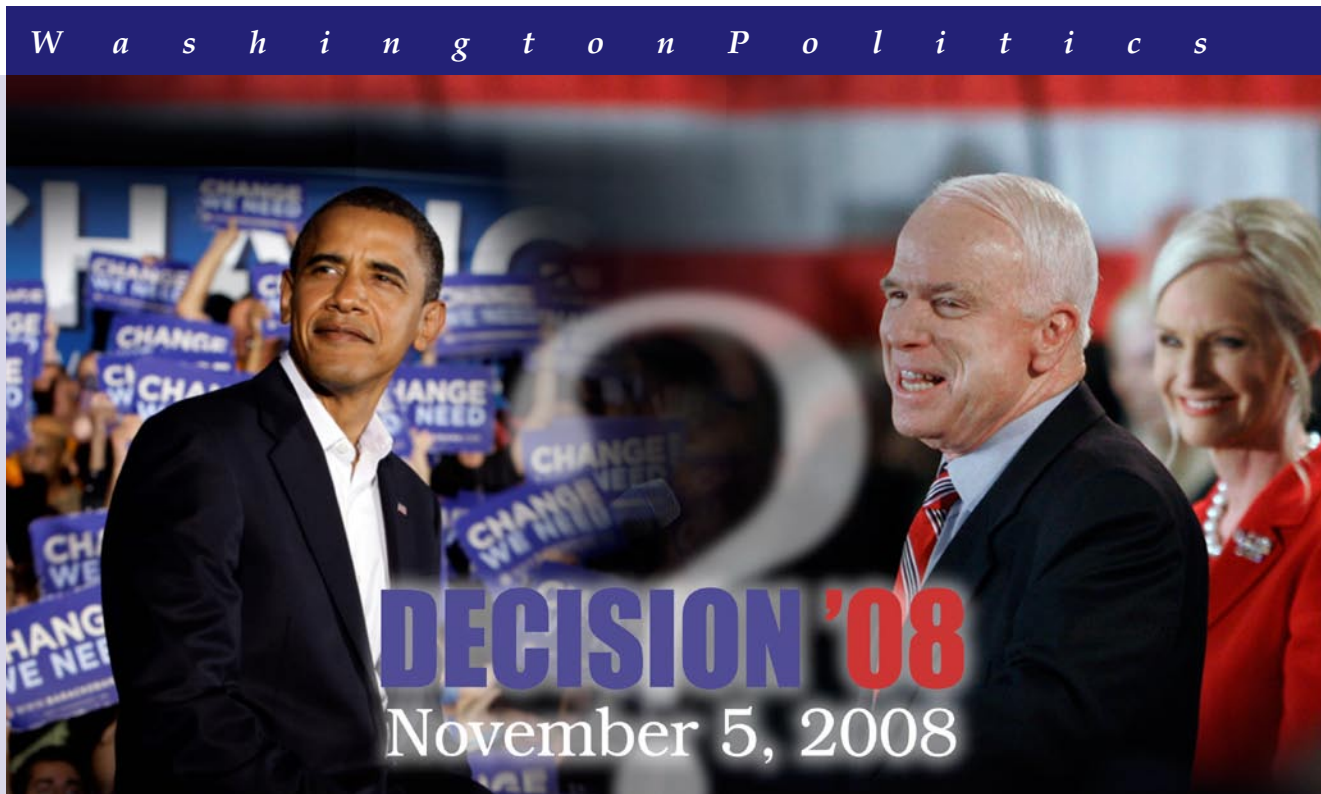
November Elections
77 Districts up for Grabs

October 20 – November 2, 2008
Early Voting



November 4, 2008
Election Day

The mid-term election in 2006 was clearly a year for, and of, the independent moderate ticket-splitter.



Weeks Out About **the Morning After**

By Bernadette Budde

Last year who would have believed the Miami Dolphins would be the ones to break the New England Patriots regular season winning streak? Who would have further believed men would be offended by sexist remarks or John would cheat on Elizabeth? If you accept the once unbelievable is now fact, you must also accept the dynamics of the 2008 election means anything is possible.

The thing to remember is there are four pillar points creating a collision course for reality.

First, the culture wars of 2000 and 2004 are back. They have been reintroduced into the political dialogue since the selection of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin to the ticket. Many pundits thought we were not only in a post-partisan era but a post-social issue divide as well. Much of the revived grassroots reported from the hinterlands is because of traditional pro-gun, pro-life, pro-flag volunteers who labored for candidates in previous elections.

The question is what happens when these forces collide with the fix-it electorate of 2006, now exacerbated by the hairpin turns of the market, along with concerns about access to credit and insurance?

While many may argue about Wall Street vs. Main Street, Florida voters know all-too-well about foreclosures and insurance premiums. The economy is a top issue, whether defined as jobs, retirement security, health care access, or gasoline prices. If voters view D.C. as clueless, greedy and lazy, what does this mean for the incumbents, particularly many of the freshmen members who rode a wave of discontent in 2006, who can now be tagged as part of the problem?

And when we look at the electorate and the maps, we see a far more diverse map today than we did four years ago. In Florida, we're told there are hundreds of thousands of infrequent or unregistered African-Americans, second-generation Hispanics, naturalized Americans, restored felons, early snow birds, students and others who have reshaped the electorate.

Nationally, we predict the electorate will be less white, less wed, and less working than before. New voters nationwide are registering in far higher numbers with Democrats, or sign up as unaffiliated. These demographic shifts are evident in Florida, but also in swing states such as Virginia, Colorado, and North Carolina.

The mid-term election in 2006 was clearly a

year for, and of, the independent moderate ticket-splitter. Democrats won these elusive voters and took control not only of the House and Senate but a number of state legislatures and governorships. Team Obama saw the potential to pull together millions of voters who held little in common other than their desire for something different. The volunteer corps that won primaries and caucus states, or came close in losing, propelled the Obama campaign ahead of the professional media-heavy Clinton operation.

