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CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION

Transcript of proceedings had at the public hearings conducted by the Constitution Revision Commission held at Florida SouthWestern University, Suncoast Credit Union Arena, 13351 FSW Parkway, Fort Myers, Florida, on May 10th, 2017, commencing at 5:00 P.M.

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

Carlos Beruff, Chairman  
Commissioner Lisa Carlton  
Commissioner Erika Donalds

ALSO PRESENT:

Dr. Jeffrey Allbritten, President FSW

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1           PRESIDENT ALLBRITTEN: Good afternoon.  
2       Would everyone take your seats. Good afternoon and  
3       welcome, glad you're all here, glad the public is here  
4       with us.

5           Welcome to Florida SouthWestern State  
6       College in sunny Southwest Florida. You are in our  
7       brand-new Suncoast Credit Union Arena, which we just  
8       opened about four months ago, kind of proud of it.  
9       Glad you're here with us. Exciting what's going on  
10      every -- once every 20 years. We can play a small  
11      part in this. We're glad to have you here and host  
12      you.

13           Not to take your time, but I wouldn't be the  
14      president if I didn't brag one quick moment. You're  
15      sitting in the home of the Florida State champions in  
16      softball one week ago, so happy about that.

17           Thanks again, anything we can do to help you  
18      while you're here, our staff would be happy to do  
19      that.

20           THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you so much. It's a  
21      wonderful facility. We're happy to be here as we  
22      continue going around Florida, listening and getting  
23      ideas to change the projection of Florida for the next  
24      20 years.

25           This is a Constitution Revision Commission,

1 commonly known as the CRC. My name is Carlos Beruff,  
2 and I'm the acting chairman. I was appointed by  
3 Governor Rick Scott.

4 We like coming to you. That's what this is  
5 all about. Our goal is to be able to reach all  
6 Floridians within a two-hour drive of their home, and  
7 we're going to make that happen over the next 12  
8 months.

9 I would like to start by Dr. Gary Lester,  
10 who will lead us in the invocation if we could all  
11 stand.

12 (Whereupon, the invocation was had.)

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Joyner will lead  
14 us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

15 (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was  
16 had.)

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Please be seated.

18 I'm going to introduce the commissioners  
19 joining me here. To my right, Commissioner Donalds,  
20 Sprowls, Commissioner Jordan, Commissioner Lester,  
21 Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Nocco, and  
22 Commissioner Gaetz.

23 To my left, starting with Commissioner  
24 Carlton, Commissioner Nuñez, Commissioner Washington,  
25 Commissioner Gainey, Commissioner Joyner, and that's

1 it. Pepe there? No? Okay.

2 Behind me, we're going to start with  
3 Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Thurlow-Lippisch.

4 To my left on the upper level, Commissioner  
5 Timmann, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Cerio,  
6 Commissioner Stemberger, Commissioner Solari,  
7 Commissioner Coxe.

8 To my right, behind me, Commissioner  
9 Stewart, Commissioner Heuchan, Commissioner Keiser,  
10 Commissioner Karlinsky, Commissioner Newsome,  
11 Commissioner Kruppenbacher, and Commissioner Plymale.

12 A few of us missing but usually one of a  
13 crowd of about 30, so there's a bunch. I'm going to  
14 turn the gavel over to Commissioner Donalds, since  
15 this is home-court advance for her. Thank you very  
16 much.

17 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Good evening, my  
18 fellow Southwest Floridians. Thanks for being here  
19 today.

20 I'm going to call names, forgive me if I  
21 don't pronounce them well. But when your name is  
22 called, if you could come up on either podium; and  
23 when you are up to speak, please restate your name for  
24 the court reporter and for the commissioners.

25 We're going to start with Gery Trelchler,

1 Mayor Randy Henderson, Liza McClenaghan, and Paul  
2 Waldmiller.

3 MR. TRELCHLER: Commissioners, Mr. Chairman.

4 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Your name, please,  
5 your name.

6 MR. TRELCHLER: Gery Trelchler.

7 In the spirit of our founding fathers, and  
8 in this case, Benjamin Franklin, I would like to  
9 quote, "Those who beat their swords into plowshares  
10 usually end up plowing for those who kept their  
11 swords."

12 1.7 million Florida concealed-carry permit  
13 holders should be able to openly carry and not fear of  
14 being outed. They should be able to carry on college  
15 campuses, airport lobbies, theaters -- remember the  
16 Batman shooting -- churches -- don't forget the  
17 Carolinas -- and all other reasonable places.

18 Unarmed requirements present soft targets  
19 for attackers. I think anyone -- law enforcement,  
20 legislators, etc., who vote to support gun-free zones  
21 should have a sign in front of their house that says  
22 "gun-free zone."

23 Except for the obvious group -- felons and  
24 those judged unstable -- all Floridians should be able  
25 to purchase all guns without waiting periods or gun

1 control measures. Why do we want to make criminals  
2 out of good citizens and empower the criminal class  
3 only to appease the uninformed? Let the voters have  
4 their say. I believe a good with a gun is the best  
5 candidate for a bad man with a gun. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, sir.  
7 Mayor?

8 MAYOR HENDERSON: Good evening. Chairman  
9 Beruff and FCRC committee members, welcome to Fort  
10 Myers, and thank you for establishing this meeting  
11 here in Fort Myers. Dr. Allbritten, thank you for  
12 your gracious host.

13 I would like to invite my fellow municipal  
14 officials who are here maybe to stand impunity with  
15 me.

16 In 1968, home rule powers were established  
17 in Florida, and we hold them as treasured to our work  
18 here in the local level. Establishment of home rule  
19 power includes municipalities and agencies who serve  
20 to drive economic development in Florida cities and --  
21 certainly here in Fort Myers and all other five cities  
22 here in Fort Myers -- economic development remains the  
23 prime initiative of all cities with home rule powers.

24 We ask that you support them, let them be,  
25 or we would welcome you to strengthen them even, if

1 you could, for our municipalities across Florida.

2 Other examples of home rule opportunities  
3 where we may be the first line of defense includes  
4 operating against pill mills and sober homes, where we  
5 oftentimes are involved in addressing these  
6 challenging issues.

7 Please protect your cities. The cities are  
8 the local needs to the community. I want you to know  
9 they did a lot of business on behalf of the city and  
10 the public. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Liza  
12 McClenaghan, Paul Waldmiller, Clara Graham, Chad  
13 Hendrix.

14 MS. MCCLENAGHAN: Good evening. My name is  
15 Liza McClenaghan. I'm the volunteer state chair for  
16 Common Cause Florida's 50,000 members. Thank you for  
17 proving us this service, Commissioner, and for  
18 providing these forums for public engagement.

19 We remain concerned about the process and  
20 procedures of the commission and the public's  
21 participation. While the website has improved,  
22 there's still much information that is missing for our  
23 members and fellow Floridians to understand about our  
24 role.

25 There is no set timeline. For example, how

1 many of these public hearings will there be before  
2 committees start meeting? When is the cutoff date for  
3 making proposals? How much time will there be to  
4 comment on committee work before the full committee  
5 votes? What is the date of submission to the  
6 Secretary of State of your final product?

7 We look forward to the rules working through  
8 meeting next week in Tampa. Their press release and  
9 the judge have indicated that there's public comment.  
10 Are those comments limited to two minutes like these  
11 hearings? Are they only allowed before the committee  
12 discussion begins?

13 For many Floridians, this is a first  
14 interaction with such an important commission. Will  
15 there be a process chart to make sure you know how the  
16 Commission's work will be accomplished? How can the  
17 public participate in the committee meetings once they  
18 begin?

19 Common Cause and other organizations  
20 specifically urged in an April 10 letter the adoption  
21 of rules that will encourage independence, prohibit  
22 conflicts of interest, ensure nothing but  
23 transparency, and clearly specify a schedule for  
24 meaningful public participation throughout the  
25 process.



1           We encourage you to quickly address these  
2 issues and convey this information to the public.

3 Thank you.

4           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

5           MR. WALDMILLER: My name is Paul Waldmiller.  
6 I'm a former internationally credentialed alcoholism  
7 and substance abuse counselor, a forensic specialist,  
8 who has established alternatives to incarceration  
9 programs. I have trained many judges, attorneys, and  
10 law enforcement. In fact, for a number of years, I  
11 was also employed as a law enforcement officer. I  
12 have helped establish drug courts, DWI, and domestic  
13 violence courts. And recently, in Hamilton County,  
14 also a veteran's treatment court.

15           I am, however, a victim of a foreign  
16 immigration marriage scammer and corrupt courts that  
17 cahooted to steal thousands of federal tax dollars and  
18 actually had a police officer threaten to murder me  
19 for exposing them.

20           I am far from being alone as an American  
21 with these sort of crimes committed against us. Our  
22 federal, state, local governments are largely  
23 corrupted by the British Accredited Registry -- the  
24 BAR Association -- and all three branches of our  
25 government. They have no real system of oversight.

1           Whatever you decide, you must, you must  
2 include citizens review panels to have power over all  
3 government agencies including the courts, attorneys,  
4 police, DCF, domestic violence programs and others.

5           Our government must be held responsible by  
6 its citizens as our founding fathers established. I  
7 have yet to receive any help from my federal  
8 representatives, my state representatives, or law  
9 and/or police; and this happened to me in 2009.

10           I was chased out of United States for two  
11 years while my attorney said, "Paul, don't come back  
12 here unless I say it's safe."

13           I was an illegal alien in another country;  
14 think on that. Think on the victims of Americans here  
15 in this country. We need real justice.

16           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, sir.

17           Ma'am?

18           MS. GRAHAM: Good evening. My name is Clara  
19 Anne Graham, president of the League of Women Voters  
20 of Lee County, Florida.

21           The league believes in promoting a clean  
22 energy future for Florida. Florida has the potential  
23 to be among the top solar-producing states in the  
24 country, but we currently generate only 1 percent of  
25 our energy from solar power. With at least 40 percent

1 of our state's population at risk from sea level rise,  
2 Florida is on the front lines of climate change. We  
3 cannot ignore this any longer and must instead embrace  
4 policies that will enhance our use of clean solar  
5 energy.

6 Sparked in part by the passage of Amendment  
7 4 and the defeat of Amendment 1 in 2016, awareness and  
8 support for forward-thinking solar policies in Florida  
9 is growing. We need to move our state forward towards  
10 affordable, resilient energy systems that relies on  
11 clean energy sources like solar and avoids risky and  
12 expensive investments in outdated fossil fuel sources.  
13 Going solar creates more options as consumers decrease  
14 their dependency on fossil fuels and creates  
15 well-paying jobs for our economy.

16 Finally, the League of Women Voters is  
17 cosponsoring two state sea level rising summits both  
18 at Florida Gulf Coast University. One is the Florida  
19 Coastal and Ocean Coalition and the other addressing  
20 sea level rising resilience and adaptation in the  
21 Estero Bay region. Currently, I serve on an  
22 eight-member League of Women Voters of the United  
23 States climate change task force. I urge you to go to  
24 LWV.org to obtain a copy of our toolkit for climate  
25 action; help protect our planet.

1                   COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Chad  
2 Hendrix, Kathleen Mayo, Eugene Milhizer, and Jon  
3 Thompson.

4                   Please state your name.

5                   MR. HENDRIX: Hello. My name is Chad  
6 Hendrix, and we thank you all for being here. As a  
7 firearms trainer and the president of the Pink Pistols  
8 Association here in Florida, Fort Myers chapter,  
9 Florida's Constitution should be the pillar that  
10 protects all of our civil rights. And unfortunately,  
11 Mississippi and Georgia now have better gun rates than  
12 the State of Florida does.

13                   I was at Pulse nightclub one week before the  
14 terrorist attack that killed 49 of my fellow gay  
15 brothers and sisters. I feel that Florida has, in  
16 their constitution, a three-day waiting period. We  
17 have NICS checks systems that are instantaneous that  
18 protect -- it's already in place for, like,  
19 preventable -- you know, the other side likes to say  
20 that there's 2 million people that have been stopped  
21 from buying guns. Well, 90 percent of those, when you  
22 look at the numbers, are false-positive. If I have a  
23 very similar name to somebody that we do, in fact,  
24 want to keep from getting guns, but what you actually  
25 find is that 90 percent of those are false-positives;

1 and the gun sale is allowed to progress under the  
2 current system.

3 Also, I feel that our ballot initiative  
4 system is really a danger for us. We have Michael  
5 Bloomberg who wants to spend millions of dollars.  
6 He's done it in Colorado, and he's done it in the  
7 State of Washington. When I'm a firearms instructor  
8 and I hand a firearm to one of my students, that's now  
9 a crime because we didn't stop and get background  
10 checks. That's why 52 sheriffs in the State of  
11 Colorado sued and refused to enforce that law.

12 So if we're going to have valued initiatives  
13 in Florida, we need to do what Arizona is trying to  
14 do, and what they are doing is actually requiring all  
15 the counties in the state to actually --

16 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Your time is up.  
17 Thank you.

18 MR. HENDRIX: Thank you very much. I  
19 appreciate it.

20 MR. MILHIZER: Good afternoon. To the  
21 chairman of the commission, I'm Eugene Milhizer. I'm  
22 dean emeritus and a professor of law at Ave Maria  
23 School of Law.

24 I'm here to urge the commission to help  
25 clarify an amendment, Article I, Section 3, pertaining

1 to religion freedom; and Section 23, pertaining to the  
2 right of privacy.

3 First, with regard to the rights of privacy,  
4 our provision has been interpreted too narrow with  
5 respect to abortion, which makes it unnecessarily  
6 difficult to enact reasonable regulations to help  
7 protect women pursuing an abortion.

8 I would like to read you a very brief  
9 passage from a 2007 United States Supreme Court  
10 decision, *Gonzales v. Carhart*, where a majority of the  
11 court said, and I quote, "Whether to have an abortion  
12 requires difficult and painful moral decisions. Some  
13 women come to regret their choice to abort the infant  
14 life they once created and sustained. Severe  
15 depression and loss of esteem can follow. The states  
16 are free to enact laws to provide a reasonable  
17 framework for a woman to make a decision that has such  
18 a profound and lasting meaning. The state has an  
19 interest in ensuring a grave choice is well-informed."

20 In other words, the overly strict  
21 interpretation of our privacy provisions present in  
22 Florida prohibiting women the time they may need to  
23 reflect upon this grave choice; and that is an  
24 important reason why this commission should reconsider  
25 that provision.

1           Briefly, with regard to Article I, Section  
2   3, the so-called "No. 8 provision" under religious  
3   freedom. Once again, this constitutes an  
4   unnecessarily strict interpretation and prevents the  
5   state from working constructively with faith-based  
6   organizations, which, in turn, ultimately harms the  
7   public. And so I urge this commission, likewise, to  
8   revise the No. 8 provision. Thank you kindly for your  
9   attention.

10           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

11           Ma'am?

12           MS. MAYO: My name is Kathleen Mayo. I'm a  
13   fifth-generation Floridian. I'm a retired librarian.  
14   I'm president of the local National Organization for  
15   Women, and I'm an active volunteer in my community. I  
16   care about Florida.

17           I'd like to speak about two issues in the  
18   Florida Constitution. The first one is the right of  
19   privacy as expressed in the Constitution's Declaration  
20   of Rights, Section 23. It states that every person  
21   has the right to be let alone and free from  
22   governmental intrusion into the person's private life.

23           Many in our legislature, and people here  
24   today, are not happy with this right of privacy, this  
25   strong, freestanding statement that Florida voters

1 passed in 1980. They repeatedly worked to diminish  
2 its impact on their bills and on the subsequent  
3 rulings by the state's courts; but these legislators  
4 are perfectly happy for the state to spend tens of  
5 thousands of taxpayer dollars to defend their  
6 ill-conceived legislation in court, especially  
7 defending those bills that place limits on a woman's  
8 legal choice to terminate her pregnancy.

