

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Next to the re-election of Gov. Bush, the biggest story to come out of the elections on Nov. 5 was the news about the constitutional amendments. How will the amendment calling for maximum class sizes in our public schools be implemented? What will be the effects on Florida's state universities of the amendment calling for the resurrection of something akin to the Florida Board of Regents, and how and when will the implementation occur? And what about cages for pregnant pigs?

There isn't much anyone can say now about the amendments, inasmuch as it is the legislature in its 2003 session that must enact implementing legislation. There will, no doubt, be calls for new taxes to accommodate the reduced class sizes but legislative leaders have indicated no interest in raising taxes. There is a little breathing time that may enable the governor and legislative

leaders to craft implementation plans, and there are promises of better economic times ahead for Florida. The class-size amendment also imposes on our education leaders the need to find teachers—qualified ones—to man the additional classrooms. That may be as big a problem as finding the money.

Other interesting stories emerged from the elections, too. And at least one of those has not as yet been given much attention by the media, but you can bet that it is a major concern to the Florida Education Association (FEA).

The Democrats' loss in the Nov. 5 elections has been called a resounding defeat. But a stronger word is needed to describe the defeat suffered by the FEA. "Rout" would be more like it.

The Florida Education Association really created Bill McBride. They anointed him more than a year ago, believing McBride to

be the Democrat with the best chance of beating Gov. Bush and neutralizing his education reform program. FEA turned its top people over to McBride to run his campaign.

But the FEA's biggest loss may well be the disenchantment of its members with the high-handed methods of its leaders who have very skillfully—until now—obscured the line between Florida's teachers and the

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Mallory Horne and Stan Marshall

Liberty Award Presented to Horne

*Mallory Horne was presented with the Institute's symbol of liberty award by Founding Chairman Stan Marshall on Oct. 29, on the occasion of Horne's retirement as chairman of The James Madison Institute Board of Directors. Given his role in the evolution of government in this state, Horne was honored for his nine years of service to JMI and to Florida at large.**

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Freedom, Not Voting, Makes America Great

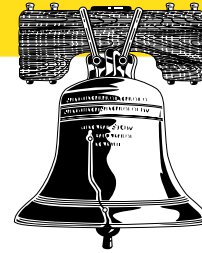
By Alex Epstein

Every election day politicians, intellectuals, and activists propagate a seemingly patriotic but utterly un-American idea: the notion that our most important right—and the source of America’s greatness—is the right to vote. According to former President Clinton, the right to vote is “the most fundamental right of citizenship”; it is “the heart and soul of our democracy,” says Sen. John McCain.

Such statements are regarded as uncontroversial—but consider their implications. If voting is truly our most fundamental right, then all other rights—including free speech, property, even life—are contingent on and revocable by the whims of the voting public (or their elected officials).

America, in this view, is a society based not on individual rights, but on unlimited majority rule—like Ancient Athens, where the populace, exercising “the most funda-

mental right of citizenship,” elected to kill Socrates for voicing unpopular ideas—or modern-day Zimbabwe, where the democratically elected Robert Mugabe has seized the property of the nation’s white farmers and



...respect for individual liberty is the essence of America—and the root of its greatness.

brought the nation to the verge of starvation—or Germany in 1932, when the people democratically elected the Nazi Party, including future Chancellor Adolph Hitler.

Would anyone dare claim that America is thus fundamentally similar to these regimes, and that it is perfectly acceptable to kill controversial philosophers or to exterminate six million Jews, so long as it is done by popular vote?

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Florida Politics 2002: What a Ride!

Susan A. MacManus gave JMI members and guests her insights into election 2002 on Oct. 29, 2002, at a Tallahassee luncheon. MacManus is professor of public administration and political science in the Department of Government and International Affairs at the University of South Florida and chair of the Florida Elections Commission. She pointed out that candidates who choose one issue to the exclusion of others rarely win and that two-thirds of Florida voters are either retirees or parents who do not have children in public schools.*

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teachers unions. The FEA leaders all along have proclaimed that they represent all 178,000 Florida teachers or, at the very least, the great majority. But in reality, they can claim membership of fewer than half of our public school teachers. In some of the large urban school districts, where the unions seem to pretty much have their way with school boards and where union leaders try desperately to maintain secrecy about membership, the figures are surprising. For example, fewer than 40 percent of Miami/Dade’s teachers belong to United Teachers of Dade. Membership figures are public information, provided by the school district office in each county.

