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Probing the Murky Depths of U.S. Sugar Deal & FEA Activism

TALLAHASSEE –Two hotly contested issues take center stage in the [Summer 2010](#) edition of *The Journal of The James Madison Institute*:

Rewarding Florida's Best Teachers

- After a decade of successfully promoting excellence in student performance, it is time for Florida to reward excellence in teaching--with appropriate safeguards in place, good teachers have little to fear and much to gain from a merit-based system.
- The **FEA's reflexive resistance to merit pay** mirrors its opposition to other educational reforms that are now greatly benefiting many low-income and minority students.
- To protect their turf, some unscrupulous teachers have enlisted students to **parrot the FEA's party line**—for example, the [SB6 Student Assignment](#) obtained by JMI through public records request.
- Rather than embracing a merit-based system promoting excellence, the **FEA is stuck in the last century's paradigm** seeking to retain a pay-and-tenure system akin to a pass/fail grading system.

Sweet Deal . . . or Sour?

- In the current fiscal environment, the U.S. Sugar deal would necessarily supplant existing projects started under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).
- **PRO:** The U.S. Sugar deal would provide the State of Florida with 180,000 acres south of Lake Okeechobee. Large tracts of land for water storage and treatment are needed to permanently preserve and restore the Everglades, and the lack of such has limited all previous efforts resulting in a patchwork of smaller, less effective projects.
- **CON:** The U.S. Sugar deal has no completed plan or funding for restoration, excludes potentially useful land owned by other companies, overcharges taxpayers based on land values from the height of the real estate boom, compromises the South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) ability to fulfill its core mission of water supply and flood control, and eliminates the availability of SFWMD funds for other worthwhile environmental and water projects for decades.

JMI's Summer 2010 Journal is available on-line at www.jamesmadison.org.

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