9 Like people everywhere, I cherish the right  
10 to be left alone and free from governmental intrusion  
11 in my life. I encourage you not to meddle with our  
12 right to privacy, resisting intrigues of those who  
13 would water down our rights. It's one of the nation's  
14 strongest privacy statements and guarantees some  
15 protection from those who would place their personal  
16 and religious beliefs above those of Florida citizens.

17 I would also ask you to look at Section 1 of  
18 the Declaration of Rights and remove the term  
19 "physical" in front of "disabilities."

20 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, ma'am.

21 Jon Thompson, Jim Hoefling, Rodger Dowdell,  
22 and Gary Woodroffe.

23 MR. THOMPSON: I'm Jon Thompson, native  
24 Floridian, graduate of the University of Florida; go  
25 Gators.



1 I've got two issues I want to bring before  
2 the commission. The first is short: education; and  
3 the parents need choices. I would ask you to consider  
4 repelling the Blaine Amendment as other states have  
5 done and replace it with a voucher choice for parents,  
6 which should be of help to, particularly, inner-city  
7 children.

8 The second issue is Amendment 1, Section 23,  
9 1980, to reinstate the original intent of the  
10 amendment. The Constitution requires the intent of  
11 the people of Florida be followed. So Amendment 1,  
12 Section 23, must be interpreted according to the  
13 reasonable intent of the people who passed it, which  
14 was to protect the privacy of citizens of Florida from  
15 improper information gathering on them.

16 The Florida Supreme Court chose to  
17 completely reinterpret the amendment as if they were  
18 solely responsible for the will of the people nine  
19 years later after passage of the amendment. They  
20 somehow twisted the privacy from improper information  
21 gathering to include, of all things, abortion rights  
22 of minors.

23 All of us who are parents and grandparents  
24 understand the limitations of minor children, whose  
25 brains are still developing through their teenage

1 years. Thus the need for the Florida parental  
2 contempt statute. The Uniform Gifts to Minors Acts  
3 and many other protections of minors require their  
4 parents to act to protect.

5 As parents, this all makes perfect sense.  
6 Why this was taken away from parents by the Supreme  
7 Court of Florida in the case of minors' abortions  
8 under a constitutional amendment designed to protect  
9 information gathering privacy is completely beyond me.  
10 This is not justified; it's just wrong.

11 Informational privacy is, today, a much  
12 bigger issue than it was in 1980 when Article I,  
13 Section 23, was passed. I had no cell phone, no  
14 computer in 1980 that today can be hacked or  
15 information about all of us can be gathered by  
16 governments and businesses.

17 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Time is  
18 up.

19 MR. DOWDELL: My name is Roger Dowdell. And  
20 as a commission, you folks have been noticed multiple  
21 times that you have no delegated authority to write a  
22 constitutional amendment. The reason for that is  
23 quite simple: The authority is in the people. It's  
24 reserved in the people. And everyone on the  
25 commission didn't come from the people or elected by

1 the people for that purpose. Instead, you're all  
2 very, very accomplished people -- I can see from the  
3 resumes -- very, very successful. You should be proud  
4 of yourselves, but you're politically-appointed. So  
5 you weren't really from the people. And that's the  
6 reason why any valid constitution or any valid  
7 amendment must come from the people.

8 It is our constitution and it is our rules  
9 to govern. So it's that, fundamentally. It's nothing  
10 disrespectful of all of your capabilities or anything  
11 else; it's the way our government runs. In addition,  
12 we've tried to make it clearer that it's important  
13 that you not do this, but also that we face enormous  
14 problems of lawlessness in our government.

15 I have with me a document I would like to  
16 leave with you called "the Declaration of Government  
17 Lawlessness with Harmful Intent." Similar to what our  
18 founders did in the Declaration of Independence, where  
19 they enumerated their grievances, we have a list here  
20 of all of the grievances relevant to our state,  
21 federal, and local governments, where they are not  
22 following the law. Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, sir.  
24 We'll take that.

25 State your name, please.

1 MR. WOODROFFE: My name is Gary Woodroffe.  
2 Thank you for the opportunity to appear.

3 Yours truly witnessed a Tampa Middle  
4 District federal judge, a few weeks ago, express her  
5 outrage concerning the Florida Department of Revenue  
6 modus operandi to the Civil War, Sherman's March to  
7 the Sea. If you don't know what that is, you need to  
8 resign.

9 Consider our legacy. Life, liberty,  
10 property, and family violations by the State of  
11 Florida to we the people continue unabated, include  
12 the best of we the people, include doctors, teachers,  
13 and engineers that are having their families, their  
14 livelihood, their reputation destroyed by this  
15 for-profit entity under the collar of law.

16 The Department of Revenue is a private  
17 for-profit corporation. They operate clandestinely,  
18 refusing to reveal the corporate officers' identity or  
19 shareholders' identity according to my own efforts.  
20 They appear to receive millions of dollars of Title  
21 IV-D money, while seizing millions of dollars from we  
22 the people under the color of child support without  
23 due process. The reason for their secrecy appears to  
24 be illegal, malfeasant modus operandi.

25 It's probably obvious to see by now, my son

1 was the victim of colonel kidnapping. He was born in  
2 San Francisco, California, December -- January 17,  
3 1999. I was there. I cut his umbilical cord. I was  
4 not an absent father. Subsequently, his mother  
5 proceeded to engage in parent kidnapping, violating  
6 UCCJA 28, USC 1738 --

7 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Sir, your time is up.  
8 You're welcome to submit any comments on the website,  
9 FLCRC.gov.

10 Linda Neely, Glen Gibellina, Rae Ann Wessel,  
11 and Holly Schwartz.

12 MS. NEELY: Good afternoon, almost evening.  
13 My name is Linda Neely. I would like you all to read  
14 my shirt. There's a -- anybody that receives funds  
15 from the public treasury signs a notarized statement  
16 to defend and protect the United States Constitution,  
17 the Constitution of the State of Florida. Does not  
18 say that we should revision it; It says that they  
19 shall defend and uphold it.

20 So today we are here. You are spending -- I  
21 believe I heard your estimated budget is \$2 million to  
22 run this commission, and you are looking for ways to  
23 add things to the Constitution, while our Constitution  
24 for Florida states that the people are the true  
25 political power. That we -- under Article V, we the

1 people have the right to peacefully assemble. Today  
2 we are peacefully assembling to lecture our elected  
3 representatives, which are not here in front of us.  
4 We face political appointees.

5 And we the people are to be able to seek  
6 redress, and yet nobody from my Florida Government has  
7 ever been able to show me where redress is needed. So  
8 I think that this commission should look at  
9 strengthening the public's right.

10 In 2010, the Florida Supreme Court judge  
11 ruled that we the people don't have the right to speak  
12 at public meetings. In 2013, our legislators did make  
13 an adjustment to that court ruling and said that we  
14 have the right to speak out on any agenda item before  
15 it is passed. But this own commission was found by an  
16 attorney general and a finding that you have the right  
17 to do your own rules. And the legislators need to  
18 keep their noses out of your rules and procedures.  
19 But us the people --

20 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

21 Glen Gibellina, Rae Ann Wessel, Holly  
22 Schwartz, Ryan Sharp.

23 MR. GIBELLINA: Good afternoon. My name is  
24 Glen Gibellina. I'm a parental rights advocate and  
25 cofounder of Why Dads Matter, a non-profit

1 organization for parental support and information.

2 We have a cancer, a cancer of the judicial  
3 system, and that cancer needs to be cut out.

4 Currently, that is the Family Law Division of the  
5 Florida Bar. They are a wrecking ball to our judicial  
6 system.

7 I would strongly suggest that everybody go  
8 see *Divorce Corp* documentary; it's on Netflix. I'll  
9 even pay for it. I'll be at the meeting next week,  
10 and I would like some feedback from this.

11 This is a \$50-billion-a-year industry. More  
12 money flows through the family courts than all the  
13 other courts combined. That should tell you something  
14 right off the bat. And Florida is not alone. They  
15 are one of the worst.

16 I'll give you an example, personally one  
17 that I know. Case No. 2002DR3254, 12th Circuit in  
18 Manatee County. This is my case. 2002, that's when I  
19 filed for divorce. Fifteen years later, it's still  
20 open. 800 documents. Is this acceptable for our  
21 family law division? Absolutely not. When you keep  
22 me from my child, that's a criminal act. Parent  
23 alienation should be filed as a criminal act.

24 We have on the records coming up a federal  
25 mandate for shared parenting. We've tried to work it

1 before; twice, it was shot down. Once the federal  
2 amendment goes into the house of cards of the Florida  
3 Bar Division, it's going to fall. Judges will be  
4 removed, lawyers will be disbarred, and the  
5 high-conflict attorneys that are the worst should be  
6 doing jail time.

7 Parental alienation is a crime. It should  
8 be treated as such. And I'll see you next week at the  
9 workshop. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

11 MS. WESSEL: Good afternoon and welcome to  
12 Lee County. My name is Rae Ann Wessel, here on behalf  
13 of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation,  
14 proudly celebrating 50 years of conservation resources  
15 in this region.

16 I come to you tonight with two items that we  
17 would like to put forward. First is a change in the  
18 cabinet, and the second has to do with elections.  
19 Regarding the makeup of the cabinet, Florida's economy  
20 lives or dies based on the quality of our environment.  
21 We know very well because Article II, Section 7, of  
22 the Florida Constitution identified there is a policy  
23 in the state to conserve and protect natural resources  
24 and the scenic beauty of the state and that we abate  
25 air and water pollution.



1           Water is the life source of our community  
2 and all of Florida. People have challenges to both  
3 the growth and the quality of our experiences for  
4 tourists based on our water quality. Local experience  
5 tells us that when we have green algae washing up on  
6 our beaches, an inky dark water, it's not good for  
7 tourism; and we are seeing that effect this year.

8           Our recommendation is to realign the state  
9 government with the economic driver by creating a  
10 cabinet position that deals with water environment and  
11 tourism and reorganize the Department of Agriculture  
12 to be on par with other committees of its same kind,  
13 like DEP, like Department of Transportation,  
14 Department of State, Fish and Wildlife, Conservation  
15 Commission.

16           Our second item is to promote the idea of  
17 nonpartisan elections. Here in Lee County, we have  
18 had a significant disenfranchisement from voters  
19 because of closed elections. We're up to 60 percent  
20 of our voters may not be able to participate because  
21 of partisan elections, so we encourage you to take a  
22 look at that opportunity. Thank you.

23           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

24           MR. SHARP: Good evening, Commission  
25 members, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Ryan Sharp,

1 elected vice president of the America's Party of  
2 Florida. We're an educational grassroots group making  
3 sure that the principles of America's founders are  
4 preserved. George Washington urged us all to "raise a  
5 standard from which the wise and honest can repair"  
6 and then asserted, "The rest in the hands of God."

7           Since 2008, we've had biweekly conference  
8 calls open to all citizens of goodwill to discuss  
9 politics, current events, and talk to candidates and  
10 elected officials. Anyone interested can call me at  
11 (727) 798-1101.

12           I am here on behalf of myself and thousands  
13 of legal Floridians who were denied their  
14 constitutional right to representation during the 2016  
15 elections. Article I, Section 1, of the Florida  
16 Constitution says, "All political power is inherent in  
17 the people." I have handed copies for all of you to  
18 look at of a press release that lays out the facts of  
19 our detail -- of our case in detail. I'll not focus  
20 on the injustice today, but I will lay out the  
21 solutions.

22           In 1998, Article VI, Section 1, was added by  
23 this commission with the intent to make elections more  
24 fair for our parties and NPAs. This affected the  
25 opposite effect. We demand that these burdens end

1 immediately and that the rights of the people to vote  
2 for those who represent them be returned.

3 We propose that the following provisions be  
4 added to Article VI, Section 11:

5 A. Any legal citizen who meets all age,  
6 citizenship, and residency requirements written in the  
7 United States Constitution and the Florida  
8 Constitution shall be able to be printed on the ballot  
9 and/or have their votes counted as a write-in  
10 candidate for the office of their choice without any  
11 undue burden, requirement, or registration beyond the  
12 lawful means of proving their citizenship and that  
13 they meet the age, citizenship, and residency  
14 requirements of the U.S. and the Florida Constitutions  
15 for that particular office they're running for. All  
16 fees, charges, financial obligations --

17 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Time is  
18 up.

19 Ma'am?

20 MS. SCHWARTZ: My name is Holly Schwartz. I  
21 went to school in Tallahassee and worked in  
22 Tallahassee. So I have to tell you I appreciate all  
23 the travel and effort that you're putting into this,  
24 so thank you very much.

25 Two issues very quickly, interesting

1 statistics. In Lee County, one in five jobs is tied  
2 to tourism; and tourism, last year, generated \$3  
3 billion. So anything that could be done to help  
4 preserve our natural systems in Florida will sustain  
5 that revenue stream.

6 Second issue, very quickly, so that everyone  
7 is represented here. Hopefully, you'll consider, very  
8 strongly, nonpartisan election process. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Leslie  
10 Turner, Ligia Castaldi, Claudia Reed, and Jeanne  
11 Berdeaux.

12 Go ahead.

13 MS. TURNER: I guess I'm up. My name is  
14 Leslie Turner. I would like to thank the commission  
15 for allowing me the opportunity to testify today in  
16 Lee County. I live in Parker Lakes in Fort Myers, and  
17 I work as a medical technologist for a large Catholic  
18 hospital. I'm also a wife, a mother, and a breast  
19 cancer survivor.

20 I have two points I would like to comment  
21 on. The first has to do with open primaries. At the  
22 moment, Florida only allows Democrats or Republicans  
23 to vote in primary elections. This leaves out 25  
24 percent of Florida citizens from participating in the  
25 election process. And this is unfair because it

1 leaves out so many people, many of whom I have spoken  
2 to, but it also unfairly targets the younger voters  
3 because they are the largest population registered as  
4 independent; therefore, I ask the commission to allow  
5 all voters in Florida to decide this issue by putting  
6 an open primary ballot amendment in 2018.

7           Second point I would like to discuss has to  
8 do with privacy provision in the Florida Constitution,  
9 Article I, Section 23. This provision guarantees the  
10 right of each Florida resident the right to be let  
11 alone and free from government intrusion into his or  
12 her private life. The Florida Supreme Court has  
13 consistently ruled that laws restricting access to  
14 women's reproductive rights and the right to choose  
15 violates the right to privacy laws; therefore, the  
16 voters of Florida should be made aware of these  
17 changes to this.

18           I ask the commission to please make public  
19 any proposed changes to state Constitution before they  
20 are placed on the 2018 ballot. The vast majority of  
21 voters support contraception and maintaining the  
22 balanced decision in *Roe v. Wade*. This majority does  
23 not want this commission to undermine a woman's  
24 reproductive rights. Thank you.

25           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

1 MS. CASTALDI: Hello. My name is Ligia  
2 Castaldi. I'm a law professor at Ave Maria School of  
3 Law. I would like to remind this commission that the  
4 Florida right to abortion was created by the Florida  
5 Supreme Court in 2007. It was not created by popular  
6 vote or by Florida voters.

7 I would also like to remind this commission  
8 that the U.S. Supreme Court has consistently, after  
9 *Roe*, limited and regulated abortion practices.  
10 Following *Roe*, the Supreme Court frequently ruled on  
11 abortion -- in favor of abortion providers; but it  
12 also placed a number of limitations on the  
13 constitutional right to abort, such as state  
14 requirements that only licensed physicians perform  
15 abortions and that late-term abortions be performed in  
16 licensed hospitals. The Supreme Court has found no  
17 constitutional right to government-funded abortions in  
18 cases like in *Maher v. Roe* and *Poelker v. Doe*.