Florida's primary status meant state residents missed the flood of yard signs, emails, text messages, and shopping mall brigades that sprung up in other states. For this election, unlikely voters have come out in full force and the Obama organization is far superior to what Democrats had two years ago. But this is an extremely expensive venture to keep running, even with volunteers. What happens if that money dries up?

The post-Republican convention bounce appears to have leveled out in a few target states, but the McCain-Palin camp looks rejuvenated in Florida. The consensus is by late-October, the Obama campaign won't be able to sustain its ground-game in the states on the summer target list, which might force a decision about whether Florida or North Carolina has the resources for the final push toward November.

A bigger overriding question is whether congressional races run on a different track.

Generic ballot tests show a narrowing gap, with the Democratic edge more likely in high single digits rather than mid-teens. In some Republican circles, enthusiasm headed into the final weeks is equal to the euphoria of the young Obama volunteers from last winter. In the closing weeks, Republican operatives are hopeful of holding their own in the U.S. House rather than suffering another 30-seat loss.

Where is Florida in this calculation? Your 25-member congressional delegation has at least one of every category of race this cycle.

- Open Republican seat: There are 29 nationwide, nearly all of which had competitive primaries. Democrats anticipate picking up at least a half dozen of them. The assumption in the Sunshine State is state legislator Bill Posey (R) will keep the seat

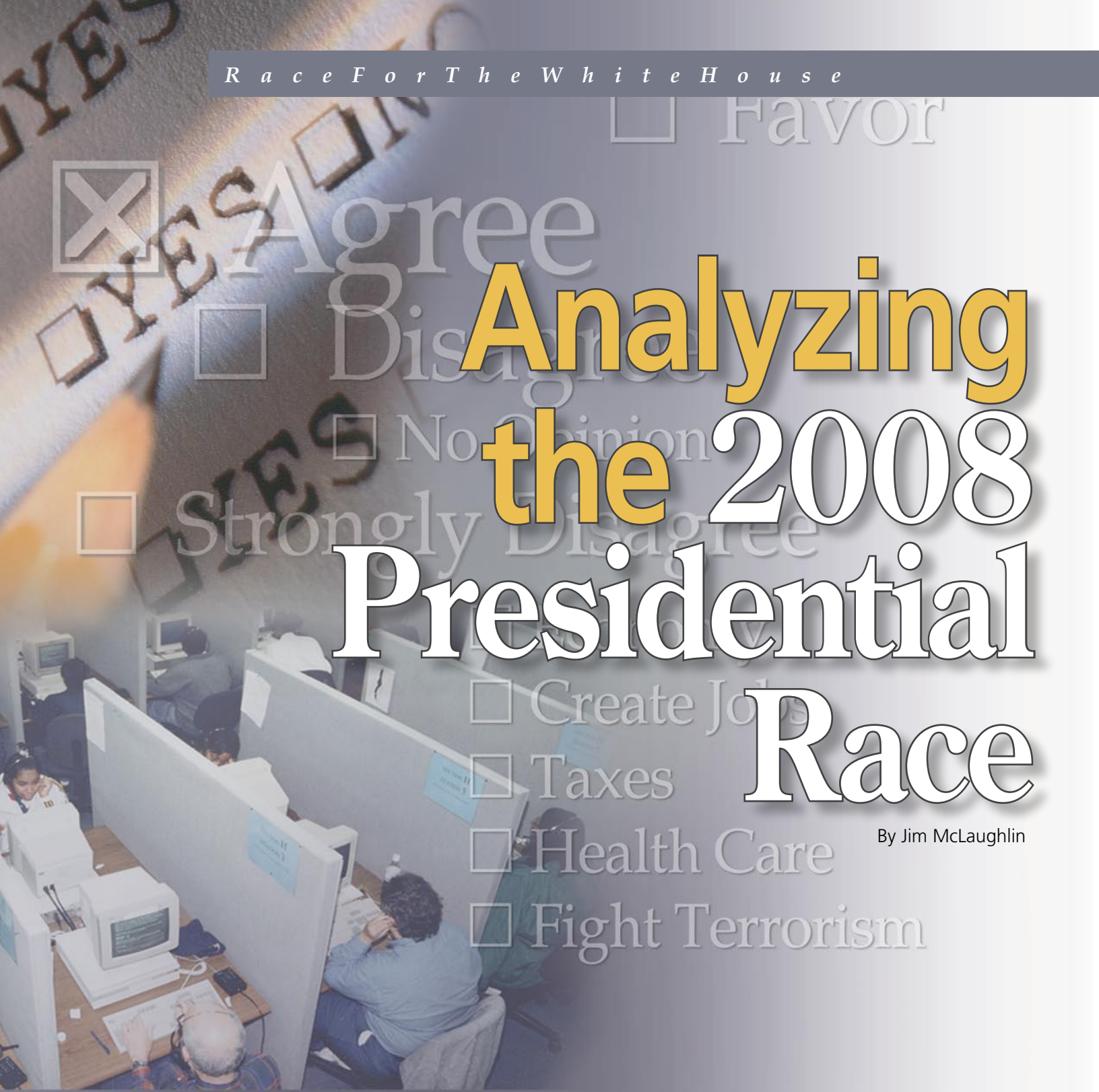
When we look at the electorate and the maps, we see a far more diverse map today than we did four years ago.

vacated by Rep. Dave Weldon (R 15).

