

The
Madison Policy Digest

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Presented by: **The James Madison Institute**

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

Featured Topics

**RE-REBUDGETING
NEW SCHOOL RATINGS
REVISITING THE INSURANCE PLAN
SLIPPING INTO A RE...WHAT?**

Speaker preps Florida House for more budget cuts

Orlando Sentinel
By John Kennedy
January 11, 2008

TALLAHASSEE - House Speaker Marco Rubio set the table Thursday for a second round of state budget cuts in early March.

Rubio, R-West Miami, scheduled an extra round of House Council meetings Feb. 12-14. Each of the panels will prepare budget reductions that the speaker expects lawmakers to approve soon after they convene March 4 for the 2008 regular session.

"The budget situation is deteriorating," said Rubio in a blunt memo to his members.

For complete article click here: http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/politics/orl-loccuts11011108jan11_0.6345577.story

Florida schools rated 14th best in US

Florida Today
By Kate Brennan
January 10, 2008

Florida's public schools ranked 14th nationally with a C-plus on a report card issued Wednesday by Education Week magazine, beating the national average of C.

But the state placed in the bottom tier for school finance, including per student spending, and its ability to prepare students for success in school and beyond.

Florida Education Commissioner Eric Smith called the state's ranking "good news," but said he wasn't pleased with its grade.

For complete article click here:
<http://www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080110/NEWS01/801100345/1006>

Insurance executives to testify on pricing practices

South Florida Business Journal
January 10, 2008

In the wake of a report showing property insurance rates are not declining the way politicians promised, the Florida Senate is to pull industry executives in to testify under oath about their pricing practices and increased profits associated with escalating rates.

In January 2007, the Legislature made lower-priced reinsurance available to homeowners' insurers and predicted that premiums would decline by an average 28 percent.

"We worked with the insurance industry and regulators who specifically told us that if we took certain actions to reduce the cost of reinsurance, rates would go down substantially," Senate Democratic Leader Steve Geller said in a news release. "We took those actions. Some insurance companies kept their promise, but many did not. We need to find out why."

For complete article click here:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/stories/2008/01/07/daily46.html>

Opinion

Why I Am Not Using the R-word This Time

Cato Institute

By Alan Reynolds

January 2, 2008

On January 10 2001, the Financial Times wrote that I was "the first prominent economist to use the R- word". The White House gathered more than a dozen economists to discuss the economy that April and I was still the only one saying the recession had begun.

Unlike in 2001, many economists now seem unusually eager to declare the US precariously near recession. Even the former Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan (one of the last to notice recession in 2001), recently said there was a 50 per cent chance of a downturn soon.

Why have I not joined this chorus? The answer has little to do with a hypothetical housing-led or consumer-led recession, neither of which finds much support in historical experience. My doubts about an imminent recession largely stem from some unresolved academic disputes about the relative importance of oil prices and interest rates. Those seemingly arcane controversies seem worth revisiting, if only because they involved Ben Bernanke, the current Fed chairman.

For original article click here: http://cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=8872

Quote of the Week

“If we look to the history of other nations, ancient or modern, we find no example of a growth so rapid, so gigantic, of a people so prosperous and happy.”

—James Monroe

Cartoon of the Week



Chan Lowe, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*

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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