19 We have a brief that we're going to submit  
20 to Commissioner Donalds that we would appreciate if  
21 you would read. We would like to urge you to consider  
22 amending Article I, Section 3, of the Florida  
23 Constitution to clarify the interpretation of the  
24 right to privacy and bring it closer to current  
25 federal constitutional standards on abortion. Thank

1 you.

2 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Go ahead.

3 MS. REED: My name is Claudia Reed.

4 Officially, the United States is a democratic  
5 republic; but recent decisions have proven that in  
6 reality, on the federal level, we have become an  
7 oligarchy, ruled by the well-to-do for at least the  
8 last several decades. How did this change come to  
9 pass? I would guess through the cancerous spread of  
10 systemic corruption. Instead of representing their  
11 constituents, elected officials now do the bidding of  
12 their largest campaign donors.

13 On the state level, governments vary. So  
14 how does Florida rate corruption-wise? In 2015, the  
15 Center for Public Integrity gave Florida a D minus for  
16 transparency and accountability. In 2016, Harvard Law  
17 School Center for Ethics reported that in Florida,  
18 while illegal corruption is under control, legal  
19 corruption is very common in both executive and  
20 legislative branches.

21 *Legal corruption* is defined as  
22 ^ quotes?\*political gains by an official in exchange  
23 for providing specific benefits to individuals or  
24 groups. This means that Florida laws are commonly  
25 passed to benefit special interest entities rather

1 than the public, but the public has to obey these laws  
2 nonetheless. How can this be considered okay? Why is  
3 it legal for Florida government to betray its citizens  
4 in this manner?

5 As a remedy, I propose integrating a  
6 comprehensive corruption ban into the Florida  
7 Constitution itself. The American Anti-Corruption  
8 Act, AACA, is a final --

9 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Time is up, ma'am.  
10 Thank you.

11 MS. BERDEAUX: I think you called me. I'm  
12 Jeanne Berdeaux and I'm presently the Respect Life  
13 director for the Catholic Diocese of Venice, covering  
14 ten counties in Southwest Florida.

15 Unfortunately, our Florida Supreme Court  
16 justices have decided in multiple cases, including  
17 parental consent and 24-hour waiting periods, that  
18 there's a right to abortion, even for minors, hidden  
19 in the constitutional amendment Article I, Section 23.  
20 That amendment simply states, "Every natural person  
21 has the right to be let alone and free from  
22 governmental intrusion into the person's private life  
23 except as otherwise provided herein."

24 I remember being a young, new Florida voter  
25 back in 1980 when that amendment was on the ballot.



1 I feel as though I was duped into thinking it was just  
2 to protect our citizens from identity theft or  
3 governmental intrusion. I had no idea at the time  
4 that this amendment would be used to promote  
5 abortions, and I never would have agreed to it.

6 We have had over 50 women come to our  
7 Project Rachel postabortion clinic retreat in just the  
8 last two years. We have heard their stories, through  
9 a lot of tears, of how they were coerced into having  
10 an abortion or thought they had no other choice and  
11 how they have handled their grief and regret for 20,  
12 30, or more years.

13 Even right outside the abortion center, some  
14 women argue it's the best thing to do and sometimes  
15 change their mind when they see the people praying  
16 there. If they had to think about it for another 24  
17 hours, perhaps more women would make a better  
18 decision, one they could live with in peace for the  
19 rest of their lives.

20 We have already lost almost 3 million  
21 Floridians to abortion. Please give Florida voters a  
22 chance to let our voices be heard on this issue with  
23 an amendment that would clarify that there's a right  
24 for informational privacy and should not be used as a  
25 right to abortion.

1           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Michael  
2 New, Elise Rose, Steven Maxwell, Charlotte Nycklemoe.  
3           Go ahead.

4           MR. NEW: My name is Michael New. I'm a  
5 professor at Ave Maria University. And first I would  
6 like to discuss Florida's privacy clause as pertaining  
7 to protect the pro-life laws. The privacy clause was  
8 adopted in the Florida Constitution in 1980; and since  
9 that time, frequently used to strike down (inaudible).  
10 First, it was used it to strike down parental pro-life  
11 laws on two occasions, once in 1989 and once in 1999.  
12 And just this past year, the privacy clause was used  
13 to strike down a law requiring a 24-hour waiting  
14 period for women obtaining abortion.

15           Four quick points in my testimony. First  
16 off, the privacy clause was never intended to hinder  
17 or obstruct pro-life laws. It was discussed in 1978  
18 Constitutional Convention. It was adopted in 1980.  
19 The clear intention of the privacy clause was to give  
20 individuals protection from government surveillance.  
21 Abortion was never mentioned either at the convention  
22 or the 1980 legislature discussion.

23           Secondly, waiting periods and other types of  
24 protective pro-life laws are popular. Twenty-seven  
25 states have a waiting period before a woman gets an

1 abortion. There's also polls that show 80 percent of  
2 Americans support 24-hour waiting periods before women  
3 can obtain abortions.

4 Third, waiting periods are good public  
5 policy. A 2016 study in Utah on waiting periods found  
6 that of those seeking abortion, 8 percent did not go  
7 through with the procedure; and those that didn't were  
8 the most the most conflicted about it, showing, again,  
9 that it did give women some time to make a better  
10 decision.

11 And fourth is concerning the privacy clause  
12 could undermine life issues in other ways. There's a  
13 big push to legalize assisted suicide over the past  
14 couple years. It's been legalized in California and  
15 Colorado. And many policy analysts are concerned that  
16 privacy clauses could be used to legalize assisted  
17 suicide. I think this is a very serious issue, one  
18 that needs public input on these hearings, testimony.  
19 It should not be decided by judicial fiat.

20 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, sir.  
21 Elise Rose, Steven Maxwell, Charlotte Nycklemoe,  
22 Tamara Paquette.

23 DR. ROSE: I'm Dr. Elise Rose. Article I,  
24 Section 23, the right to privacy, should not be  
25 construed as to limit waiting periods for medical

1 procedures, including abortion. Florida judges have  
2 struck down even a minimal 24-hour waiting period for  
3 abortions. Both the American Psychological  
4 Association and American Psychiatric Association --  
5 both pro-choice groups -- have determined that  
6 abortion is a stressor, a stressor capable of causing  
7 post-traumatic stress disorder.

8           When a woman is pregnant, especially with an  
9 unplanned pregnancy, she's in a heightened emotional  
10 state. Before making a life-changing decision, such  
11 as abortion, a woman should be given time to consult  
12 her family and her regular physician or to investigate  
13 the provider. Without the mandatory waiting period,  
14 the only person she may speak with are providers such  
15 as Planned Parenthood, who have a financial stake in  
16 rushing her to get the procedure. Abortion is  
17 irreversible; once done, it cannot be undone.

18           When we make a purchase of a car or vacuum  
19 cleaner, we have three days to return the item. I do  
20 not believe the privacy clause was intended to prevent  
21 the minimal consumer protection provided by a one,  
22 two, or three-day waiting period; therefore, I urge  
23 amendment of this privacy clause to allow mandatory  
24 waiting period before abortion or other serious  
25 medical procedures. Thank you.

1           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

2           MS. NYCKLEMOE: Good evening. I'm Charlotte  
3 Nycklemoe. I am with the League of Women Voters, and  
4 I am here to speak to you tonight about fair  
5 districts. Presently, the legislature has its own  
6 special rules for maintaining its records. We think  
7 that the legislature should follow the same open  
8 records laws as other branches of the government and  
9 be required to maintain all records they acquire in  
10 the course of their public campaign.

11           During the fair district litigation,  
12 legislatures claim that they should be excused from  
13 testing about how the maps are drawn. The Supreme  
14 Court ordered them to turn over documents and testify  
15 about how the maps were drawn. The Constitution  
16 should make clear that there is no legislative  
17 privilege in redistricting cases, just as the Supreme  
18 Court ruled.

19           The fair districts amendment passed by 63  
20 percent of the voters in 2010 have stopped abuses by  
21 politicians that entered into secret, back-room  
22 schemes to rig political districts and elections hold  
23 onto political power; however, some think the power  
24 structure will surely seek pressure at the CRC  
25 proposed constitutional amendment that would severely

1     undermine fair district amendments.

2             We urge the CRC to reject any attempt to  
3     change the way that fair districts rules work. We  
4     hope that the CRC will do nothing to weaken the fair  
5     district amendment or to aid and abet those who try to  
6     cheat the public by secretly drawing districts for  
7     their own political purposes. Thank you.

8             COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Steven  
9     Maxwell, Tamara Paquette, Diana Walsh, and Joyce  
10    Fletcher.

11            DR. MAXWELL: Good afternoon, Commissioners.  
12    My name is Steven Maxwell for the record.  
13    Specifically, I would like to speak to Article II,  
14    general provisions, Section 8, ethics in government.

15            My requested action is that you add  
16    municipal officials language after the constitutional  
17    officers paragraph in that particular section to make  
18    full public disclosure uniform. This past section  
19    made it to the House. Unfortunately, the Senate  
20    seemed to be having some discomfort or undue pressure.  
21    So I would hope that you would consider that  
22    particular requested action I have made to add  
23    municipal officials at the required full public  
24    disclosure as all elected constitutional officers.  
25    The rational being that they spend millions of dollars

1 of taxpayer money serving as municipal officers,  
2 specifically elected public officials, i.e. city  
3 council persons.

4 The second thing deals with Article V,  
5 Section 12 of the judiciary. Specifically, I'm asking  
6 that the Judicial Qualifications Commission remain  
7 intact in toto. Do not try to monkey around with  
8 something that is truly a public-based, citizens-based  
9 article that acts as a checks-and-balance relationship  
10 to the discipline of our judges in the State of  
11 Florida.

12 Lastly, I'm speaking to Article 6,  
13 subsequent election. The requested action is to amend  
14 the sections governing closed primaries and then  
15 become an open primary state. Basically, the  
16 cornerstone of democracy is being able to vote; that  
17 is, to have the voice, the opportunity, and the  
18 ability to tax down tyranny as well as allowing for  
19 equality.

20 I appreciate your attention. Godspeed with  
21 you as you travel around to the 67 counties in  
22 Florida. Thank you for your attention.

23 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

24 MS. PAQUETTE: Well, hi. Good afternoon,  
25 everybody. My name is Tamara Paquette, former

1 candidate for county commissioner in District 5,  
2 president of the Democratic Women's Club of Collier  
3 County and member of League of Women's Voters. Right  
4 now after I have heard testimony from quite a few  
5 other individuals, I'm just going to speak for myself  
6 because I'm going to put it right on the table today.

7 I have this beautiful, well-prepared speech  
8 regarding Article I, Section 23, of the Florida  
9 Constitution. "Every natural person has the right to  
10 be let alone and free from governmental intrusion into  
11 the person's private life," and that should stay.

12 This elected commission has a big decision  
13 to make. Women like myself, who have terminated  
14 pregnancies, and the 70,000 women in the State of  
15 Florida who terminate pregnancies every single year do  
16 not want their government to tell them whether they  
17 can make the decision or not. We don't only have a  
18 country that has freedom of religion but freedom from  
19 religion. And I want you to dig down very deeply and  
20 decide for yourself what is best for you; and I  
21 promise you, I will never regret any decision I made  
22 when I dig down deep inside of me and chose to make my  
23 decisions that affected my health. Respectfully,  
24 thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Diana



1 Walsh, Joyce Fletcher, Chauncey Goss.

2 MS. WALSH: Good evening. Diana Walsh from  
3 Naples, Florida, and the League of Women Voters of  
4 Collier County. I'm here to talk about process.

5 This commission is important. It can place  
6 revisions directly on the ballot, and it's crucial  
7 that this is done in the fairness of the public.  
8 We're hoping that as you go forward, the public will  
9 be given ample notice so that you can have -- we can  
10 have meaningful public participation in this process.  
11 As civically-engaged Floridians, we want assurance  
12 that we'll have an opportunity to comment on any  
13 proposals before they are recommended to be placed or  
14 voted on to be placed on the 2018 ballot.

15 In addition, one other item: We're  
16 concerned about the possible influences that might be  
17 brought to bear on elected officials who are on this  
18 commission. While there are ethical rules that  
19 provide that commission members cannot take anything  
20 of value from someone lobbying against you, there is  
21 an exception for campaign contributions. Your ethics  
22 rules should be changed so that legislators or other  
23 elected officials cannot take campaign contributions  
24 from any person or organization lobbying on an issue  
25 for the CRC. Thank you.

1                   COMMISSIONER DONALDS:  Joyce Fletcher,  
2  Chauncey Goss, Yepram Dervahanian, Fred Eyrich.

3                   MS. FLETCHER:  Good evening, Commissioners,  
4  and thank you for being here.  My name is Joyce  
5  Fletcher.  I have been the voter service chair with  
6  the League of Women Voters of Collier County for more  
7  than eight years.  I want to address Article VI of the  
8  Florida Constitution on suffrage and elections.

9                   During the 2016 elections last November,  
10 there was much distress that there many voters were  
11 disenfranchised by write-in candidates.  The  
12 Constitution, as a result of the last CRC, allows all  
13 registered voters, regardless of party, to vote in a  
14 primary when all the candidates are of the same party;  
15 however, when there's a candidate from another party  
16 running or write-in candidate, the primary is closed  
17 to only registered voters for the party of that  
18 candidate.  Unfortunately, many of the write-in  
19 candidates who do not pay a fee to file or qualify, do  
20 not campaign, do not raise money, do not attend  
21 candidate forums, really only enter the race to close  
22 the primaries.  I understand that one of the members  
23 experienced this during this last election cycle, as  
24 well as our state senator and two representatives in  
25 Collier County.

1           The issue needs to be addressed. Three  
2 possible solutions right here. One would be open  
3 primaries; another would be -- in Article I,  
4 Section -- I'm sorry; Section 1, Article VI, it says  
5 that candidates -- write-in candidates could not be  
6 faced with a greater requirement for registering than  
7 those in the larger part. Maybe we need a mandatory  
8 fee for those who register without a party. Maybe we  
9 need all candidates who appear on the ballot from the  
10 same party to appear in the primary.

11           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, Ms.  
12 Fletcher.

13           Chauncey Goss?

14           MR. CHAUNCEY: Good evening, Chairman,  
15 Commissioners. Thank you all so much for visiting  
16 Southwest Florida. I appreciate it. I'm a resident  
17 of Sanibel. I'm a member of city council. I'm  
18 speaking not for the council, but for myself.

19           I want to talk to you, briefly, about  
20 taxation without representation. I believe that any  
21 person who has the authority to levy ad valorem taxes  
22 onto the residents of Florida should be directly  
23 accountable to those taxpayers and through the  
24 electoral process. Unfortunately, that's not really  
25 the case.

1           According to the state's Department of  
2 Economic Opportunity, there are 20 special independent  
3 districts that are not accountable at all for voters,  
4 that have their board members appointed directly by  
5 the governor. One's here in South Florida, the South  
6 Florida Water Management District.

7           The Residents of Sanibel have no say in  
8 choosing the governing board, yet the governing board  
9 can and does levy a tax on my property. The governor  
10 appoints the governing board; and if I don't like the  
11 tax or policy, my only recourse is to attend a  
12 governing board meeting.

13           I can also call the governor and let him  
14 know my opinion, but my voice is diluted by 20  
15 millions other Floridians. In fact, we just had an  
16 incident recently where a mayor wrote a letter to the  
17 chairman of the governing board asking for something  
18 that's important for us, for our economy, and for our  
19 environment. Neither the chairman or staff bothered  
20 to respond. When the mayor discussed this with the  
21 governor, the governor told him to talk to the  
22 executive director. Well, the same executive director  
23 is the one who decided not to respond in the first  
24 place, so that didn't go too far. There's no direct  
25 accountability. There's not even recourse on the

1 ballot box.