- Freshmen Democrats: Of the 42 first-term Democrats who were elected in 2006, most look relatively secure because their voting records are blurred enough to argue moderation and some fiscal restraint. Nationally, clearly identified and consensus challengers haven't surfaced everywhere. The Florida example is Rep. Tim Mahoney (D 16) vs. attorney Tom Rooney. If Mahoney wins again, Democrats will lose very few of the class that brought them into the majority.
- Vulnerable Republicans: Several Republican incumbents squeaked into the 110th Congress with slim margins and were immediately on the target lists for 2008. The Florida example is Rep. Vern Buchanan (R 13) who faces a rematch. A lasting post-convention/pre-election bounce would help him with the party faithful.
- Expanded field: Congressional Democratic strategists have moved to destabilize Republican incumbents who appeared safe in previous elections, much as they did in 2006 by capitalizing on personal or performance weaknesses, coupled with changing demographics. Florida has a number of these contests – Reps. Ric Keller (R 8), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R 18), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R 21), Tom Feeney (R 24) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R 25). Odds say one person on this list won't return.

Call your friends and family in other states and prepare them for an aftermath only you can fully understand: not knowing the morning after who has been elected our next president. We're expecting 135 million voters using unfamiliar ballot systems, overlaying a highly competitive race in at least a dozen states decided by margins of less than two percent. At least that's how it looks today. ■

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(e-mail: budde@bipac.org)



Analyzing the 2008 Presidential Race

By Jim McLaughlin

In spite of quite a bit of upheaval in the economy and in world events, the numbers in most of the key presidential battleground states have remained relatively stable with neither campaign being able to put the other away.

In August of 2007, against the conventional wisdom, we told AIF members that we thought Barack Obama had a real shot at beating Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination for president. It was great political theatre and Senator Obama was able to pull off the upset defeating the vaunted Clinton political machine.

On the Republican side, Senator John McCain was able to mount a major comeback after all the punditry had him dead and buried last summer to outduel his Republican challengers relatively early on to win the GOP nomination.

The vast majorities of voters tell pollsters the country is off on the wrong track and they are not satisfied with the Republican president or the Democrat controlled Congress. Now we have continued unrest in the Middle East, economic problems on Wall Street affecting main street, Russia invading Georgia, not to mention the so called "Palin factor."

With Congress' negatives approaching 80% and this election fast becoming the most anti-incumbent political environment we have seen in a long time, is it any wonder why all the politicians tell us they are "reformers" who want "change"?

What does this all mean?

Get ready; hold on for the ride; it looks like this year's presidential race will go down to the wire again!

Analyzing national and state polls reveal scenarios where it is possible for either Barack Obama or John McCain to win the national, popular vote, yet still lose the election in the state-by-state Electoral College tally. It appears that eleven states, including Florida, will hold the key to who the leader of the Free World will be over the next four years. Those eleven states are Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.

In looking at the presidential race, the national polls are extremely less important than what is going on in the key eleven states. We have the usual swing states in play in this presidential election, such as Florida, Ohio, Nevada, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Michigan and New Hampshire. But, there are others that will matter in this election.

What should we look for in terms of trends

regarding the key battleground state presidential polling?

It is not good for Barack Obama that states like Minnesota and Wisconsin are still in play. On the other hand, it's not good for the McCain Campaign that states like Indiana and Virginia are still in play. If Senator Obama starts to pull away in states like Ohio and Colorado, that would show a trend for him. If Senator McCain gains the advantage in places like Ohio or Michigan ... that spells trouble for the Obama Campaign.

In spite of quite a bit of upheaval in the economy and in world events, the numbers in most of the key presidential battleground states have remained relatively stable with neither campaign being able to put the other away.

What's driving the voters' attitudes?

Well, it's the economy and then some! When gas prices spiked, it was all about energy costs, gas prices and drilling. The Republicans gained some traction on the drilling issue as Democrats looked like obstructionists and went on vacation when Americans wanted action from Congress. With the latest financial problems on Wall Street, the Republicans have been hurt because they control the White House. Right now it's all about kitchen table economic issues with the voters.

When Barack Obama was leading over the summer, he had about a 20 point lead over Sen. McCain when it came to the economy. When Sen. McCain was ahead after the GOP convention, it was because he had erased Obama's lead on the issue of the economy.

Now what is going to happen over the final days of the campaign?

Well, the good news is the presidential campaigns will probably go away from Paris Hilton and lipstick on pigs to hopefully who has better ideas on jobs and the economy. Chances are, whoever the voters think will do a better job on things like creating economic opportunity, taxes and energy policy will probably be the next President of the United States.

That will be a good thing for our country, Florida and the business community. ■

Jim McLaughlin of McLaughlin & Associates is a political analyst and national pollster (e-mail: jim@mclaughlinonline.com)

Well, the good news is the presidential campaigns will probably go away from Paris Hilton and lipstick on pigs to hopefully who has better ideas on jobs and the economy.

1 Know Your Constitutional Amendments

By José Gonzalez

When Florida voters head to the polls on Tuesday, November 4, they will be determining the fate of six (6) different proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution. Originally, the number of amendments to be voted on was nine (9), but amendments 5, 7, and 9 were thrown off the ballot by the Florida Supreme Court. Amendment 5, better known as the "Tax Swap" amendment, would have reduced property tax bills by 25% by eliminating the portion of ad valorem taxes used to fund local schools. Amendments 7 and 9 both dealt with the contentious issue of state funding for private institutions and school vouchers.

For 2008, seven of the original nine proposed amendments were put on the ballot by the powerful Taxation and Budget Reform Commission (TBRC), which began meeting across the state in 2007 and officially concluded its business in late April of 2008. These amendments range across a wide spectrum of issues touching education, the environment, and property taxes.

Only one proposed amendment made it on the ballot via the initiative petition process. Amendment 2, more commonly known as the Florida Marriage Protection Amendment, received a total of 649,346 verified signatures. The Florida Legislature was relatively quiet this year and only placed one amendment on the ballot, probably in deference to the TBRC and its proceedings.

Amendment 1

Relating to Property Rights/Ineligible Aliens

Placed on the ballot by a Legislative Joint Resolution, this amendment proposes an amendment to the state Constitution to limit the Legislature's ability to regulate the property rights of ineligible aliens.

