

MADISON POLICY DIGEST

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*Researchers to Study Milwaukee Choice Program

*Juvenile Detention Center May Be Privatized

*Drilling Plan Moves Toward Florida Coast

RESEARCHERS TO STUDY MILWAUKEE CHOICE PROGRAM

School choice is not just a hot topic issue in Florida. Here is a look at a major study being conducted on school choice in other parts of the country:

The Heartland Institute reports, “The School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP) at Georgetown University will conduct a five-year longitudinal study of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), the nation's oldest and largest school voucher program for low-income families.

“The SCDP, led by chief investigator Dr. Patrick J. Wolf, previously won a nationwide competition to evaluate the two-year-old Washington, D.C. voucher program in 2004. Wolf said the Milwaukee evaluation is intended to provide the most comprehensive study yet conducted of an active school choice program.

“I am especially pleased that foundations from across the ideological spectrum on school choice have expressed an interest in supporting this important study,” Wolf said.

“The Georgetown study will expand the scope and depth of what we know (and do not know) about MPCP's impact on student achievement and other factors important to the learning environment of lower-income students,” said Gerard Robinson, who is a senior fellow at Marquette University's Institute for the Transformation of Learning. Robinson is also the author of the 2005 report “Survey of School Choice Research.”

For the full story click here:

<http://heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=18758>

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER MAY BE PRIVATIZED

The Palm Beach Post reported that the juvenile detention center of Palm Beach County may be privatized under a proposed bill in the Florida House of Representatives.

If the plan passes this session, the state will search for a company that could run the juvenile detention center and cut costs up to \$100,000.

In 2002, the Southwest Florida detention center began undergoing the process of privatization until the contractor pulled out.

The Palm Beach Post reports, "The current plan says that the state should try to privatize the facility by Jan. 1, 2007. If no contractor can guarantee a \$100,000 annual cost savings on the center's \$4.7 million annual budget, it will remain under state control.

For the full story click here:

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/state/content/state/epaper/2006/04/11/a10a_xgr_detention_0411.html

DRILLING PLAN MOVES TOWARD FLORIDA COAST

The U.S. Department of the Interior closed public comment on the issue of drilling for oil off the Florida coast of Tuesday.

With dozens of proposals before it, Congress must now pick the plan it feels is best in moving ahead with the drilling.

The Orlando Sentinel reports, "The administration plan would allow oil and gas drilling in an area called Lease Sale 181 that is south of the Panhandle and contains about 330 million barrels of oil and 3.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas."

While opponents of the plan are still complaining about the possible side-effects that drilling may have on the ecosystem, Americans are overwhelmingly for drilling.

According to Gary Strasburg, who is spokesman for the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service, over 25,000 people sent their views on the matter of drilling off the coast of Virginia, off the coast of Florida, and in Bristol Bay, Alaska in the form of comments to Congress. Of the 25,000 people who sent in comments, 24,000 favored the drilling plan, and out of 3,580 Floridians who weighed in on the issue, only 150 opposed the plan.

The Sentinel reports, "The Department of the Interior can open the area to drilling even without congressional approval. Now that the public-comment period is closed, the department will draft a new version and open that up for more comments. The process is to be complete -- and leases available -- by July 1, 2007.

For the full story click here:

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/state/orl-moildrill1206apr12,0,4832675.story?coll=orl-news-headlines-state>

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The difference between death and taxes is death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets (Will Rogers).

OPINION OF THE WEEK

“Scaring for Money” by John Stossel

“If you're a scientist working for private industry, it helps to invent something useful. But if you're a scientist trying to get funding from the government, you're better off telling the world how horrible things are.

“And once people are scared, they pay attention. They may even demand the government give you more money to solve the problem.

“Usually the horrible disaster never happens. Chaos from Y2K. An epidemic of deaths from SARS or mad cow disease. Cancer from Three Mile Island. We quickly forget. We move on to the next warnings.”

For the full story click here:

<http://townhall.com/opinion/columns/JohnStossel/2006/04/12/193443.html>

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