2           So this isn't really a partisan issue  
3 because governors on both sides of the aisle have used  
4 this to their advantage. You have the opportunity to  
5 remove both the temptation and what I would call the  
6 perception that some may say is an old-fashioned  
7 patronage system. I urge you to support amendment to  
8 the Constitution of Article VII, Section 9, stating  
9 that there should be no ad valorem taxation by any  
10 taxing unit in Florida unless they are chosen in the  
11 ballot box by the people as taxes. It's fair; it's  
12 delightfully simple; and it's the nation's founding  
13 fathers' rallying cry.

14           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

15           MR. DERVAHANIAN: Yepram Dervahanian. I'm  
16 from Lehigh Acres, Florida. I love my country but I  
17 fear my government. I believe that the Florida  
18 Constitution should never recognize Sharia law in any  
19 way.

20           I also urge that I have questions about  
21 Muslims or Islamics running for public office. Are  
22 they loyal to the Constitution of the United States,  
23 or are they loyal to the Quran of Sharia law? That  
24 should be looked into.

25           Last of all, Governor Rick Scott and

1 Superintendent Pam Stewart should get rid of this  
2 communist common core; it's terrible. Let's protect  
3 our students. Thank you very much.

4 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you very much.  
5 Fred Eyrich, Dean Cross, David Doan, and John Jordan.

6 MR. EYRICH: Dear Mr. Chairman and members  
7 of the CRC, my name is Fred Eyrich. I'm an activist  
8 with Americans for Prosperity. I'm here to first ask  
9 you to simply do nothing and hold the citizens of  
10 Florida harmless. If this commission does seek leave  
11 from putting something forward, we hope that it will  
12 be done in the most transparent way possible.

13 We also ask that if you must fix anything,  
14 please fix Article IX of the State Constitution. We  
15 hope you will rework it to ensure and codify school  
16 choice options in Florida. We believe school choice  
17 has been under attack in the court system, and we hope  
18 that the CRC does anything that will make school  
19 choice ratified in the constitution. Thank you. Have  
20 a good night.

21 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Sir?

22 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Commission. My name  
23 is Dean Cross. I'm a native Floridian and 33-year  
24 resident of Fort Myers. I'm also like millions of  
25 other people throughout the United States and

1 Florida: a law-abiding gun owner.

2 We are probably the most law-abiding people  
3 there are. We abide by the rules. We do the  
4 background checks. We do everything that's required,  
5 but the ones that don't are the bad guys. They don't  
6 care about waiting periods. They don't care about  
7 background checks. They just do whatever they want to  
8 get it. But I go by the law.

9 So what I'm asking you to do today is: Do  
10 not recommend any kind of laws, regulations,  
11 constitutional amendments, waiting periods that would  
12 infringe upon mine, and millions of other people like  
13 me throughout the United States and Florida, the right  
14 to keep and bear arms. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

16 MR. DOAN: My name is David Doan. Thank you  
17 for the opportunity to speak with you. In 1823,  
18 Thomas Jefferson responded to letters of the Justice  
19 William Johnson of the Supreme Court; and in response,  
20 he said, "On every question of construction let us  
21 carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution  
22 was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the  
23 debates, and instead of trying what meaning may be  
24 squeezed out of the text, we can conform to the  
25 probable one in which it was passed." That was good

1 advice then; that's good advice now.

2 Article I, Section 23, of the Florida  
3 Constitution, the right to privacy, says, "Every  
4 natural person has the right to be let alone and free  
5 from governmental intrusion into the person's private  
6 life except as otherwise provided herein." When the  
7 people of Florida voted on Article I, Section 23, I  
8 don't believe for one minute they thought they were  
9 voting on anything other than to allow people the  
10 right to privacy and their personal life similar to  
11 the original intent of the Fourth Amendment. They  
12 probably never dreamed they were guaranteeing anyone  
13 the right to abortion. The judges have found that  
14 somewhere in the words. I believe the importance of  
15 clarity, all too often, there's too much opportunity  
16 for the courts to misinterpret articles, amendments,  
17 and in this case, a section of the Constitution.

18 What I'm asking the commission to do is to  
19 reword Section 23 to make it perfectly clear that the  
20 only guarantee is the right to privacy, not to abort a  
21 baby. The same letter President Jefferson wrote the  
22 Chief Justice says there must be an ultimate arbiter  
23 somewhere. This is true but it does not prove that  
24 it's either party. The ultimate arbiter is the  
25 people. Let the people of Florida be the ultimate



1 arbiter in this case. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. John  
3 Jordan, Nathan Forrester, Linda Doggett, and Ryan  
4 Kennedy.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: After this group, we're going  
6 to take a five-minute break and reconvene. Thank  
7 you.

8 DR. FORRESTER: I'm Dr. Nathan Forrester. I  
9 suggest the removal of a 1998 section that is Article  
10 VIII, Section 5 (b), of the Florida Constitution. The  
11 section creates a local option for counties to impose  
12 waiting periods and/or background checks for firearm  
13 sales in the county.

14 There's no statistical evidence that waiting  
15 periods or even background checks reduce homicides.  
16 PolitiFact examined the claim that, quote, there's no  
17 statistical evidence that a waiting period for handgun  
18 purchasers reduces violence, unquote. And they found  
19 the statement to be mostly true.

20 The provisions of the section serve only to  
21 burden citizens and tie up law enforcement resources  
22 and do nothing to impede criminals from acquiring  
23 firearms. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

25 MR. KENNEDY: Mr. Chairman and members of

1 the CRC, my name is Ryan Kennedy. I'm here today to  
2 talk about the fact that we in the State of Florida  
3 and as residents of the United States should have a  
4 limited government. This includes our right to bear  
5 arms.

6 Currently, we have a three-day waiting  
7 period to purchase a gun. This is not what the  
8 founders intended when writing the Florida  
9 Constitution or the U.S. Constitution. This is why  
10 this should be taken out of the Florida Constitution.  
11 Thanks.

12 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

13 MS. DOGGETT: Good evening and thank you.  
14 My name is Linda Doggett. I'm the elected clerk here  
15 in Lee County and comptroller. I'm here to talk to  
16 you about clerks as technology leaders for the court  
17 system.

18 Court system comptrollers are the  
19 independent keeper and processor of records and money  
20 flows in and out of county governments and the court  
21 system. Court clerks are accountable locally as we  
22 provide thousands of critical services including  
23 providing access to justice; and because of that  
24 accountability, we have been leaders in technology  
25 implementing solutions to meet the local needs of our

1 community. But just as importantly, all of the  
2 Florida courts have to come together to implement  
3 resourceful, innovative solutions to make technology  
4 work for our statewide court system.

5 In the bragging rights category, the  
6 statewide e-filing portal was recognized as the best  
7 in the nation. While most states struggle with a  
8 single statewide system, Florida's integrated e-file  
9 system for the state level with that of the local  
10 level to provide seamless experience, accepting  
11 submissions from attorneys, judges, self-representing  
12 litigation and many more. The portal process system  
13 created a million dollars this last year and an  
14 average up to 63,000 new cases a month with 123,000  
15 registered total users. With ever-expanding services,  
16 it continues to save thousands of dollars for the  
17 court system use and Florida residents.

18 In addition to our statewide system  
19 providing single data base for court records access to  
20 authorized users, called *CCIS*, which will soon have  
21 recording and business analytics from the  
22 information-rich, statewide depository of court case  
23 data to improve our services to Florida as well as  
24 lower the cost of doing business. All of this without  
25 asking for additional funding from the legislature.

1           We ask that you preserve the locally-elected  
2 constitutional office of the clerk and the innovating  
3 technology leadership that --

4           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

5           John Jordan. If we don't have a John  
6 Jordan, then we'll put this beck in the stack, and  
7 we'll come and take a five-minute recess. Thank you.

8           (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

9           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you, everyone,  
10 for your patience and to continue with the first four  
11 speakers if you could please come forward. We have  
12 John Jordan, Kenneth Wilkinson, Dan Dougherty, and  
13 Payal Majmundar. John Jordan, Kenneth Wilkinson, Dan  
14 Dougherty, and Payal Majmundar. I apologize if I  
15 mispronounced that name.

16           Mr. Wilkinson, you may begin.

17           MR. WILKINSON: Welcome Mr. Chairman and  
18 commissioners. I'm Ken Wilkinson, Lee County Property  
19 Appraiser. And like you, I was a member of the TBRC  
20 in 2008 and three of your commissioners served on the  
21 same commission. I really appreciate that you have  
22 the ability -- one difference between the two  
23 commissions is when you pass something to the ballot,  
24 it doesn't have to go before the Supreme Court.

25           We had three that we passed, two of which

1 I'm sure Commissioner Levesque will champion this  
2 time; but my issue at that time was kind of limited to  
3 our required local levy, which represents 26 percent  
4 of all taxes of every property in the State of  
5 Florida, representing about \$8 billion. We got to the  
6 ballot. The Supreme Court took it off. My hope is  
7 this commission will take another look at that and  
8 consider that as something that you can see going to  
9 the ballot.

10           What it does is -- as you know, had it  
11 passed, it would have amended the Florida Constitution  
12 to eliminate property taxes that the state legislator  
13 currently requires local school districts to levy in  
14 order to qualify for state aid. Everybody is in favor  
15 of a per-pupil cost. It should be equal across the  
16 state, not depending where you live; but everybody  
17 gets the same cost, so they all get the same  
18 opportunities.

19           This would eliminate that tax in total and  
20 replace it with a one- or two-cent sales tax or a  
21 combination of one-cent sales tax, sunset sales tax  
22 exemption except for the essentials of life: rent,  
23 utilities, medicine, food. But each of those sales  
24 tax exemptions have to come back as a separate bill,  
25 not a bundle. In the past, they'll all be back in

1 because certain instances will make sure that that  
2 happens.

3 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you, Mr.  
4 Wilkinson. If you have any documents that you would  
5 like us to see, please leave them at the table.

6 Mr. Dougherty. And I know I'm not saying  
7 this name correctly, but Payal Majmundar, Tracey  
8 Gagnon after that.

9 MR. DOUGHERTY: Mr. Chairman, Commission, my  
10 name is Dan Dougherty. The Constitution Revision  
11 Commission needs to restore Article I, Section 23, of  
12 the Florida Constitution, also known as the Privacy  
13 Amendment, to its original purpose because it has been  
14 misused by activists judges to protect the right of an  
15 abortion. 1978 CRC, the Florida Legislature, and the  
16 majority of voters in 1980 voted for informational  
17 privacy, not an absolute right to an abortion.

18 By interpreting the privacy clause an  
19 absolute right to abortion, the Florida Supreme Court  
20 has ignored Article I, Section 1, of the Constitution,  
21 which establishes all political power in the state  
22 from the people, not activists judges. CRC has it  
23 within its power to revise Article I, Section 23, to  
24 the prior intention of the amendment, that the intent  
25 of the amendment is to protect informational privacy,

1 not the right to an abortion; and in so doing, uphold  
2 Article I, Section 1, to ensure will of the people is  
3 above the will of activists judicial branch.

4 Floridians use their representatives to the  
5 legislature to pass laws. The Florida Supreme Court  
6 is neither an elected body of representatives nor is  
7 it a law-making body. It interprets laws and  
8 unfortunately, has misinterpreted Article I, Section  
9 23. Floridians have demonstrated a desire for  
10 pro-life policies both through their elected officials  
11 and at the ballot box. And because of illegal  
12 legislators at the bench, much common sense pro-life  
13 laws have been blocked, denying all Floridians, no  
14 matter how small, their constitutionally-protected  
15 right to life.

16 MR. CARLTON: Thank you.

17 Go ahead.

18 MS. MAJMUNDAR: Good evening. I am Payal  
19 Majmundar, a political science student at the  
20 University of Florida. First, I would like to say  
21 thank you for coming to my hometown. Earlier this  
22 year I worked with former speaker John Byrd, Supreme  
23 Court's Justice James Perry, former Attorney General  
24 Bob Butterworth, to create this particular proposal.

25 This proposal amends Article V, Section 8,

1 of the Florida Constitution to modify the mandatory  
2 retirement age for Supreme Court justices from 70  
3 years to 75 years of age. We want to amend this  
4 particular section because the current version of the  
5 law was created in 1972 when life expectancy was only  
6 70.75 years. Now it's 79.8 years, so the retirement  
7 age in our constitution hasn't changed to reflect  
8 that. So in order to retain top-experience talent on  
9 the bench, we want the raised mandatory retirement  
10 age.

11 There's a growing belief that the age limit  
12 established 45 years ago is too low by today's  
13 standards and arbitrarily depriving our courts of  
14 experienced, thoughtful, and capable justices. A  
15 similar amendment was successfully passed in  
16 Pennsylvania in 2016 election. The Pennsylvania  
17 Legislature had to amend their state Constitution to  
18 provide that justices on their Supreme Court and  
19 judges to retire on the last day of the calendar year  
20 in which they turn 75.

21 The justification behind Pennsylvania's  
22 amendment, which also applies to Florida, is that with  
23 the amount of time it takes to (inaudible) to age 70  
24 is (inaudible) the best legal mind to serving.  
25 There's no scientific evidence to show that age 70 is



1 a ceiling for intellectual ability; and in fact, three  
2 of our U.S. Supreme Court justices right now are over  
3 the age of 75. For these reasons, we hope that you  
4 consider putting our amendment on ballot to change the  
5 mandatory retirement age from 70 years to 75 years of  
6 age. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Tracy  
8 Gagnon.

9 And then I would like to call the next four  
10 speakers so you can be ready at the podium. Brian  
11 Chandler, Larry Gillis, Evelyn Brogden, and Fred  
12 Ingersoll, if the four of you could come forward.

13 Go ahead.

14 MS. GAGNON: My name is Tracy Gagnon,  
15 resident of Fort Myers, Florida. The reason I'm here  
16 today is there's too many voters in Florida being  
17 denied the right to vote in the primary elections.

18 Last year, 3.5 million voters were not  
19 allowed to vote in the primaries. That's a lot of  
20 votes. That's one out of every four voters not  
21 allowed to vote in the primaries. That's a lot of  
22 voters that paid for those elections that were denied  
23 the right to vote in those elections.

24 If the Democratic and Republican parties are  
25 private entities that get to decide who gets to vote

1 in their primaries, then they should pay for it. It  
2 seems rather unconstitutional to have us pay for the  
3 elections and not be able to vote in them.

4 I remember I honestly had no idea what a  
5 closed primary was the first time I went to vote. I  
6 was registered as an independent. There was nobody on  
7 my ballot, and that's how I learned what a closed  
8 primary was. In the election I was voting in, it was  
9 the sheriff. I couldn't believe that the sheriff is a  
10 partisan election. Where I'm from, I don't know what  
11 our sheriff is, whether he's a Republican or Democrat,  
12 and I don't know why that would matter for a sheriff.

13 The other reason I'm here today is because  
14 usually, it's straight Republican or Democrat; but  
15 last year, I wanted to vote in the Democratic  
16 presidential primary. I also wanted to vote for Jason  
17 Maughan; and in my opinion, Lizbeth Benacquisto  
18 cheated when she had one of her supporters register to  
19 run as a write-in candidate, disenfranchising me and  
20 others from voting in her election. I hope you can  
21 allow open primaries and close the loophole on  
22 write-in candidates.

23 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Brian  
24 Chandler. Larry Gillis is next.

25 MR. CHANDLER: My name is Brian Chandler.

1 I'm a Florida resident. I appreciate the opportunity  
2 to speak here. When I first heard of the commission  
3 and the opportunity we have to speak, I was going to  
4 speak on something else; but having watched some of  
5 the other testimonials last night and what I have seen  
6 here, I decided to say something different.

7           When our country was founded, the founders  
8 of our country committed treason to break from the  
9 crown. They dedicated their lives, their property,  
10 and their honor, everything that they had, everything  
11 that they possessed, everything that they were to  
12 bring freedom to this country. Many of them paid for  
13 their lives; many of them paid for their lives and  
14 property; some of them paid for just the property.  
15 They fought for our freedom and the freedom that we  
16 have.