Supporters: The OCA (the Organization of Chinese Americans, a non-profit group and minority rights advocate) has voiced support of the amendment, saying that it is time to do away with an outdated and racist section of the Florida Constitution.

Opponents: None have been identified at this time.

AIF Position: None

Amendment 2

Florida Marriage Protection Amendment

The Florida Marriage Amendment, which is also known as the Marriage Protection Amendment, would ban same-sex marriage in Florida. If it passes, it will write into the state Constitution a clause that would prevent judges from overturning the law.

Amendment 2 is the only proposed amendment on the 2008 General Election ballot resulting from the citizen initiative process.

Supporters: Florida4Marriage is the sponsor of the initiative.

Many also believe that the constitutional amendment is also being pushed in order to bring out more conservative voters for the presidential election.

Opponents: The group Florida Red and Blue and the ACLU are fighting the initiative. ACLU officials say they are worried the ballot's language will make it difficult for unmarried couples who share benefits, including many seniors, to continue that practice.

AIF Position: None

Amendment 3

Changes and Improvements Not Affecting the Assessed Value of Residential Real Property

If approved, would authorize the Legislature to prohibit the consideration of certain improvements and changes to property when assessing the property's value to ad valorem taxation. It was approved for the ballot by the TBRC.

Supporters: Amendment 3 was sponsored by Commissioner Gwen Margolis and received wide support by the majority of the Commission.

Opponents: No organized opposition to this proposed amendment has formed as of the writing of this report.

AIF Position: Support

Amendment 4

Property Tax Exemption for Perpetually Conserved Land; Classification and Assessment of Land Used for Conservation

This measure would amend the Florida Constitution to require the state Legislature to make a property tax exemption for property which is under perpetual conservation protection (as defined by general law). This would apply to property taxes beginning in 2010. It was approved for the ballot by the TBRC.

Supporters: Amendment 4 is the combination of two proposals sponsored by Commissioner Brian Yablonski, Vice President of Public Affairs for the St. Joe Company. Other supporters include Florida Taxwatch, Florida Association of Counties, and environmental groups like Audubon of Florida, the Trust for Public Lands, the Nature Conservancy, the Florida Wildlife Federation, and 1000 Friends of Florida.

Opponents: No organized opposition to this amendment has surfaced as of the writing of this report, although there have been some news articles questioning Amendment 4 because of its potential to take vast parcels of land off of the state's tax rolls.

AIF Position: Support

Amendment 6

Working Waterfronts

(see page 12 for a full description)

AIF Position: Support

Amendment 8

Local Option Community College Funding

The measure proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution that would require the Legislature to authorize local option sales tax levies for counties. These levied ad valorem taxes would go towards community college funding, and the counties would be required to get voter approval of the levies. The measure was voted onto the ballot by the TBRC.

Supporters: Amendment 8 was sponsored by the Governmental Services Committee, a standing committee of the TBRC and is supported by the presidents of all 28 community colleges in Florida, and organizations like Taxwatch

Opponents: No vocal opponents have been identified as of the printing of this report.

AIF Position: Support

José Gonzalez is AIF's Vice President for Governmental Affairs
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The Bottom Line

The State of Florida and the business community dodged a bullet with the successful legal challenge of Amendment 5. The Florida Supreme Court only took a handful of hours before it ruled in favor of the Circuit Court's decision. In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court Justices agreed that Amendment 5's intent and its language was misleading to the voters. AIF played a significant role in the fight against Amendment 5 by appearing as a named party on the lawsuit and as a member of the Coalition to Protect Florida's Economy. The remaining six amendments are much less controversial (with the exception of the gay marriage amendment which continues to divide much of the electorate). Whether they reach the 60 percent threshold necessary for passage remains to be seen and will be determined by how actively supporters of these amendments campaign during the days leading up to the general election. At its recent summer meeting, the AIF Board of Directors voted in favor of supporting amendments 3, 4, 6, and 8. AIF encourages our members to educate their employees on the benefits of these proposed amendments, and we strongly urge your support of these good public policy proposals.



What is Amendment 6?

By Keyna Cory

We encourage full support for Amendment 6.

This November, Florida voters will have a unique opportunity to preserve “working waterfronts” for future generations.

The Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission voted to place on the ballot a constitutional initiative providing “working waterfronts” be taxed at “current use,” not “highest and best use” as defined in the amendment. Simply stated, *Amendment 6* will ensure that a marina be taxed as a marina and not as a high rise condominium.

Every day, public access to Florida’s waterfronts is literally being taxed out of existence as marine-related businesses are unable to afford higher property taxes. The current system of “highest and best use” taxation forces waterfront businesses to be appraised and taxed upon potential use of the land, such as a high-end condominium or waterfront resort, instead of the current use of the property.

That is why *Amendment 6* needs to be passed by Florida voters this November. The passage of *Amendment 6* will allow Florida’s marine industry to continue providing Floridians, tourists and future generations with public access to the state’s waterways and will support the economy with billions of revenue every year.

Presently, the marine industry contributes \$18 billion dollars to Florida’s economy. Florida can not afford to lose the marine industry and the

economic impact it provides. If “working waterfronts” do not receive this much needed change in the Constitution, many will be forced to sell to development and we will lose public access to our waterways. Working waterfronts are unique and are water dependent. A marina has to be located on the water and cannot be located inland. Just recently two major boat manufacturers have relocated to other southern states because of lower taxes and other incentives offered by these states and, in general, to avoid the high cost of doing business in Florida.