The exploitation and abuse of teachers by the organization that pretends to represent their interests is the shocking, and largely untold, story of education in Florida. The time may now have come for the story to be told and the people of Florida are more likely to be interested in the full account of

the unions’ nearly complete conversion to a political machine and the self-serving activities of its leaders. Revealing the truth about the FEA and its disdain for the teachers it claims to represent may, in the end, be one of the biggest stories to come out of the recent elections.

The McBride defeat is nothing less than a crushing blow to the FEA, whose leaders had staked their future on his election. The FEA has suffered a serious drop in membership in many school districts and its leaders’ loss of face on Nov. 5 may very likely portend further defections. If so, the result will surely be a more prominent place for Florida citizens, including our teachers, in setting education policy.

J. Stanley Marshall
Founding Chairman

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Contrary to popular rhetoric, America was founded, not as a “democracy” but as a constitutional republic—a political structure under which the government is bound by a written constitution to the task of protecting individual rights. Democracy does not mean a system that holds public elections for government officials; it means a system in which a majority vote rules everything and everyone, and in which the individual thus has no rights.

In a democracy, observed James Madison in *The Federalist Papers*, “there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention (and) have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property.”

The right to vote derives from the recognition of man as an autonomous, rational being, who is responsible for his own life and who should therefore freely choose the people he authorizes to represent him in the government of his country. That autonomy is contradicted if a majority of voters is



Speakers Bureau in Action

Policy Analyst Gary Landry explains the proposed constitutional amendments and recommendations for voting on them to the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce at its monthly meeting Nov. 1. For the past several months, the Institute presented a series of lectures to civic and community groups across Florida to discuss the 2002 Florida constitutional amendments.*

allowed to do whatever it wishes to the individual citizen.

The right to vote is not a sanction for a gang to deprive other individuals of their freedom. Rather, because a free society requires a certain type of government, it is a means of installing the officials who will safeguard the individual rights of each citizen.

What makes America unique is not that it has elections—even dictatorships hold elections—but that its elections take place in a country limited by the absolute principle of individual freedom. From our Declaration of Independence, which upholds the “unalienable rights” of every individual, among which are “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” to our Constitution, whose Bill of Rights protects freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the freedom of private property, respect for individual liberty is the essence of America—and the root of its greatness.

Unfortunately, with each passing election day, too many Americans view elections less as a means to protect freedom and more as a means to win some government favor or handout at the expense of the liberty and property of other Americans. Our politicians promise not to protect the basic rights spelled out in the Declaration and the Constitution but to violate the rights of some people in order to benefit others.

Today’s politicians want subsidies for farmers—by forcing nonfarmers to pay for them; prescription drugs for the elderly—by forcing the nonelderly to pay for them; housing for the homeless—by forcing the nonhomeless to pay for it. The more “democratic” our government becomes, the more we cannibalize our liberty, ultimately to the detriment of all.

This election day, therefore, we should reject those who wish to reduce our republic to mob rule. Instead, we should vote for those, to whatever extent they can be found, who are defenders of the essence of America: individual freedom.*

Alex Epstein is a writer for the Ayn Rand Institute (www.aynrand.org/medialink) in Irvine, Calif. Reprinted by permission.

Energy Authority to Speak in Pensacola

On December 10, 2002, at 7 p.m., Matthew R. Simmons will address JMI members and guests on “The Future of Energy: Challenges and Key Issues” at the New World Landing in Pensacola, Fla. Simmons is chairman and chief executive officer of Simmons & Company International, a specialized energy investment banking firm with offices in Houston, Texas, and Aberdeen, Scotland. Call the JMI office for reservations.*

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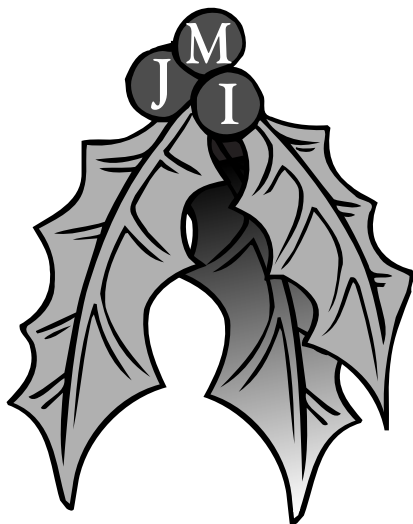
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