17           The writings of a very wise man that I read,  
18 that I frequently read, makes it very clear that the  
19 type of government we have is less important than the  
20 integrity of those who administrate it. The ethics of  
21 government and the ethics of those writing our laws,  
22 administrating the laws, interpreting our laws is more  
23 important to the people than how it is actually  
24 established.

25           I urge you to look carefully at the impact

1 of the reformations that you will make and to  
2 strengthen the ethics in government and transparency  
3 to the people and to (inaudible) the people. This is  
4 what our founding fathers pledged their lives to do  
5 and what our military pledges their lives to do. Will  
6 you pledge your life to do it? Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you.

8 Mr. Gillis?

9 MR. GILLIS: I'm Larry Gillis. Thank you  
10 for hearing me. I'm from Cape Coral. I'm a  
11 fourth-generation Bostonian, but I kept my residence  
12 in Florida for the last nine years. My proposal on  
13 minimizing government was submitted this afternoon  
14 electronically, 100182.

15 As you all know, whenever some major  
16 (inaudible), the common response is to say, "There  
17 ought to be a law." You know, hopefully, the "do  
18 something" attitude and how it affects our  
19 legislators, especially those who wish to be seen as  
20 doing something about the cruelties of life,  
21 especially those who will become notorious. The same  
22 attitude affects bureaucrats and administrative  
23 agencies who tend to engage in mission creep and use  
24 taxpayer money to lobby legislators into expanding  
25 their legislative bureaucratic mandates. Sometimes we

1 see solutions in search of problems. This is not  
2 good. Government is metastasizing before our very  
3 eyes. Most worrying of all is our court's  
4 administrative and government agencies.

5 My proposal is a simple one: create a  
6 presumption to default mode against government  
7 latching and requiring for minimalizing our  
8 government. It needs to be done so the government,  
9 particularly administrative agencies, make use of the  
10 least amount of power. My time is -- to speak is  
11 limited, so I will end here. Yes, I am a registered  
12 Libertarian voter, and my proposal is consistent with  
13 Libertarian principle. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. And if  
15 you would like to leave any comments or documents, you  
16 can leave them at the table there.

17 MS. BROGDEN: Hello. My name is Evelyn  
18 Brogden, and I was born and raised, for the most part,  
19 here in the State of Florida. I'm a current field  
20 organizer for Equality Florida. And as a gay woman, I  
21 believe that all the people, regardless of their  
22 sexual orientation or gender, should have equal  
23 treatment in our great state. I urge you, please, do  
24 not roll back any progress we've made in this  
25 community and for the gay and transgender community.

1           In light of what happened last summer at  
2 Pulse, it is in the role as a state and as a community  
3 to give protection. So we're working so hard to get  
4 on the local level all the way to the state the right  
5 to keep existing because I, myself, have felt  
6 threatened, scared, and fearful for my safety just for  
7 breathing after the Pulse tragedy.

8           Secondly, as a community, it is vital that  
9 we have constant access to privacy to make our own  
10 decisions about ourselves and our bodies. Again, I  
11 urge you that this body does not make any attempt to  
12 circumvent Florida Supreme Court's decision in order  
13 to pander to the interests of a few local individuals  
14 that are trying to further their ideological agenda at  
15 the expense of a woman's ability to make the most  
16 personal and difficult decision for herself, for  
17 myself. Please do not interfere with that and  
18 continue as.

19           Lastly, I ask that you consider the  
20 restoration of voting rights for convicted felons. If  
21 we, as a state, are going to have representatives, we  
22 have to have all citizens have the right to vote and  
23 have representatives that rightfully represent their  
24 needs. And when a convicted felon serves their time,  
25 that should be the end of it. They should not have

1 their Bill of Rights taken away because of a status  
2 they served, and they paid their dues. And I just  
3 want to thank you again for your time, and I hope that  
4 you all travel safe back to your homes.

5 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. I'll call  
6 the next four speakers if you would please, all four,  
7 come forward. Grayson Porter, Archie Taghan, Claudia  
8 Volk, and Louis Piche.

9 Grayson Porter.

10 MS. PORTER: I'm an impromptu speaker today.  
11 I didn't really plan this. I wanted to point out the  
12 great State of Florida is being sprayed. I'm an  
13 antigeoengineering activist, and I suffer from  
14 Morgellons, the nonlesion version. If anyone here is  
15 interested in fighting Morgellons and geoengineering,  
16 please grab me on my way out.

17 And I would like to see -- I don't know if  
18 there's anything on the Constitution right now to stop  
19 the State of Florida from actually doing  
20 geoengineering aerosol spraying. If it's there, keep  
21 it. If it's not there, let's get something now.

22 In 2014, I did eight months of research for  
23 Matt Joiner federal programs -- director for Adam  
24 Putnam's office -- for the Florida Department of  
25 Agriculture and Consumer Services, a mouthful. When I

1 finished, he wouldn't return any phone calls. He was  
2 moved to Bartow. He didn't ever respond, period. I  
3 also copied the 8-gig memory stick to Rubio's office,  
4 Grayson's office, Nelson's office; and only now, two  
5 years later, I have one person in Rubio's office who  
6 will actually talk to me. This failure to respond,  
7 period, across the board on the geoengineering aerosol  
8 spraying that is taking place right now across our  
9 entire state is just appalling to me.

10 So if you don't know anything about  
11 geoengineering, go to [chemtrailsplanet.net](http://chemtrailsplanet.net), take a  
12 look at what Mr. Saive has collected up in  
13 Gainesville; and look up any time. If the contrail  
14 doesn't go away, there's a reason for it. It's  
15 aluminum, barium, and strontium. If you're worried  
16 about it, get yourself on diatomaceous earth and see  
17 if you can start getting the toxic heavy metal out of  
18 your system. You'll feel a lot better. And thank you  
19 for your time.

20 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Just for the record,  
21 could you state your name?

22 MS. PORTER: Grayson Porter, sorry.

23 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Go ahead.

24 MR. TAGHAN: I'm Archie Taghan for Americans  
25 for Prosperity. And I really question the reason for



1 this commission, but it is what it is.

2 So my feelings are that if you do need to go  
3 and do something -- because you don't necessarily have  
4 to do something if you're looking for something to do.  
5 So if you're going to do that, we support that you  
6 would make changes in Article IX of the Florida  
7 Constitution to ensure and codify the school choice.  
8 I've got grandkids coming up; I've got great-grandkids  
9 just getting ready to happen. So I care about the  
10 schools. I care about what is going on, and I want  
11 them to have every choice that they need. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Claudia  
13 Volk, Louis Piche.

14 And I'm just going to call the next four  
15 speakers if you would come forward. Lori Cook North,  
16 Carolyn Morton, Stephen Hooper, and David Rodenfels if  
17 you would please come forward to be ready to speak.

18 Go ahead.

19 MR. PICHE: Thank you. Dear Mr. Chairman  
20 and members of the CRC, my name is Louis Piche. I'm a  
21 member representing Americans for Prosperity.

22 So our goal is to simply ask you that you do  
23 nothing with the Florida Constitution; but if you  
24 must, we ask that you do it in a transparent way. If  
25 you must, we also ask you to look at Article IX of the

1 State Constitution, hope you will rework it to codify  
2 school choice and options in Florida. We believe  
3 school choice has been under attack in the court  
4 system, and we hope if the CRC does anything, it will  
5 make sure that our school choice will be ratified in  
6 the Constitution. I appreciate your time today.  
7 Thank you very much.

8 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Lori  
9 North and then Carolyn Morton.

10 MS. NORTH: Hi. I'm Lori North. And I just  
11 say today to the Chairman and the members of the  
12 Constitution Revision Commission, I'm a volunteer with  
13 Americans for Prosperity. And I'm here to ask you  
14 first to simply do nothing and hold the citizens of  
15 Florida harmless.

16 If this commission does see the need for  
17 putting something forward, we hope that it will be  
18 done in the most transparent way possible. We also  
19 ask that if you find a need to fix something, please  
20 modify Article IX of the State Constitution. We hope  
21 you will revise it to ensure and codify school choice  
22 options in Florida. I have grandchildren, like the  
23 previous gentlemen said, and I see how it has  
24 benefited their lives and success in schools. We  
25 believe school choice has been under attack in the

1 court system, and we hope that if the CRC does  
2 anything, it will make sure school choice will be  
3 ratified in the Constitution. Thank you very much.

4 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Carolyn  
5 Morton, Stephen Hooper. David Rodenfels after Mr.  
6 Hooper.

7 Go ahead.

8 MR. HOOPER: Good evening. My name is Steve  
9 Hooper, two o's, not two p's. Fun fact: There are  
10 196 countries on the planet. The United States is but  
11 one of them. It has the shortest constitution in the  
12 history of man. That Constitution takes about 30  
13 minutes and 30 seconds to read. The United States is  
14 also the longest lasting constitution in the history  
15 of the planet.

16 One of the things that's missing from the  
17 U.S. Constitution is mention of corporations. The  
18 other thing that's missing in the U.S. Constitution is  
19 mention of political parties. And now we have  
20 corporations that are political parties that are  
21 running everything. I suggest to you that there's  
22 nothing fundamentally wrong with that.

23 A lot of the speakers that have come here  
24 today have spoken to you about the need for open  
25 primaries. When people vote, the vote should mean

1 something. When they pay taxes, there should be --  
2 they should have the ability to elect the people that  
3 are representing them. Until and unless you find a  
4 way to allow them to do that unfettered by political  
5 persuasion, by corporate influence, by political  
6 parties, we will never have that; and we will just be  
7 one of the other 195 countries. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. And then  
9 after Mr. Rodenfels, we have -- Keith Flaugh come  
10 forward. And looks like Chris Rubino from Fort Myers;  
11 sorry about that. Kurt Goerke and then Steve Hemping.

12 MR. RODENFELS: My name is David Rodenfels.  
13 Looking at the transcripts online and some of the  
14 comments that have been posted to the website, I know  
15 some of my fellow Floridians have their opinion with  
16 access to affordable healthcare.

17 I want to voice my support for a proper  
18 amendment requiring healthcare, so no Floridian,  
19 regardless of age, gender, income, or any pre-existing  
20 condition, needs to suffer when treatment is available  
21 and accessible.

22 I also want to state that Floridians want to  
23 know who they're voting for and more specifically, who  
24 those candidates actually represent. I would like to  
25 propose an amendment that would require candidates for

1 statewide offices, including the governor, lieutenant  
2 governor, county officials, U.S. officials, the  
3 president and vice president, to disclose their tax  
4 returns as a requirement to appear on the Florida  
5 ballot.

6 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you.

7 MR. GOERKE: Hi. My name is Kurt Goerke,  
8 and I'm here tonight representing the American Lung  
9 Association of Florida. And I would like to speak on  
10 support of two constitutional amendments that are  
11 tobacco control-related, and both were added to our  
12 constitution through the initiative process in  
13 Florida.

14 The first one is Article X, Section 20; and  
15 it passed in 2002 by 70 percent of our Florida voters  
16 and basically brought us almost all workplaces are now  
17 smoke-free, including restaurants. We know that  
18 there's no acceptable, safe exposure to secondhand  
19 smoke. We also know that most indoor workplaces now  
20 being smoke-free has been a great public health  
21 benefit to both workers and patrons in Florida.

22 The second one I would like to address is  
23 Article X, Section 27. It was passed in 2006 by 60  
24 percent of Americans -- excuse me; Florida voters. It  
25 basically mandated that the State of Florida continue

1 to allocate a portion of the tobacco control dollars  
2 to prevention programs in Florida, and it is  
3 administered through the Florida Department of Health.  
4 Most people know it as "Tobacco Free Florida."  
5 According to the Florida Department of Health, the  
6 program has saved the State of Florida \$3.2 billion in  
7 healthcare costs. And annual smoking-related  
8 healthcare costs in Florida are down by 15 percent  
9 between 2006 and 2015.

10           Unfortunately, we have a ways to go yet. We  
11 still know that tobacco-related illness and death is  
12 the number one preventable cause of death in Florida.  
13 And 7,400 Floridians will begin to smoke again this  
14 year. So we -- basically, the American Lung  
15 Association stand ready to help you in any way, and we  
16 thank you for the opportunity to speak before your  
17 services. Thank you.

18           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Keith  
19 Flaugh.

20           MR. FLAUGH: Good evening. My name is Keith  
21 Flaugh, Southwest Florida. I'm one of the managing  
22 directors of Florida Citizens' Alliance. We work with  
23 over 80 groups across the State of Florida and have  
24 20,000 supporters -- more than 20,000 supporters.  
25 We're very focused on K through 12 local education

1 through our communities and preserving our school  
2 choice. Many supporters of our alliance are also  
3 activists which you have had from already today.

4 We also ask and urge that you do nothing.  
5 So don't tinker, but if you decide you are going to do  
6 something, do it with absolute transparency. In the  
7 area of K through 2 education, we also urge that you  
8 fix Article IX of the State Constitution to codify  
9 school choice options for our children. It is  
10 essential that we reform our system to unleash the  
11 potential of each and every child. Obliteration of  
12 this competition is an absolute critical-must to make  
13 this a reality.

14 Regarding the Second Amendment, this is a  
15 God-given right. We strongly urge you to protect, and  
16 I quote, "The right of the people to keep and bear  
17 arms shall not be infringed." I always like to hear  
18 people in the audience, "What comes after the word  
19 'infringed'?" Period. Federal government has no  
20 right to infringe on our Second Amendment rights. In  
21 fact, here in Florida, we ask you to strengthen every  
22 Floridian's right by codifying three items: Declaring  
23 what 10 states have all done: Nullification of the  
24 Second Amendment is federal infringement of our Second  
25 Amendment rights; support constitutional carry as 13

1 other states have done; and finally, support national  
2 response of the CCW permit under Article IV of the  
3 U.S. Constitution just as we do with driver's license.  
4 Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. You're  
6 going to correct me, I know.

7 MR. RUBINO: My name is Chris Rubino; sorry  
8 about that. I have awful handwriting. I'd like to  
9 say thank you, appreciate the opportunity to speak. I  
10 would like to speak about two issues.

11 I spent 27 years in the United States Navy.  
12 My honor, my privilege to serve, but I don't think we  
13 do enough for our veterans. I think we find a way to  
14 put it in our Constitution to make sure we have no  
15 more homeless veterans, no more 22 veterans a day that  
16 commit suicide. We need to put more of our money into  
17 taking care of the people that took care of us. I  
18 spend most of my days off at the VFW helping veterans.  
19 The VFW is doing a lot, but the state, every state,  
20 needs to do more to take care of our veterans after  
21 they serve.

22 Second issue I would like to talk about is  
23 the Second Amendment like many people talked about  
24 today. In addition to the 27 years I did in the Navy,  
25 I did 20 years as a police officer and as an



1 instructor at police academy. I have had many  
2 instances in my career where I have had a gun at the  
3 back of my head. I have been in fire fights. I have  
4 done everything that you could think on the law  
5 enforcement end of owning a gun. And I must say, of  
6 all the guns I have taken off the street -- it's  
7 probably in the hundreds -- not one was ever by a  
8 legal law-abiding citizen.

9           Making more laws to limit law-abiding  
10 citizens owning guns is just -- it doesn't do  
11 anything. There's other words to be used, but it  
12 wouldn't be proper. It doesn't do a thing. We need  
13 to enforce the laws that we have for illegal gun  
14 ownership. When people commit crimes with a gun, they  
15 should be put away. It shouldn't be the law-abiding  
16 citizens that are -- that take the brunt of these  
17 laws. Instant background checks do their part making  
18 sure that people don't get the guns they shouldn't  
19 have; but after that, the three-day wait, the other  
20 background checks, do nothing to keep the guns out of  
21 people that will go out there and commit murders,  
22 commit acts of atrocity. It's not the law-abiding  
23 people that need to be regulated. Thank you.