The proposed amendment simply states that the following marine-related businesses will be taxed at current use:

- Marinas and docks open to the public for water access and recreational uses
- Public vessel launches into navigable inland and coastal waterways
- Commercial fishing facilities
- Water-dependent marine manufacturing facilities
- Marine vessel construction and repair facilities

AIF has been coordinating the efforts of Save Our Waterfronts, a broad-based coalition of businesses, individuals and associations who believe this change to Florida’s Constitution is necessary to keep the marine industry from being taxed out of existence ... just taxed at the property’s current use!

Even local governments and economic development councils from across the state have shown their support by adopting resolutions in support of *Amendment 6*. ■

Keyna Cory is the President of Tallahassee-based Public Affairs Consultants, Inc., and AIF’s Chief Lobbyist (e-mail: keynacory@paconsultants.com)

Life After the Elections

By José Gonzalez

It is November 5th (the day after the general election) and the campaign season in Florida and across the United States is finally over. After months of debates, mailers, phone calls, and district walks, we finally know the make-up of both chambers of the Legislature and whether any proposed constitutional amendments surpassed the 60 percent threshold needed for approval. The dust may have settled on the campaign trail, but what happens next?

Well for starters, the Florida Constitution mandates that an Organizational Session be held on the 14th day after each general election (this year Organizational Session falls on Tuesday, November 18th). In Florida, elections are held every two years and on even numbered years. This session is solely held for the purpose of organizing each chamber. This is a ceremonial time during which officers are officially selected (although announcements are made prior to the session) and the official rules of each chamber are adopted. Although there is no official time limit to an Organizational Session, the official business can be completed within a short period of time (usually a couple of hours). One interesting item to note is that during election years, bills may not be filed until after the completion of the Organizational Session.

Another important process that takes place in the interim between each session, and usually during the summer and fall months, is the development of Interim Projects. Interim projects usually correspond to legislative priorities established by each of the chambers. House and Senate staff are directed to research different issues and proposals and then prepare reports, which are presented and debated during the subsequent session. The subject and findings of an interim project may become legislation; therefore, they are closely monitored and tracked by associations like AIF.

Last but not least, during the months leading up to the regular session, legislators come



to Tallahassee for a series of Interim Committee Meetings. Because the Legislature in Florida only meets for 60 days each year, there is a need for legislators and staff to meet in Tallahassee in order to prepare and advance their agenda. Regular committee hearings are held — mostly to hear presentations from agency staff on interim projects and budget documents. It is not uncommon, however, to debate legislation if it is filed (usually this corresponds with bills that are a priority of Senate and House leadership.)

As you can see, newly-elected legislators don't have much time to get settled in. Legislative work begins almost as soon as the elections are over, and the months leading up to the regular session are quite busy in Tallahassee. With term limits firmly in place in Florida and with more and more turnover in both chambers, it is essential that the business community be engaged in early education of new legislators. The months immediately following an election represent the best time to accomplish this goal.

So while the pace of the election season goes away, a whole new kind of urgency sets in with new legislators. Of course, AIF is there every step of the way making sure that our members' needs are well represented. ■

José Gonzalez is AIF's Vice President for Governmental Affairs
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With term limits firmly in place in Florida and with more and more turnover in both chambers, it is essential that the business community be engaged in early education of new legislators.

Political Endorse

“Florida’s lackluster economy demands strong leaders who will advance measures that foster a business-friendly climate.”

– BARNEY BISHOP,
PRESIDENT
& CEO, AIF

The Associated Industries of Florida Political Action Committee (AIFPAC) is a political tool available to members of AIF which provides them an opportunity to be involved politically with the legislative races statewide. The AIFPAC derives its contributions from businesses and associations that are current members of AIF, and its purpose is to assist in the election of business-friendly incumbents and candidates to the Florida Legislature.

AIFPAC is led by a Board of Directors who determine — after consideration of candidate questionnaires, incumbent voting records and political analyses of the districts — which candidates will receive contributions and endorsements from the AIFPAC. The member companies and associations invested in the AIFPAC recognize and understand the issues that face Florida’s businesses and economy; and through their contribution to the AIFPAC, they support candidates that share their opinions.



Florida Senate

Dist.	Name
SD 1	Tony Hill (D)
SD 3	Charlie Dean (R)
SD 5	Stephen Wise (R)
SD 7	Evelyn Lynn (R)
SD 9	Andy Gardiner (R)
SD 11	Mike Fasano (R)
SD 17	JD Alexander (R)
SD 19	Gary Siplin (D)
SD 23	Nancy Detert (R)
SD 24	Thad Altman (R)
SD 25	Jeff Atwater (R)
SD 27	Dave Aronberg (D)
SD 29	Chris Smith (D)

Florida House

Dist.	Name
HD 1	Greg Evers (R)
HD 2	Dave Murzin (R)
HD 3	Clay Ford (R)
HD 5	Brad Drake (R)
HD 8	Alan Williams (D)
HD 9	Peter Boulware (R)
	Michelle Vasilinda (D)
HD 10	Leonard Bemby (D)
HD 11	Debbie Boyd (D)
HD 12	Janet Adkins (R)
HD 14	Mia Jones (D)
HD 17	Lake Ray (R)
HD 18	Ronald “Doc” Renuart (R)
HD 19	Mike Weinstein (R)
HD 20	Bill Proctor (R)

HD 21	Linda Myers (D)
HD 23	Charles Chestnut (D)
HD 24	Kurt Kelly (R)
HD 26	Pat Patterson (R)
HD 27	Dwayne Taylor (D)
HD 28	Dorothy Hukill (R)
HD 29	Ralph Poppell (R)
HD 30	Ritch Workman (R)
HD 31	John Tobia (R)
HD 32	Steve Crisafulli (R)
HD 33	Sandra Adams (R)
HD 34	Chris Dorworth (R)
HD 35	Dean Cannon (R)
HD 36	Scott Randolph (D)
HD 37	Scott Plakon (R)
HD 38	Bryan Nelson (R)
HD 40	Eric Eisnaugle (R)
HD 42	Marlene O’Toole (R)
HD 44	Robert Schenck (R)
HD 46	John Legg (R)
HD 47	Kevin Ambler (R)
HD 48	Peter Nehr (R)
HD 49	Darren Soto (D)
HD 52	Bill Heller (D)
HD 54	Jim Frishe (R)
HD 55	Darryl Rouson (D)
HD 56	Rachel Burgin (R)
HD 57	Faye Culp (R)
HD 59	Betty Reed (D)
HD 60	Ed Homan (R)
HD 64	Kelli Stargel (R)
HD 65	John Wood (R)
HD 67	Ron Reagan (R)

