

The
Madison Policy Digest

Friday · June 15th · 2007

Presented by: **The James Madison Institute**

“CELEBRATING 20 YEARS AS FLORIDA’S PREMIER FREE-MARKET THINK TANK”

JMI News Briefs

* On Wednesday, *Governing Magazine*'s Alan Greenblatt interviewed President Bob McClure for a future article.

* Yesterday, the Florida Legislature, after passing 3 bills, adjourned at 6:28 p.m., Sine Die, bringing the 2007B Special Session to a close.

* In an effort review the results of the Legislature's special session on property taxes and to outline what still needs to be done, The James Madison Institute is hosting a forum where an outstanding panel of experts will address current tax and budget issues. The event will be held on Thursday June 28, in Tampa. More information is available at www.jamesmadison.org.

Featured Topics

**CLOSING THE DEAL
DILEMMA OF THE TUITION VETO
PROTECTING PAYCHECKS
THE SANDY SPRINGS MODEL**

Articles

Legislature passes property tax-cutting package

Associated Press

By Bill Kaczor

June 14, 2007

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Primary homeowners would have the choice of getting a new tax break or keeping the one they have as part of a two-pronged plan the Legislature passed Thursday to cut soaring property taxes by billions of dollars.

Lawmakers, meeting in special session, added the taxpayer choice provision to a proposed state constitutional amendment that will go on the Jan. 29 presidential primary ballot for voter approval after narrowly passing in both houses.

The Republican-sponsored amendment, aimed at slashing homeowner taxes and eliminating inequities, passed in the Senate with only one vote to spare, while the House passed it by just two votes more than the minimum of three-fifths in each chamber.

It has drawn opposition from Democrats, local governments, teachers, police, firefighters and

others, but the other part of the plan, a bill to roll back and cap taxes, passed with nearly unanimous bipartisan support.

For complete article click here:

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070614/APN/706141580>

FSU faces funding shortfall

Tallahassee Democrat

By Angeline Taylor

June 15, 2007

Florida State University faces a shortfall of \$6 million to \$10 million because of the governor's veto of a 5-percent tuition increase, President T.K. Wetherell said Thursday.

He made the estimate during a special teleconference of the board of trustees. FSU had factored in the increase when planning its 2007-08 budget that includes funding for 6,000 incoming freshmen.

We're in a difficult situation (at) a unique time right now," Wetherell told trustees. "We don't know if anybody's going to challenge the governor's vetoes or not."

Wetherell held the teleconference shortly after the state's board of governors met to discuss Gov. Charlie Crist's veto, among other items. The board of governors didn't decide a plan of action Thursday. Instead, it decided to explore its options and reconvene "in several weeks."

For complete article click here:

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070615/NEWS01/706150334/1010>

Court Rules Against Unions on Fee Issue

Associated Press

By Mark Sherman

June, 15 2007

States may force public sector labor unions to get consent from workers before using their fees for political activities, the Supreme Court said Thursday.

The court unanimously upheld a Washington state law that applied to public employees who choose not to join the union that represents them in contract talks with state and local governments. The workers are compelled to pay the equivalent of union dues, a portion of which the union uses for political activities.

Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the court, said the law does not violate the union's First Amendment rights.

But the state's Democratic governor and Democratic-controlled legislature recently changed the law to eliminate the provision that was upheld Thursday, blunting the impact of the court ruling.

The narrow issue before the justices was whether, as the law formerly prescribed, employees must opt in, or affirmatively consent, to having some of their money used in election campaigns.

For complete article click here:

<http://www.ocala.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070614/APW/706141497>

Opinion

Georgia City Shows Florida How To Cut Costs

Tampa Tribune

By Geoffrey F. Segal

June 12, 2007

With the Florida Legislature now seemingly intent on mandating lower property taxes, some local officials are warning of libraries shutting down, your 911 call going unanswered, or your local jail turning inmates loose.

Yet if those same officials would only turn their gaze a bit farther north, they could observe a Georgia city that demonstrates how Florida's local governments not only could survive but could thrive, with big savings for taxpayers.

Indeed, the experiment in Sandy Springs, Ga., has proved that local governments don't need hundreds of public employees to function. Sandy Springs, a fast-growing town of more than 80,000 residents, has only four public employees who are not involved with public safety. Except for police and fire, virtually every government function has been contracted out.

In its two years under private management, Sandy Springs hasn't needed a tax hike or a fee increase, the government has become more responsive, the service quality has improved, and so has customer satisfaction. The residents love it.

For complete article click here:

<http://www.tbo.com/news/opinion/commentary/MGBGHSDLT2F.html>

Quote of the Week

“Life, liberty, and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty, and property existed beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place.”

– *Frederic Bastiat*

Cartoon of the Week



Andy Marlette, *Independent Florida Alligator*

Speakers' Bureau

Need a speaker for your next event? JMI's team and network of scholars are available to headline or participate in your organization's next gathering. JMI staff will help you match the topic with the appropriate speaker. To learn more contact Thomas at 850-386-3131 or Thomas@JamesMadison.org

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www.JamesMadison.org

The Madison Policy Digest is a free, weekly e-newsletter that summarizes Florida's top public policy headlines from around the state, complete with topical research and comment by The James Madison Institute. Suggestions and feedback are welcome at Thomas@JamesMadison.org.