24           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Thank you  
25 for your service.

1 Steve Hemping? Steve Hemping?

2 All right. I'll call the next four speakers  
3 if you could come forward. John Kesich, Steve Miles,  
4 Branden Pearson, and Carl Veaux.

5 MR. KESICH: Good evening, Commissioners.  
6 My name is John Kesich from Venice up in Sarasota  
7 County. I would like to propose two related changes  
8 that will make our elections better.

9 First is to switch from first-past-the-post  
10 voting to single transferable vote, which is a form of  
11 rank very similar to the runoff voting that you may be  
12 more familiar with.

13 The second is to -- in all cases where it is  
14 practicable to use multimember districts. I intend to  
15 submit an electronic submission which will have more  
16 detailed information for you including a link to a  
17 five-minute video which explains how single  
18 transferable vote with multimember districts works;  
19 however, I will just give you one example from my  
20 personal life which might make things clear for you.

21 On the 2016 ballot, we in Sarasota County  
22 had five races to populate our charter review board.  
23 Like many citizens, I voted for five candidates and  
24 none of them made it. I don't know if you can  
25 understand why I feel that I'm not represented on that

1 board. Now, if on the other hand, we had all of the  
2 candidates run in one single race where every voter  
3 got to rank the choices in their order of preference  
4 and then we applied the rules of single transferable  
5 vote, the results would be much more representative  
6 and much more fair. Thank you for your consideration.

7 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Steve  
8 Miles.

9 Branden Pearson.

10 MR. PEARSON: Good evening, Constitution  
11 Review Committee. My name is Branden Pearson. I'm a  
12 recently-registered voter here in Lee County. Shortly  
13 after turning 18, I registered -- when I went to  
14 register to vote, I was uncertain if I wanted to  
15 pledge party affiliation at the same time. At the  
16 national, state, and even local level, we have seen  
17 party divides cause discontent; and personally, I lean  
18 to more conservative values, but there are times where  
19 (inaudible) are more to my principles.

20 I believe President John F. Kennedy said it  
21 best: "Let us not keep the Republican answer or the  
22 Democratic answer, but the right answer." (Inaudible)  
23 State of Florida. This can be very dangerous. The  
24 State of Florida is only 1 of 11 states with a closed  
25 primary system. This has prevented the over 2.8

1 million registered voters that have no party  
2 affiliation from voting in primaries. Even in cases  
3 where only candidates of a single party are running,  
4 an independent writing in, a single individual, can  
5 close an entire primary and prevent voters from having  
6 a choice. Ultimately, this is excluding millions of  
7 voters from across the great State of Florida from  
8 having an equal voice in the election.

9           It is this reason why I believe the  
10 Constitution Review Commission should place on the  
11 2018 ballot an amendment to establish either semiopen  
12 or open primaries here in the State of Florida. I  
13 believe this will expand voter participation in  
14 (inaudible) and allow a more fair and ethical  
15 election. Thank you for your time. I hope for you to  
16 consider either a semiopen or open primary form of  
17 election. Thank you.

18           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. And while  
19 Mr. Veaux is coming forward, I'll call the next four  
20 speakers. Catherine Durkin Robinson, Glen Ahlert,  
21 Matthew Gomes, Samantha Severance.

22           MR. VEAUX: Good evening. My name is Carl  
23 Veaux. I am currently president of Cape Coral Friends  
24 of Wildlife and president of Southwest Florida Audubon  
25 Society. I was on the Lee County Charter Commission,

1 so I know what you're going through; and it is a  
2 wonderful process.

3 I am here to propose that the real estate  
4 (inaudible) for supplying wildlife with quality land  
5 for the next seven to ten years not be ignored by our  
6 government as of now, and we need to preserve our land  
7 for our children and their grandchildren. We all  
8 remember when you saw your first eagle or deer, fox;  
9 and this will deprive our children if we don't buy  
10 more land for wildlife and water quality.

11 It's in your hearts. I know this is how I  
12 was when I was in your shoes. And if you have the  
13 heart, vote for Amendment One included in the  
14 Constitution to help it; however, it is in the courts.  
15 And if the courts don't rule in your favor, you don't  
16 have to, but I still think it would be good to be in  
17 the Constitution.

18 I collected 4,300 votes for Amendment One.  
19 I'm no stranger to it, and I would like to see it  
20 implemented in the way that people want it. Remember,  
21 74 percent of the people of Florida voted for it and  
22 78 percent in Lee County. So if you please remember  
23 your eagle, your children, and the panther, we need  
24 this before the millions of people who will be coming  
25 here to live. We won't have land without it. Thank

1 you.

2 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Catherine  
3 Durkin Robinson, Glen Ahlert, Matthew Gomes, Samantha  
4 Severance.

5 MS. ROBINSON: Hi. My name is Catherine  
6 Durkin Robinson. I organize Parent Network in the  
7 State of Florida who believe in their -- preserving  
8 their right to choose the type of education for their  
9 kids. One of our parents is here today. She would  
10 like to introduce herself to you and tell you why  
11 we're here.

12 MS. BANNWORTH: Hello. My name is Tiffany  
13 Bannworth. I'm a lifelong resident of Lee County.  
14 I'm a mother of seven boys. And I believe that you  
15 should vote for any amendment that protects the rights  
16 of parents like me to choose the type of education the  
17 their children ought to have.

18 Previously, if I had infinite amounts of  
19 money, I could choose and send my children wherever I  
20 wanted. What happens to people who are lower-income,  
21 or who are not able to afford a large family but also  
22 want my child to have either a Christian faith private  
23 education or homeschool? Now, It's not to say that  
24 one is better than the other. Some people, public  
25 school's preferred, private school's preferred, or

1 homeschool. The idea is that the rights should lie  
2 within the parents to be able to choose what they know  
3 about their own family and what's better for their  
4 family. You only get one chance to send them to  
5 school during their life of education. So why settle  
6 for what you think is best for your children?

7           And there are avenues which I'm able to send  
8 my children to private school. But now I do send my  
9 kids to a private Christian academy. I'm able to  
10 utilize the Florida tax credit through (inaudible).  
11 Thank God I'm able to renew that every year. So that  
12 the finances cannot be poured into other avenues so  
13 this program ceases to exist. Thank God it happens to  
14 me and my family and seven boys, but other families  
15 deserve this option as well. And I ask that you think  
16 about this, and you think that there is not only one  
17 proper way of education in the State of Florida, that  
18 you allow it to open up to any avenue to better serve  
19 the children and the families that do have access to  
20 education. And I thank you for listening. I hope you  
21 guys will continue to fund private education as well.  
22 Thank you.

23           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. For the  
24 record, could you please state your name?

25           MS. BANNWORTH: My name is Tiffany

1 Bannworth.

2 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: And if you would  
3 please fill out the speaker card, so we would have a  
4 record of you.

5 Glen Ahlert. Glen Ahlert?

6 Matthew Gomes?

7 MR. GOMES: Hello. My name is Matthew  
8 Gomes, and I have lived in Florida for 15 years. I  
9 appreciate the opportunity to speak before the  
10 commission.

11 As a gay individual, I believe that -- and  
12 I'm involved in my school's gay/straight alliance  
13 group. I believe that all people regardless of their  
14 sexual orientation or gender should have equal  
15 treatment in our great state. I ask you, please, do  
16 not roll back any progress made to the community and  
17 to the state thus far for the gay and transgender  
18 community. In the upcoming 2018 election, I'll be  
19 thoroughly exercising my right to vote. And I hope to  
20 see more positive action for the well-being of the  
21 LGBTQ community.

22 Furthermore, in accordance with equality for  
23 our community is the right to safety and privacy. On  
24 behalf of women and their right to their own bodies,  
25 it is vital that they have constant access to full



1 privacy to make their own decisions about themselves  
2 and their bodies. Because of this, I want you to  
3 ensure protection guaranteed under the privacy clause,  
4 Article I, Section 23, continues to protect the  
5 woman's and anyone who may need access to their right  
6 to make private decisions about their own bodies.  
7 Thank you very much.

8 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Samantha  
9 Severance.

10 And then while Ms. Severance is coming  
11 forward, I'll call the next four speakers if you would  
12 come forward. Amy French, Dean Water, Terry -- I'm  
13 sorry; I can't read the last name -- from Fort Myers,  
14 Terry Loraine maybe, and Ronnie Rankin if you four  
15 could come forward.

16 MS. SEVERANCE: Good evening. My name is  
17 Samantha Severance. The reason I came here this  
18 evening was to -- I was very curious about what this  
19 whole process was about, and this is also an impromptu  
20 sort of speaking.

21 I decided that I wanted to speak about  
22 corporate interests versus citizens interests in our  
23 democratic process and that the effects of the way our  
24 (inaudible) have from everything from education to the  
25 environment.

1           I wanted to speak on basic rights. I think  
2 it's important that we start to think about basic  
3 rights of clean water, clean air, and an environment  
4 that we can protect and pass onto our children. I  
5 think that we have to consider that corporations are  
6 way more powerful, have a lot more political clout  
7 than just ordinary citizens; and that is unfair,  
8 especially in the education process as well. If we  
9 start to prioritize education and fund private  
10 education, then we're really taking away from our  
11 public education and the -- and what we want so much  
12 for our kids.

13           Really just short and sweet, maybe not so  
14 sweet, but I would really like to see corporate  
15 America step back and not be treated as equal  
16 citizens. Corporations are not people and they  
17 shouldn't be given the same rights as people. Please  
18 listen to the people. Thank you.

19           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Amy  
20 French.

21           MS. FRENCH: Thank you for being here. I'm  
22 a proud member of the Teachers Association of Lee  
23 County. I'm a proud public school teacher, proud  
24 about the choices that we have in our public schools  
25 right now. But I'm really here to speak to you about

1 Article I, Section 6, the right to work.

2 "The right of the employees, by and through  
3 a labor organization, to bargain collectively shall  
4 not be denied or abridged." So I'm going to ask you  
5 when you go back and go through the Constitution,  
6 leave that one alone. We have that already. The  
7 language is good, so you don't have to do anything.  
8 Make your lives easier. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Dean  
10 Water. Dean Waters?

11 Terry -- I'll let you say your last name.

12 MS. LIANZI: Good evening. Thank you for  
13 allowing me to speak. My name is Terry Lianzi. I'm  
14 speaking for the League of Women Voters of Lee County,  
15 Florida, with the agreement of our president.

16 Since 1994, voters have approved numerous  
17 proposed amendments to our Constitution relating to  
18 conservation. In 2014, the voters statewide by a vote  
19 of 74.96 percent approved the constitutional amendment  
20 to preserve ecologically sensitive and vulnerable  
21 land. In Florida, protecting conservation lands is  
22 conserving water, which is why we urge this commission  
23 to consider a proposal to acquire and restore land  
24 necessary to protect our drinking water sources and  
25 protect the water quality in our lakes and streams.

1           Also, land conservation for a habitat for  
2 wildlife can create recreational opportunities for  
3 residents and visitors alike, fueling our tourism and  
4 the economy. As voters in Lee County, we passed a  
5 grassroots initiative, Conservation 20/20, by 84  
6 percent. The league was one of the founders of this  
7 very successful grassroots initiative.

8           I am a lifelong conservationist, and I want  
9 you to restore the water from Lake Okeechobee to  
10 Florida Bay. This is necessary to counter sea level  
11 rise and saltwater intrusion. I was once upon a time  
12 a member of the board for South Florida Water  
13 Management District. There's lots of information.  
14 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

15           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Ronnie  
16 Rankin. Ronnie Rankin?

17           All right. The next four speakers are June  
18 Comer, Karen Leonardi, Al Riker, and Robert Himschoot.

19           June?

20           MS. LEONARDI: I'm not June. I'm Karen  
21 Leonardi. Good evening. In 1885, the Florida State  
22 Constitution under Article IX, Section 9, provided for  
23 a property tax exemption for widows who were bona fide  
24 residents of the State of Florida. In 1968, the  
25 Florida State constitution revised this specific

1 provision; and the provision was altered and expanded  
2 to set a specific value of an amount if not less than  
3 \$500 to be provided to every widow, widower, and blind  
4 or disabled person, an exemption of property taxation,  
5 as stated in Article VII, Section 3.

6 Now, this is an important point being that  
7 the \$500 exemption has remained at this amount and has  
8 not been adjusted since 1968; therefore, in  
9 recognition that property values in the State of  
10 Florida have substantially increased since 1968, and  
11 quite honestly, the property taxes, relative to those  
12 increased values, have also substantially increased,  
13 it is requested that the amount of the property tax  
14 exemption for widows, widowers, and blind and disabled  
15 persons as addressed in the Florida State Constitution  
16 be reviewed and the dollar amount for this exemption  
17 be suitably and appropriately increased to reflect the  
18 current times.

19 I hope that I, in my quiet and very small  
20 voice, with yours as well, can bring about a positive  
21 change. Thank you so very much, and thank you for  
22 listening.

23 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Al Riker?

24 Robert Himschoot from Fort Myers?

25 All right. I'll call the next four

1 speakers. Dr. Joseph Doyle, Christopher Turner, Shaun  
2 Connett, and Gwynne Hickman.

3 DR. DOYLE: Good evening, Commissioners.  
4 I'm Dr. Joseph Doyle, a physician from Naples,  
5 Florida. I would like to address corruption at the  
6 local level. And we need to drain the swamp like  
7 Donald Trump says. I'm not talking about the  
8 Everglades.

9 At the local level, I believe we need to  
10 have the county commissioners and the school board  
11 members term limits just like we do for our state  
12 representatives, senators, governor, and  
13 constitutional officers. We recently had school board  
14 members that served over 10 years. We currently have  
15 a commissioner of the court of 14 years who's up for  
16 re-election. And tried to have a local ordinance  
17 recently. They imposed -- they agreed to three terms,  
18 12 years; well, that's a joke. We need two terms,  
19 eight years, or something like that similar to what  
20 we're doing at the state level.

21 The other think I would like to see is we  
22 have a billion-dollar county budget, and we have a  
23 billion-dollar school board budget. The county has  
24 the clerk of courts overseeing the county's. We have  
25 nothing like that at the school board level. We have

1 a superintendent and a board majority, does not  
2 monitor it. So I think we need to expand the role of  
3 the clerk to have oversight over the school board.  
4 Along those lines, we still need to look at local  
5 control and do all we can for school choice. Thank  
6 you.

7 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you.  
8 Christopher Turner, American Cancer Society, probably  
9 mispronouncing the last name.

10 Shaun Connett.

11 MR. CONNETT: How's everyone doing today?  
12 My name is Shaun Connett. I'm a U.S. Army veteran.  
13 I'm asking this board to keep the Florida Constitution  
14 as it is now. All of us can agree this country is in  
15 a very divided state and not everything need to be put  
16 into the Constitution. It can be resolved at local  
17 levels.

18 I would also ask that you look into your  
19 local universities and see what they're teaching in  
20 those universities. If you're not familiar with  
21 antifa, maybe you should look into that. Also, you  
22 should look into why people are dropping out of  
23 colleges with hatred towards America. And I'll leave  
24 you with that. Thank you very much for your time.

25 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you for your

1 service.

2 Gwynne Hickman and while she's coming up,  
3 Jennifer Leaf, Melissa Butler, Ron Saberton from Fort  
4 Myers speaking about -- looks like gerrymandering, and  
5 David Crowther.

6 MR. TURNER: Excuse me; Christopher Turner  
7 for The American Cancer Society. I apologize for my  
8 handwriting. I'm here on behalf of the American  
9 Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I appreciate  
10 the opportunity to speak in support of two tobacco  
11 control-related amendments that are added to the state  
12 Constitution through the citizens initiative process.

