

January 24, 2002

## PORK OF A DIFFERENT SORT

By SUSAN CHRISTIAN

**T**he Preamble of the Constitution of the State of Florida begins as follows:

*We, the people of the State of Florida, being grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty, in order to secure its benefits, perfect our government, insure domestic tranquility, maintain public order, and guarantee equal civil and political rights to all, do ordain and establish this constitution.*

As voters in Florida in the next general election, by action of the Florida Supreme Court on January 17, 2002, you may have the opportunity to make pregnant pigs a part of the state constitution, by amendment.

Yes, pregnant pigs. Blossoming sows are nowhere mentioned in our constitution as it currently reads. However, the responsibilities of the three branches of government are clearly spelled out. The Supreme Court conducted its business in fitting order in approving the wording of the item to be included in the ballot. It meets the tests applied as stated in the Constitution. However, three justices “. . . made it clear they don't think the fate of pigs is the stuff the constitution should be made of.”<sup>1</sup> And we agree.

It is the responsibility of the legislature to consider the creation of statutes that provide the regulation of activities over which it has powers. We hope that the current legislature will include in its considerations its rightful role in the oversight of pregnant pigs, with an eye to preventing future assaults on our state's constitution.

It is the responsibility of Florida's citizens to know what the constitution is supposed to do and *not* do in preserving our rights. Apparently the citizens' initiative process has gotten out of hand.

Have *you* read your constitution recently? To get to the Florida Constitution online, use this web address: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm>, and click on "Constitution" at the top of the page.

1. *Tallahassee Democrat*, January 18, 2001, p. 1-A.

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*Susan Christian is membership director of The James Madison Institute in Tallahassee, Florida.*

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