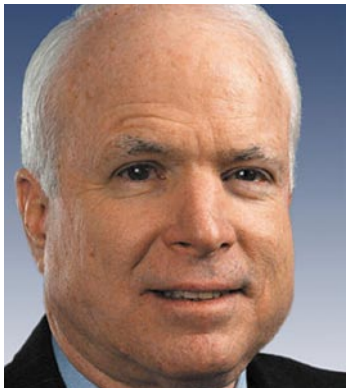
HD 69	Keith Fitzgerald (D)
HD 70	Doug Holder (R)
HD 71	Ken Roberson (R)
HD 72	Paige Kreegel (R)
HD 73	Nick Thompson (R)
HD 75	Trudi Williams (R)
HD 77	Denise Grimsley (R)
HD 78	Kevin Rader (D)
HD 79	Mike Horner (R)
HD 80	Deborah Mayfield (R)
HD 81	Mike DiTerlizzi (R)
HD 82	William Snyder (R)
HD 83	Carl Domino (R)
HD 85	Joe Abruzzo (D)
HD 86	Maria Sachs (D)
HD 87	Adam Hasner (R)
HD 89	Mary Brandenburg (D)
HD 91	Ellyn Bogdanoff (R)
HD 93	Perry Thurston (D)
HD 94	Hazelle Rogers (D)
HD 95	James Waldman (D)
HD 97	Marty Kiar (D)
HD 100	Evan Jenne (D)
HD 101	Matt Hudson (R)
HD 102	Eddy Gonzalez (R)
HD 107	Luis Garcia (D)
HD 110	Esteban Bovo (R)
HD 111	Erik Fresen (R)
HD 112	David Rivera (R)
HD 113	Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R)
HD 117	Julio Robaina (R)
HD 119	Juan Zapata (R)
HD 120	Ron Saunders (D)

Incumbents in
bold

ments

Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) recently announced its full list of Congressional endorsements. AIF endorsed a total of 19 candidates for Florida's open Congressional seats. This is the first time the statewide business association has endorsed candidates for federal office.

Electing lawmakers who understand the needs of our state's business community is a priority for AIF. The association's inaugural federal endorsements expand efforts to encourage business participation in the political process and rally the voting power of its 10,000 business members behind state and federal candidates who support the principles of a free-enterprise system.



Presidential
John McCain (R)
Sarah Palin (R)



Florida U.S. Congress – General Elections Endorsements



Jeff Miller (R) C-1



Allen Boyd, Jr. (D) C-2



Ander Crenshaw (R) C-4



Ginny Brown-Waite (R) C-5



Clifford Stearns (R) C-6



John Mica (R) C-7



Ric Keller (R) C-8



Gus Bilirakis (R) C-9



C.W. Bill Young (R) C-10



Adam Putnam (R) C-12



Vern Buchanan (R) C-13



Connie Mack (R) C-14



Bill Posey (R) C-15



Tom Rooney (R) C-16



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R) C-18



Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R) C-21



Tom Feeney (R) C-24



Mario Diaz-Balart (R) C-25

FLORIDA PROSPERITY PROJECT

“Our Employees Vote ... Florida Wins”

The Florida Prosperity Project believes in the power of voting. When Florida voters are informed and play an active role in the elections process, our families, our communities and our state benefit.

The Florida Prosperity Project is a non-partisan organization, formed to help the state's employers educate their workers about state and federal elected leaders and political issues that impact job security, wages and benefits — and ultimately your company's bottom line.

Getting Started

The Florida Prosperity Project provides a convenient and user-friendly web-based political toolkit that you have the ability to customize to suit your company's culture and needs. The materials provided by the Florida Prosperity Project have been scrutinized by a team of legal experts to ensure all information available to you and your employees is provided in a non-partisan and ethical manner. Some of the tools available to you include:

- Voter registration, early voting and absentee ballot information
- Internet or intranet sites with elected officials' voting records
- Samples of employee letters and emails that can be easily sent to elected officials
- Issue materials on business topics including healthcare and liability reform



Sign Up for Florida's Prosperity Project

www.flaprospertyproject.com
(850) 224-7173

AIF Public Opinion Research

By Michelle Mattox



For more information and to view more polling data visit aif.com

As we witness a meltdown on Wall Street — long-standing companies going under, jobs being lost, and homes being foreclosed on in record amounts — it is easy to understand why the economy is the primary concern on the voters' minds. This also translates to Florida, where voters feel the crunch in paying their tax and insurance bills, mortgages, groceries and fuel.

In a poll recently conducted by McLaughlin & Associates on behalf of Associated Industries of Florida (AIF), the most important issue to those surveyed were issues related to the economy (48%). Of that 48%, the greatest concerns were creating jobs and improving the economy (18%) and holding the line on taxes (14%). Further, Floridians still remain concerned about social issues (36%), but even when considering social issues, their greatest concern is related to the economy. Twelve percent (12%) felt that improving education and workforce skills was the most important social issue.

When the voters were asked what they believe would do the most to help the economy and cre-

ate jobs, their top response was reducing wasteful government spending (27%), which seems to correlate with the nation's overall dislike and distrust of government. Other main concerns were related to taxes, such as providing tax relief for middle-class families and small businesses (18%) and lowering property taxes on homeowners and business (14%). Additional concerns were lowering their insurance rates (10%) and increasing funding for job training and workforce skills (10%).