13 Article X, Section 20, of the Florida  
14 Constitution passed in 2002 and prohibits smoking in  
15 most indoor workplaces including restaurants. Having  
16 most of us take smoke-free places for granted, now  
17 that we've had this Constitution for 15 years, was  
18 important for the thousands of advocates who worked  
19 tirelessly for years to bring this public health  
20 measure forward. The incorporation measure an  
21 important step forward protecting Floridians every day  
22 from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

23 Article X, Section 27, passed in 2006 and  
24 mandated the state allocate portions of tobacco  
25 settlement money to tobacco prevention. The resulting



1 program is administered by the Florida Department of  
2 Health; it's better known as "Tobacco free Florida."

3 Tobacco Free Florida works to protect  
4 Floridians from dangers of tobacco by helping current  
5 smokers quit and focusing on prevention efforts that  
6 have brought our youth smoking rates down from 10.6  
7 percent in 2006 to 3 percent in 2015. It's had a 71  
8 percent decrease. The program follows the CDC best  
9 practices and is a shining example for other states on  
10 how to do tobacco prevention and education the right  
11 way. ACS stands ready to provide any additional  
12 information this body may need in order to protect  
13 these important public health provisions of Florida's  
14 Constitution. Again, Commissioner, members of the  
15 commission, I thank you for the opportunity to speak  
16 and for your service to our great state.

17 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Gwynne  
18 Hickman?

19 Our last four speakers before we take a  
20 five-minute break are Jennifer Leaf, Melissa Butler,  
21 Ron Saberton, and David Crowther.

22 MS. HICKMAN: Good evening, ladies and  
23 gentlemen. My name is Gwynne Hickman, and I'm a  
24 resident of Cape Coral. I just want to say that I'm a  
25 supporter of the Second Amendment of the Constitution

1 of the United States. We have some laws on the books  
2 already in the State of Florida. I don't know that  
3 it's necessary to put anymore on there. I don't think  
4 it's necessary to change our Constitution. We can  
5 just go by our U.S. Constitution; although, some of  
6 the comments that were made before about that and I  
7 totally agree with. And I just wanted to state my  
8 thoughts on that. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you very much.  
10 Jennifer Leaf?

11 DR. LEAF: My name is Jennifer Leaf. I'm a  
12 physician who retired this year, and I have lived in  
13 Florida for 27 years, 19 in Lee County. I'm here to  
14 advocate for open primaries. Thank you so much for  
15 allowing me a voice today, especially since I feel  
16 that in our current system of closed primaries, as a  
17 voter registered without a party affiliation, it seems  
18 like I'm often denied that voice. I do lean left of  
19 center in my political beliefs and consider myself a  
20 politically-informed person. I have never given money  
21 to a party or candidate because I feel the system is  
22 so unfair. Yes, you heard me. I'm a doctor and I  
23 have never given money to a doctor pack. I do  
24 contribute to organizations such as Project Vote Smart  
25 and Common Cause that work for more fair political

1 process, and open primary Florida would be a step in  
2 that direction.

3           Twenty-five percent of the registered voters  
4 in Florida have no party affiliation. This is true in  
5 my county also with votes strongly Republican. Closed  
6 primaries denies citizens who are actually paying for  
7 the primary elections and our registered voters from  
8 being able to vote. Both the voters with no party  
9 affiliation and the local minority party -- as in a  
10 county like Lee -- are denied a meaningful voice and  
11 who their political leaders will be. This leads to a  
12 more polarized candidates who know that they do not  
13 have to pay any attention to the majority of the  
14 people in their constituencies. This is not fair;  
15 this is not democratic. Let's not pretend that the  
16 concept of a universal primary contest solves the  
17 problem. There are ways to gain that also, well-used  
18 by old parties.

19           Please help us stop the suppression of so  
20 many of our voices. Our most fundamental right as a  
21 citizen is our right to vote in fair elections. I  
22 plead with you to put a constitutional amendment on  
23 the Florida ballot to allow open primaries. Thank  
24 you.

25           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you.

1 MS. BUTLER: My name is Melissa Butler, and  
2 I'm a retired professor of political science. And I  
3 appreciate your being here and letting us see the  
4 political process in action.

5 I'm not fully retired, though. I still  
6 teach American government in the summer in the  
7 People's Republic of China. When I'm there in  
8 Shanghai, I try to teach Chinese university students  
9 what democracy is and why it's a good thing. I tell  
10 them about government of the people by the people and  
11 for the people and about the value of full political  
12 participation. But I feel just a little bit  
13 hypocritical when I reflect on how our own system  
14 often fails to measure up as a democracy. And there  
15 is two things that come to mind that you folks could  
16 address, and they have both been mentioned already.

17 One is the move from closed primaries to  
18 open primaries. My Chinese students understand the  
19 idea of only letting party members vote, but that's  
20 really not democracy. We can do better than that.

21 Second thing is to restore voting rights to  
22 those who've had felony convictions, who paid their  
23 debt to society. They ought to be restored to full  
24 citizenship and allowed to participate politically.

25 Thank you.

1           COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. Ron  
2 Saberton? I think I'm saying your last name wrong. I  
3 apologize.

4           MR. SABERTON: Ron Saberton. That's all  
5 right. I'm not retired yet, but I heard something  
6 that was really good. I don't mean to repeat it --

7           THE CHAIRMAN: Can you put the microphone a  
8 little closer so we can hear you?

9           MR. SABERTON: Okay.

10          THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'll give you  
11 more time.

12          MR. SABERTON: Bill of Rights, I think  
13 everybody needs the right to healthcare, somehow  
14 education. Housing is relevant to the Bill of Rights.  
15 Like to see some of the money out of politics because  
16 it creates just unfair distribution in favor of large  
17 corporations whom I would like to see have less  
18 influence in government. Seems like they're taking  
19 over. The people aren't allowed to vote that are --  
20 don't have access. You know, we can put people on the  
21 moon, and we can spy on everybody in this country. I  
22 think we should be able to determine who we like to  
23 vote for in a more efficient, effective manner.

24                 Maybe Florida gets a wall; maybe we should  
25 put up on the Florida-Georgia border because we're

1 exceeding our capacity to provide ourselves with  
2 drinking water here and just became evident Florida  
3 seems to have the worst drinking water in the country  
4 according to the Internet, whatever credence you give  
5 to that instrument.

6 The legislation needs some supervision. If  
7 you look at a map of districting in the State of  
8 Florida, you wonder a child would not be able to  
9 figure out why it's guided that way.

10 Somebody mentioned people have paid their  
11 dues in prison. They should have their rights  
12 restored.

13 Minorities should have access to the polls  
14 as well as majorities, which we're not going to be  
15 much longer. I didn't come to Florida to pay -- not  
16 pay taxes 40 years ago. It seems to be --

17 COMMISSIONER CARLTON: Thank you. That's  
18 the end of your time. If you do have comments you  
19 would like to leave, please leave them on the table.  
20 I'll make sure we get copies of the rest of your  
21 testimony. Thank you.

22 David Crowther?

23 All right. Mr. Chairman, that's my last  
24 speaker. We have approximately 20-some speakers left,  
25 and we'll stand in a five-minute recess.

1 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

2 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: We're going to get  
3 started with the remaining speakers. I'm going to go  
4 ahead and call several names. Please make your way to  
5 either podium so we can keep the meeting moving.

6 Erica Evans, Charla Fox, Elise Rose, and  
7 Kyra Johnson if you could make your way down as your  
8 commissioners are on the way back. Please be sure to  
9 state your name prior to your comments.

10 Go ahead.

11 MS. FOX: My name is Charla Fox, and I am a  
12 native of Fort Myers, lifelong resident. I am a proud  
13 Lee County public school teacher and a member of our  
14 local union organization. I wanted to address you  
15 today because I want to make sure that you recognize  
16 that in this state -- I know that you know that we're  
17 a right-to-work state.

18 Article I, Section 6, addresses that and it  
19 made that change back in the '80s, I believe it was --  
20 or actually the '70s after the teacher strikes. We  
21 now have the only state that has the ability to have  
22 collective bargaining between the unions and the  
23 school districts and public education. It is  
24 important that that is in the hands of our school  
25 districts of the centers where our education and where

1 these things are happening; because if we take that  
2 out of the hands of the local area, we are making it  
3 more government, more decentralized. Those things can  
4 be done at the local level. And if we take that away,  
5 we're just making for bigger government, and that's  
6 one thing I do ask that you leave alone.

7 The other area that I would like to address  
8 is public schools. You hear a lot about school  
9 choice. We have good schools in Florida, but they  
10 have been under attack; and the funding has been under  
11 attack for many years. If we were to fund public  
12 schools the way that we do our special interest, we  
13 would have the best schools not just in the nation --

14 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Your time  
15 it up.

16 Erica Evans, Elise Rose, Kyra Johnson,  
17 Cheryl Lee.

18 MS. EVANS: Hi. My name is Erica Evans. My  
19 three pet peeves have already been brought up multiple  
20 times, so I would like to espouse on why they are  
21 important to the people of this area.

22 My first one is just on Article II. The  
23 wording of the Florida Constitution, issues for  
24 conservation. Adequate provision made by the law to  
25 protect Florida's natural resources. Adequate is not



1 cutting it in Lee County. Our Florida water quality  
2 dipped because of water pollution from the Okeechobee.  
3 In my 14 years here in the area, I've seen the  
4 landscape change and it's heartbreaking. I came here  
5 14 years ago from the mountains; and I didn't even  
6 like it here, but I felt it was so beautiful. I feel  
7 my heart breaking inside. I'm begging you to strength  
8 then the wording, if possible, of Article II.

9           Secondly, privacy with women's choices and  
10 their healthcare. I'm a nurse and as difficult as  
11 abortions for any women to make that choice, I want  
12 women to seek out healthcare providers who will give  
13 them unbiased information and support to make the  
14 decision for themselves. I don't want the government  
15 coming in and taking their choices and rights away  
16 from them.

17           And lastly, I would just like to, again, say  
18 open primaries. And I wanted to tell you a brief  
19 story about when I came to Florida as a young person  
20 to Lee County. I got involved in local politics right  
21 away. I was invited to a fundraiser for a local  
22 politician, and I was told that if I didn't register  
23 for one particular party, my vote would never count in  
24 Lee County ever again because of closed primaries and  
25 because of the write-in loophole. I have seen that

1 happen over and over again in 14 years. Please close  
2 the loophole so young people, younger than me, don't  
3 lose faith in the political process in Florida. Thank  
4 you.

5 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Elise Rose, Kyra  
6 Johnson, Cheryl Lee, Robert Geltner, Robert Valenta,  
7 and Arlene Goldberg.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Hi. My name is Kyra Johnson,  
9 and I was born and raised in Florida. And I'm  
10 thankful for this opportunity to speak before the  
11 commission. I'm involved in gay/straight alliance at  
12 my high school. And as an allied individual, I will  
13 believe that all people, regardless of their sexual  
14 orientation or gender identity should have equal  
15 treatment in our great state. I ask that you please  
16 do not roll back any progress we made as a community  
17 as far as the gay and transgender community.

18 In the upcoming 2018 election, I'll be  
19 thoroughly exercising my right to vote. And I hope to  
20 see measures and protections for the well-being of my  
21 LGBTQ friends and family so that they may live a life  
22 without fear because of their sexual orientation in  
23 the State of Florida.

24 Furthermore, a cornerstone in equality for  
25 our community is the right to safety and privacy. As

1 a community, it's vital that we have constant access  
2 to full privacy to make decisions about ourselves and  
3 our bodies. As more than 90,000 people who  
4 participated in the women's marches and rallies across  
5 Florida, it made it loud and clear in January that we  
6 do not want access to reproductive rights attacked  
7 through the legislative process; we do not want  
8 crucial healthcare providers like Planned Parenthood  
9 defunded; and we certainly don't want women's rights  
10 undermined in our state Constitution. Therefore, I  
11 urge you to ensure that these protections guaranteed  
12 under the Florida privacy rights clause of the  
13 Constitution, Article I, Section 23, continue to  
14 protect a woman's -- and anyone who may need access to  
15 reproductive care -- the right to make a private  
16 decision about her body. Thank you for your time.

17 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

18 MS. LEE: Cheryl Lee, native Floridian. I  
19 live in North Port, Florida, currently, about an hour  
20 north of here in Sarasota County. I came here tonight  
21 with my 20-year-old daughter who recently had her  
22 chance to vote for her first presidential election.  
23 And between my husband and I we have three daughters,  
24 two of them voting age, and a young son.

25 In our home, turning 18 comes with a voter

1 registration form in your face at sunup. We regard  
2 registering to vote as a major milestone and an  
3 important privilege. We raised our children to  
4 understand that the seemingly simple act of voting was  
5 fought for and our right to vote should be respected  
6 so as to respect those who struggled and fought for  
7 that right before us. When my daughter registered to  
8 vote at 18, still in high school, she wasn't  
9 comfortable with labeling herself as a Republican or a  
10 Democrat, so she registered as an independent. And  
11 the conversation went something like this over the  
12 next couple of years, "Mom, I registered. Can I be an  
13 independent?"

14 "Absolutely. You're an American. You can  
15 register with whatever you feel you resonate with."

16 So fast-forward a little bit to the  
17 presidential primaries. "I'm registered to vote. Can  
18 I go vote?"

19 "Well, no, sorry, you can't vote. All this  
20 important stuff we've been talking about the last  
21 couple of years, it doesn't apply to you as a  
22 registered voter. It only applies to people who  
23 registered to vote in another way."

24 So it's pretty clear to her and to my other  
25 daughters that there is voter discrimination. I mean,

1 that's the message that they're taking home with them  
2 after registering to vote and learning that they  
3 tightened the voter restrictions of the system of  
4 anyone who falls outside of two narrow options. So  
5 please open Florida's primaries to all Florida  
6 registered voters.

7 And I have a couple seconds left. Also,  
8 speaking of my three daughters, please preserve their  
9 right to reproductive privacy. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Elise  
11 Rose, Kay Haering, Robert Geltner, Robert Valenta, and  
12 Arlene Goldberg.

13 MR. GELTNER: I'm Robert Geltner. I'm a  
14 resident of North Fort Myers. I have been in Florida  
15 for 30 years. I'm an Air Force veteran. I know it  
16 would be great if many provisions were not needed to  
17 be placed in the Constitution; however, I think  
18 because our executive and legislative branches have  
19 refused to deal with so many issues, it's important  
20 that we get some constitutional protection. So I'm  
21 going to ask you to research some of the issues that  
22 I'm going to mention.

23 First, Florida must maintain an independent  
24 and ethically-funded judiciary. And by making sure  
25 that there's strong constitutional language to keep

1 the executive and the legislative branches from  
2 infringing on that third branch of government. And I  
3 also concur on the need to increase the age of  
4 judiciary to 75.

5           Second, I ask for constitutional language  
6 that limits the undue influence maintained by  
7 legislative staff. I actually believe that whereas  
8 state legislators have term limits, their staff's  
9 influence continues to increase forever giving the  
10 staff more influence than the legislators; and I think  
11 something need to be done about that.

12           Three, the Sunshine Law should be  
13 strengthened by our Constitution, again, not allowing  
14 the executive and legislative branch to tamper with  
15 it.

16           Four, the Constitution must contain  
17 provisions to compel the legislature to obey the vote  
18 of the people when they adopt constitutional  
19 provisions.

20           Five, we need provisions to make it easier  
21 for everyone to vote and not have litigation.

22           Six, we need constitutional provisions  
23 clarifying that corporations are not legal persons and  
24 that their rights can be restricted.

25           Seven, we need veterans' rights protected.

1           Eight, we need to protect workers who are  
2 injured under the workers' compensation laws. The  
3 legislator is not doing an adequate job.