It seems by this poll and by the trends nationally, the economy may very well be the deciding factor in the nation's politics as well as the state's politics. The voters want the candidates to address their economic issues and provide solutions to strengthen the economy. They want and need jobs to be created, the training for those jobs, their taxes lowered, and a sense of confidence in government by controlling its spending. ■

Michelle Mattox is Chief Political Officer for Associated Industries of Florida (e-mail: mmattox@aif.com)

AIF Poll • August 2008

Most Important Issue	
ECONOMIC	48%
Create Jobs/ Economy	18%
Wasteful Government Spending	3%
Hold Line on Taxes	14%
Provide Affordable Housing	5%
Property Taxes	4%
Rising Gas Prices	4%
SOCIAL	36%
Health Care	11%
Improve Education/Workforce Skills	12%
Illegal Immigration	8%
Environmental/Global Climate	5%
GROWTH & OVERPOPULATION	6%
FIGHT TERRORISM	2%
CRIME & DRUGS	5%
REFORMING LEGAL/TORT REFORM	1%
DK/REFUSED	3%

AIF Poll • August 2008

Which of the following do you believe would do the most to help the economy and create jobs?	
Reduce wasteful government spending	27%
Providing tax relief for middle-class and small business	18%
Lowering property taxes on homeowners and business	14%
Lowering insurance rates	10%
Providing tax credits and incentives for businesses to stay in Florida	9%
Increasing education spending	6%
Increasing funding for job training and workforce skills	10%
Raising taxes to provide more revenue to the state	1%
DK/Refused	5%

Methodology: The survey of 600 likely voters in Florida was conducted by McLaughlin & Associates. All interviews were conducted via telephone by professional interviewers. Interview selection was random within predetermined election units. These units were structured to correlate with actual voter turnout. The survey of 600 likely voters has an accuracy of +/- 4.0% at the 95% confidence interval

Bad News for Card-Check Bill

By Eric Brewer

Businesses in Florida and throughout the nation are on the precipice. The deceptively-named “Employee Free Choice Act” — aka “Card Check” — threatens to change the landscape and upend decades of settled labor law to give organized labor an unfair advantage in union organizing to the detriment of both employees and employers. A better name for the bill is the “Employee Forced Choice Act.”

Currently, for a union to organize a business, they must collect authorization cards from 30% of a bargaining unit and then petition the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold a secret ballot election to determine whether to certify the union. The “Employee Free Choice Act” would remove the employees’ right to a private vote and allow the union to certify once they were able to get 50% plus one of the authorization cards signed. This would not only eliminate the time-honored right to a private vote, for which so many in this country have fought, but also subject employees to outright intimidation from union organizers who could approach an employee at any time and “suggest” the employee sign the card. This is not free choice for employees; it’s forced choice.

If that wasn’t bad enough, the bill would also amend collective bargaining law so that if a union successfully intimidated its way into a business, a government arbitrator would set all the terms and conditions unless the union and employer could meet unrealistic timelines. Mandatory arbitration would remove any incentive for the union to adopt realistic bargaining positions as they could posture for the government arbitrator. In addition, employees would be denied the right to vote on ratification of the contract. Finally, the bill would increase



penalties for employers, but not unions, for violating organizing laws.

As bad as this Card Check bill is, it stands a very good chance of becoming a reality in 2009. Unions have made this a litmus-test for candidate support and have pledged over \$300 million to enact Card Check into law. Last year the bill sailed through the U.S. House but it failed in the U.S. Senate to get enough votes to overcome a filibuster. The current election may result in enough Card Check votes in Congress for the next session. As business owners, it is our responsibility to contact our Federal delegation, particularly Senators Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez, and let them know the drastic consequences Card Check would have on your business. ■

Eric Brewer is Director of Public Affairs, Southeast Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
(e-mail: eric.brewer@wal-mart.com)

A better name for the bill is the “Employee Forced Choice Act.”

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Contact U.S. Senator Mel Martinez and Bill Nelson and ask them to vote **NO on this bad legislation.**

Sen. Mel Martinez (R)
Phone: (202) 224-3041
Website: <http://martinez.senate.gov>

Sen. Bill Nelson (D)
Phone: (202) 224-5274
Website: www.billnelson.senate.gov

Working to Protect Tax Dollars

By Bill McCollum



As your Attorney General, I take my responsibility of protecting the safety and security of Florida and its citizens seriously. That responsibility includes ensuring to the best of our ability that Florida's businesses can thrive in safe neighborhoods and with level playing fields.

Our businesses must also be able to capitalize on the emerging world of e-commerce without the threat of cyber scammers and other unscrupulous individuals looking to make a buck at someone else's expense.

With that in mind, I'd like to introduce you to three areas that have become priorities for my administration.

Tackling Cyberfraud

The Attorney General's Office began a major review last fall of the many complaints we were receiving about internet scams, a large number of which involved third-party charges on cell phone bills. The resulting CyberFraud Section within our office is focusing on the new and rapidly growing industry of online cell phone content marketing — the companies that sell monthly subscriptions for ringtones, wallpaper, music, games and other third-party content for use on cell phones. Often, we have found the companies that market these services deceptively state that the services are free of charge. It may take time for consumers to spot unauthorized charges and be very difficult for them to stop those charges. In the meantime, those consumers are paying millions of dollars each year for third-party content for which they did not seek to be charged. Florida is the first state to focus resources on eliminating this particular type of consumer fraud.

As Attorney General, I have begun working with many online marketers to come up with new standards and guidelines that will protect consumers as technology evolves and the marketplace changes. One important settlement, reached in February, is with AT&T Mobility, the cell phone subsidiary of telecommunications giant AT&T. The company has agreed to be the first in the nation to implement parental notification and cancellation systems. Through its compliance, AT&T will help change the third-party content industry in positive ways, including bringing transparency to the purchase process.

Fighting Mortgage Fraud

As Florida's business community deals with the many economic challenges facing our state, our homeowners are facing financial crises in record numbers. Florida ranked highest in the country for mortgage fraud last year, and as the number of foreclosures rises nationwide, unscrupulous people are taking advantage of Floridians desperate to keep their homes. To fight this growing trend, my office has assembled a Mortgage Fraud Task Force designed to investigate mortgage activities that may be in violation of Florida's Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act and to provide relief to citizens throughout the state who are being victimized by dishonest individuals and businesses.

Composed of 26 investigators and attorneys, my Mortgage Fraud Task Force investigates mortgage fraud complaints from consumers, and it has received more than 2,000 complaints since its inception. The Task Force currently has five cases filed and nearly 20 civil investigations open into companies and individuals potentially engaged in illegal mortgage practices, including a lawsuit against Countrywide Financial for potential misconduct in its loan-signing practices.

My Task Force also developed legislation this session to ensure that homeowners are properly informed about their rights before signing a contract with a foreclosure rescue entity. The Foreclosure Rescue Fraud Prevention Act, which became law on May 28, 2008, mandates that foreclosure rescue consultants obtain a service agreement signed by the consumer. The agreement must notify the homeowner of his or her right to cancel the service and provide instructions for doing so.

The rising rates of foreclosures impact property values, local revenues, and quality of life. My office is committed to ensuring that no homeowner looking for assistance in avoiding foreclosure be further burdened by the scam artists seeking to profit from his or her misfortune.

Fighting Gangs

I developed my Statewide Gang Reduction Strategy to address the significant threat of criminal gangs and gang violence in Florida, which not only affects the safety of our families but the economy of our state. The strategy focuses on the three key goals of stopping the growth of gangs in Florida, reducing the number of gangs and gang members, and rendering the remaining gangs ineffective. Developed by my Coordinating Council of state agency leaders including the heads of the state Departments of Juvenile Justice, Education, Corrections, Children and Families, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the state Office of Drug Control, the Florida Sheriffs Association, prosecuting attorneys, the Florida Highway Patrol and the Florida Police Chiefs Association, the anti-gang strategy is built on the pillars of prevention and intervention, law enforcement, and rehabilitation and re-entry.

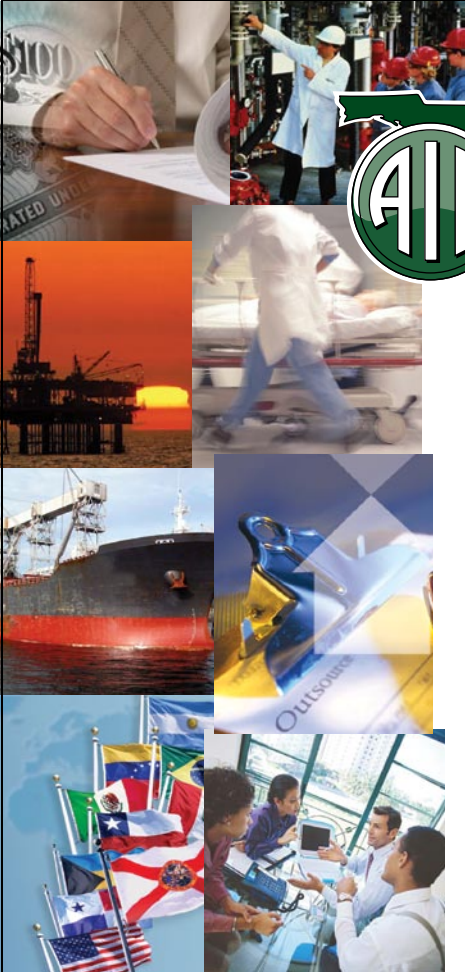
The strategy will be implemented through regional task forces throughout the state, with the first task force launched in September at St. Petersburg College. The key to the success of this strategy will be coordination and cooperation among community leaders including those in government, law enforcement, elected offices and business. These regional task forces provide a unique opportunity for businesses to engage in proactive efforts to combat gang-related theft and loss, defaced and destroyed property, and violence that threatens employees or customers.

An important objective of the anti-gang strategy is providing effective intervention programs for young people who are the most likely targets of gang recruitment. My office has initiated partnerships with community groups including the Florida Urban Leagues and the Boys and Girls Clubs to help us achieve this goal.

The safety and security of our state is everyone's business and affects our very ability to do business. Together, we will work to foster an environment in Florida that allows our economy and our communities to flourish. ■

Bill McCollum is Attorney General for the State of Florida (Home Page: <http://myfloridalegal.com>)

The safety and security of our state is everyone's business...



ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA . . .

More than just the business community's most powerful lobbying force in Florida. As the voice of business, we have launched a series of high-impact councils, focusing on the most critical current and emerging policy issues facing our state.

Financial Securities Council – Insurance and financial industries working together to secure a stable fiscal climate for Florida

Florida Council on Education & Workforce Development – Promoting innovative changes to Florida's education system

Florida Energy Council – Developing resources to meet Floridas future energy needs through exploration and drilling for fossil fuels, endorsing nuclear power, energy conservation and supporting all renewable technologies

Florida Hospital Council – Working to ensure continued quality care for the patients served by Florida's hospitals

Florida Maritime Council – Fostering florida's maritime industry to ensure its continued economic proweess in a global marketplace

Governmental Outsourcing Council – Helping to balance the needs of government and the private sector and the growing outsourcing industry

International Affairs Council – Promoting multilateral trade and connecting Florida businesses with global markets

Information Technology Council – Conveying the value of IT products and services in efforts to keep Florida moving towards the cutting edge of technology

Visit aif.com to learn more about an AIF Council

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

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