4           Nine, we need to protect collective-party  
5 rights. Thank you.

6           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. If I  
7 called your name, go ahead.

8           MS. HAERING: Hello. My name is Kay  
9 Haering. I'm requesting constitutional laws to be  
10 introduced that would protect our Florida black bear.

11           As a registered Native American, we're  
12 taught to protect our land for our time and for future  
13 generations to come. We tried but could not protect  
14 our bears from 2015 hunts. But we did stop it from  
15 being repeated in '16, '17, and it will be stopped  
16 again in 2018. Over 6.5 million citizens from all  
17 across Florida were represented by resolution signed  
18 by county and cities statewide asking the state to not  
19 to allow bear hunting in their vicinity. There's  
20 major opposition to bear killing by the majority.

21           Recently, a Senate bill was issued. SB 1304  
22 in its original form wouldn't have offered many  
23 protections. Issuing a ban on bear hunts, no forest  
24 burns during den months, which burns to death infant  
25 bears too little to run from the flames. And a

1 constitutional amendment could go further. It would  
2 protect our bears permanently, banning their hunts  
3 forever. The bears belong to a majority of the  
4 citizens and to the public trust doctrine, not to  
5 (inaudible) that choose to destroy them.

6 Fact: Nature has designed bears to  
7 self-regulate population. They will not carry a  
8 pregnancy if food is scarce. No man is needed to  
9 regulate their population.

10 Fact: No unprovoked bear attack has ever  
11 taken place in Florida.

12 Fact: Black bears are timid creatures and  
13 will run if given an escape.

14 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Your time  
15 is up.

16 MS. GOLDBERG: Hello. My name is Arlene  
17 Goldberg, and I have lived here in Fort Myers since  
18 1989. As a lesbian and a person stung by the pangs of  
19 discrimination, I believe that all people, regardless  
20 of the their sexual orientation or gender identity  
21 should have equal treatment in our great state. I ask  
22 you please do not roll back any progress we have made  
23 as a community and as a state thus far for the gay and  
24 transgender community.

25 There are states in Florida -- there are



1 counties in Florida that do have rights: rights to  
2 work, rights to have a place to live, and rights for  
3 services. And there are counties like that. But  
4 there are counties where we don't have those rights,  
5 and we're terribly discriminated against.

6 And being married here -- I was lucky enough  
7 to be in a lawsuit with the ACLU, and my lawsuit won  
8 marriage for Florida. My partner of 47 years, she  
9 died a few years ago, but we won marriage for Florida  
10 and I'm very proud of that. But there are still  
11 states that -- and still towns that have absolutely no  
12 benefits at all and terribly discriminated against.

13 I formed the Southwest Florida community,  
14 Southwest Florida Harmony Chamber of Commerce here.  
15 It embraces equality, diversity. We're opening a LBGT  
16 community center here. We're working very hard  
17 locally. We know right now we have no rights in the  
18 state, so we're trying to keep our heads down. So  
19 we're trying to make sure that we can be safe here in  
20 our own county. Thank you very much.

21 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

22 MR. VALENTA: My name is Bob Valenta. I'm a  
23 34-year resident of Lee County and of the State of  
24 Florida. I'm a 49-year respondent of the United  
25 States of America, a constitutional republic, not a

1 democracy.

2 Florida Constitution gives locally-elected  
3 school boards the responsibility of providing quality  
4 education for all students and rightfully so. It also  
5 states that while more than one rural county can join  
6 together to form one school board, no county can have  
7 more than one school board. I think this is archaic  
8 and unnecessary.

9 We are contributing \$1.7 billion to county  
10 school district funding. We find it to be too large  
11 and convoluted without a team of CPAs taking  
12 leadership. We find it funny that the best performing  
13 districts were smaller districts with more citizen  
14 input. I'm not asking you to put forth an amendment  
15 requiring the larger districts be broken up, only that  
16 the cuffs be removed so that if the citizens of Lee  
17 County or any county so choose, they may vote to do  
18 so; Otherwise, the bureaucrats control the education  
19 system, which is unconstitutional. So please remove  
20 that from the Constitution. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Don  
22 Jacobs, Pete Burkert, Cathy Michiels, E. Kingsley and  
23 Eric Irizarry.

24 Go ahead.

25 MR. JACOBS: Good evening. Thank you for

1 the opportunity to speak. My name is Don Jacobs. I  
2 live in Lehigh Acres. I have been a resident here in  
3 Lee County for about 14 years now. I'm a former  
4 paramedic, and I drive a bus for a living.

5 The topic that I came to speak on tonight  
6 has been commented pretty good tonight. The issue  
7 that I wanted to speak you about this evening is open  
8 primaries. It's been said much better that I can many  
9 times. Politicians created the problem. The parties  
10 and politicians benefit from it. They have no desire  
11 to take it. The only way it can be changed is if you  
12 put it to the voters, and that responsibility lies  
13 with you. You could change that.

14 One of the things that were mentioned was 25  
15 percent of voters are disenfranchised. With open  
16 primaries -- actually, that number is higher. Here in  
17 Lee County, we're primarily a Republican stronghold.  
18 And if you were a Democrat -- because I'm a registered  
19 Democrat. I don't really agree with everything the  
20 Democrats do, but that's why I'm registered. Anyway,  
21 independents are locked out but also the minority  
22 parties. The number is not 25 percent; it's more like  
23 half or better than half. So really, the minority is  
24 running the show, and that's not the way it should be.  
25 That's not a representative government.

1           The senator that represents me in this  
2 district right now, the re-election, in the primary,  
3 that's where the campaign went on. That's where the  
4 candidates attended forums, debated. Okay, I'm  
5 running out of time. Anyway, please support open  
6 primaries, put it to the voters. Let the voters  
7 decide. Thank you.

8           COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

9           MR. BURKERT: Good evening. My name is Pete  
10 Burkert, and I also want to speak about the election  
11 process a little bit. I know many of you up there are  
12 elected officials now or have been in the past. And  
13 you know that intuitively that it would make no sense  
14 for you to stir, for example, your county's canvassing  
15 board while you were running for office and have some  
16 say in the votes that are being counted. It is  
17 equally obvious that you, as an elected official,  
18 should have no say on what people comprise the  
19 district that you are running for. You should not be  
20 able to put this thousand people into your district or  
21 remove this thousand people in your district. I'm  
22 talking about the redistricting issue.

23           In 2010, Florida voters, by about 63 to 37 I  
24 believe, passed the fair districts amendment,  
25 requiring, among many things, that a district cannot

1 favor incumbents or a political party. Well, what  
2 happened? The immediate redistricting that occurred  
3 resulted in just that: incumbent and political  
4 parties were favored, and the courts ruled down the  
5 line over a five-year struggle back and forth with the  
6 court system that in fact, the redistricting was done  
7 incorrectly and in violation of the Florida  
8 Constitution.

9 Florida is the only state that requires this  
10 kind of redistricting, that is, not favoring incumbent  
11 or political party, that does not utilize an  
12 independent commission. So it is time that an  
13 independent commission be placed in the Florida  
14 Constitution, and the job of redistricting be removed  
15 from those people who choose to and perhaps can  
16 benefit by what happens with redistricting. So I urge  
17 this Constitutional Revision Commission to include an  
18 independent commission for redistricting for the next  
19 go-around in 2020. Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

21 MS. KINGSLEY: Elizabeth Kingsley from Fort  
22 Myers, Florida. Political parties are not mentioned  
23 in the Constitution, but the rights of the individual  
24 to vote are clearly stated. We have had Democrats,  
25 Republicans, Democrats Republicans, and a

1 conventionally Republican party in our history.

2 I voted this year and had to change parties  
3 to vote in the primary. I'm requesting that we have  
4 open primaries. I do not feel represented by either  
5 party, as I don't want to go through what I did last  
6 year. I changed my party three times just to vote  
7 each time. One comes up that doesn't represent me, I  
8 go back to the independent party. Thank you for  
9 listening. Thank you for your time.

10 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Cathy  
11 Michiels, Eric Irizarry, James Brantley, John Nipper,  
12 and Neil Volz. If you're in that group, just go  
13 ahead.

14 MR. BRANTLEY: Commissioners, my name is Jim  
15 Brantley, and I'm a 37-year resident of Lee County,  
16 50-year resident of the State of Florida. Appreciate  
17 your time tonight.

18 I'm here because in the lead up to the  
19 assembly of the Constitutional Revision Commission, at  
20 least two members of the House of Representatives,  
21 back in their home districts, made public statements  
22 about what they saw as the number one goal for the  
23 work for this commission; and that was the repeal of  
24 Article I, Section 6, of the Constitution. One of  
25 those two elected representatives went so far as to

1 say that the work of this commission he classified as  
2 a war on unions. That's what he saw. So I'm here to  
3 speak about that tonight.

4 No relationship of any type works when all  
5 of the power and relationship is on one side. The  
6 right to collective bargaining has been called the  
7 counter-veiling power. John Kenneth Galbraith coined  
8 that phrase because it gave the employees a voice so  
9 that relationship wasn't one sided. Labor stability  
10 provide for economic stability. Securing collective  
11 bargaining in the Constitution provides stability in  
12 matters related to labor management relations in the  
13 public sector. This is good for Florida's economy,  
14 and it's good for our continued growth.

15 I urge you to keep Article I, Section 6,  
16 granting Florida's public employees the right to  
17 collective bargaining with their employers to have a  
18 seat at the table. I'm urging you to please keep that  
19 status quo. And I thank you for your time.

20 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

21 MR. KRUPPENBACHER: Madam Chair, can I just  
22 say one thing for the record? Sir, no one  
23 commissioner in this body speaks for this entire body.  
24 This body is comprised of 37 individual members, and  
25 we have not agreed on any issue. We haven't even

1 debated an issue at this point. So while the press  
2 may write what somebody represents as the commission,  
3 I don't believe any member of this body to me is  
4 making those representations to begin with. But I  
5 just want the record to reflect where we are.

6 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Cathy  
7 Michiels, Eric Irizarry, John Nipper, and Neil Volz.  
8 Go ahead.

9 MR. NIPPER: Good evening. So I don't --

10 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Your name?

11 MR. NIPPER: Oh, John Nipper. I'm a  
12 resident of Fort Myers. I don't have anything written  
13 or rehearsed. I stumbled upon this quite by  
14 happenstance, so I'm not prepared in that aspect. But  
15 as a citizen and a veteran and as a father of two, I  
16 do feel prepared to speak. And I feel inclined to  
17 take this opportunity as I saw fit.

18 So I would like to speak on behalf of  
19 fathers and others like me who are struggling with the  
20 issue of abortion. And I'm in no way questioning the  
21 right of a woman to terminate a pregnancy, but I would  
22 like to have that extended to the father as well.

23 This should be a two-person system where if  
24 either parent has desire to take responsibility for  
25 the child, then I think that should be established. I



1 think the fathers should be allowed freedom to be  
2 responsible and participate. And for that very  
3 reason, as the father, I couldn't imagine having that  
4 taken away from me. As soon as I found out I was  
5 going to be a father, that was my whole life plan. To  
6 have that purpose taken from me, to not be able to  
7 choose that, would be very frustrating. But also  
8 because if I'm required to be financially responsible  
9 for a child for 20 years, and I'm required to pay  
10 child support, and certainly be compelled to provide  
11 for this child, it stands to reason I should also have  
12 the right to decide as well. And I think that's  
13 something that I have found resonance with talking to  
14 many fathers, and I feel that should be established  
15 and considered. Thank you again for this moment to  
16 speak with you. I appreciate it very much.

17 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you.

18 MR. VOLZ: Hello. I'm Neil Volz. I'm a  
19 member of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition,  
20 and I just want to thank all you guys for sitting  
21 through this. This is a cool exercise, a  
22 give-and-take public debate.

23 I just want you to know I'm here in support  
24 of the voter restoration initiative recently approved  
25 by the Florida Supreme Court. This initiative will

1 help improve our state by restoring voter rights to 2  
2 million former felons in Florida who paid their debt  
3 back to society but are currently unable to vote.  
4 This does not include people guilty of murder or  
5 sexual offenses. I believe it's important to pass  
6 this initiative for four reasons:

7 1. Our system is currently broken. In  
8 Florida, we have two things happening at the same  
9 time:

10 1. We have incredibly high disenfranchise  
11 rates for felonies. Felony rates in Florida, are  
12 higher than other states. It's a felony in Florida  
13 for releasing helium balloons on the beach, driving on  
14 a suspended driver's license, walking into a  
15 construction site. So that is on one hand. On the  
16 other hand, we are one of only three states that  
17 permanently disenfranchised people for life. That's  
18 how we ended up with 2 million people who are sitting  
19 on the sidelines going back to our community and  
20 restoring the lives of their families.

21 2. The public overwhelmingly supports these  
22 changes. According to the empirical evidence, the  
23 data shows that Republicans, Democrats, and  
24 Independents all overwhelmingly support this change.

25 3. This initiative constitutional amendment

1 was shown by the Florida Supreme Court.

2 4. This initiative will help transform  
3 millions of lives, restore millions of families, and  
4 have a positive impact on our state. And I would  
5 definitely urge you to think about that. This is not  
6 just a political exercise. This is involving 2  
7 million families, 2 million people's personal faith.  
8 That's 2 million sons and daughter of God whose lives  
9 can be greatly affected by this change. I appreciate  
10 everything you guys do.

11 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you. Cathy  
12 Michiels, Eric Irizarry, and Joel Breneman.

13 If none of those are present, those are our  
14 final speakers. Is there anyone who signed up to  
15 speak who's name has not been called?

16 MR. BRENEMAN: I'm Joel.

17 COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Okay.

18 MR. BRENEMAN: Hello. My name is Joel  
19 Breneman, social worker. I am also very much involved  
20 in the population of Southwest Florida, specifically  
21 Collier County with substance abuse. What I want to  
22 speak on is Statute 943.0585, court-ordered expunction  
23 of criminal history.

24 Now, as Neil just kind of spoke on it, about  
25 2 million individuals who have nonviolent crimes that

1 they have committed when they were younger. Well, in  
2 this state, there's also no way for someone  
3 adjudicated guilty to get those sealed or expunged off  
4 their records. So someone's done their time, whether  
5 it be Department of Corrections or local county jail.  
6 They get out. They're still being tried for what they  
7 have done. They can't find suitable housing; they  
8 can't find suitable education; and they can't find  
9 employment.

10 So what I propose I would like to see if the  
11 commission would be able to do a possible solution for  
12 the nonviolent offenders that -- say they did  
13 something when they were 19, 20 years old in a simple  
14 possession of narcotics. That adjudicated guilt, to  
15 see if 15 years down the road if they can seal the  
16 record and move on with their life and become  
17 productive members of society. Because what I have  
18 seen is we're losing many good men and women who have  
19 actual life experience in dealing with this and  
20 stopping the recidivism of coming in and out of the  
21 county jail all throughout the State of Florida just  
22 because they screwed up when they're younger. They  
23 have no help in their mind. And again, they can't  
24 find work, can't get jobs; they can't get the  
25 education they need to better help themselves.

1                   COMMISSIONER DONALDS: Thank you, sir.

2 Thank you. Cathy Michiels or Eric Irizarry? Anyone  
3 else who submitted their name who hasn't been called?

4                   Okay. Well, on behalf of the Constitutional  
5 Revision Commission, thank you so much for being here  
6 tonight. You can visit our website to submit  
7 proposals or documentation at FLCRC.gov. And we stand  
8 adjourned.

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(STATE OF FLORIDA)

(COUNTY OF LEE)

I, Jon Martina, Registered Professional Reporter for the 20th Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida, do certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the typewritten transcript, consisting of pages numbered 1 through 117, is a true record.

Dated this 26th day of May, 2017.

John Martina, Contract Court Reporter, 20th Judicial Circuit of Florida, State of Florida at Large.

My commission expires: 3-3-21

