

Madison Policy Digest  
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\*Class Sizes Looming Over State Legislators  
\*Pressure to Allow Offshore Drilling Won't be Going Away  
\*State Insurer has a Fight on its Hands

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## CLASS SIZES LOOMING OVER STATE LEGISLATORS

While this past legislative session saw the successful limiting of eminent domain abuse and the extermination of the intangibles tax, the failure to deal with the class size amendment was a shortcoming.

This worries Rep. Ray Sansom, who is up to be speaker of the Florida House of Representatives in two years. He has continued to remind his constituents that while the state experienced some success, it must not grow complacent, especially on the class size issue.

Representative Sansom said, "I feel like Chicken Little saying the sky is falling. We're going to build schools and hire teachers, and the quality of our education is going to go down. We're heading toward a California-type situation."

The Tallahassee Democrats explains, "The 'California-type' situation Sansom fears is an economic recession caused by the confluence of costly government mandates saddled in the state's constitution, a dire lack of affordable housing, stringent rules on developers, and transportation gridlock - all areas where Sansom says Florida is headed.

"The state Department of Education puts the total cost of implementing the amendment at \$25 billion, of which the state has dedicated about \$7 billion over the past four years."

Though study after study has confirmed that the size of a class does not determine students' success, the issue of the class size amendment still looms before Florida.

For the complete story click here:

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060521/CAPITOLNEWS/605210314/1010/NEWS01>

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## PRESSURE TO ALLOW OFFSHORE DRILLING WON'T BE GOING AWAY

“Pressure to allow offshore drilling won’t be going away”... and it shouldn’t. As the U.S. House of Representatives fought off another attempt to increase drilling in the Gulf, Americans should begin to ask, “Who pays for the gas these representatives use?”

Another good question to ask is, “Why do these representatives continue to say they want to decrease America’s dependence on foreign oil, and yet refuse to allow America to increase its oil reserves?”

Rep. Adam Putnam, R-Lakeland, took a stand against this particular bill saying, “[This is] a grievous assault on Florida and on other states who are dramatically impacted by what will be a three-mile drilling limit. It does not recognize the needs of our military.”

The Air Force uses a portion of the Gulf for training purposes, but the Pentagon has indicated that its concerns can be addressed.

For the complete story click here:

[http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/may/22/michael\\_peltier\\_pressure\\_allow\\_shore\\_drilling\\_wont/?local\\_news](http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/may/22/michael_peltier_pressure_allow_shore_drilling_wont/?local_news)

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## STATE INSURER HAS A FIGHT ON ITS HANDS

The St. Petersburg Times reports, “For the first time since Hurricane Andrew struck Florida in 1992, homeowners are banding together around the state, either through Web sites or through condo/homeowners associations, and protesting the soaring cost of property insurance.

“Public Enemy No. 1 appears to be Citizens Property, the state-run insurer of last resort, which has swelled with high-cost policies dumped by private insurers who are cutting back or fleeing the market entirely.

“People who have never before been involved in any kind of organized protests are finding themselves collecting petitions and joining groups whose sole aim is to present a united front to government leaders.”

Nobody likes high insurance costs, or any other high costs, but it is not the job of the government to intervene when costs are too high. Should the government be able to tell an advertising company how much it is allowed to sell its services for? Should the government be allowed to tell car manufacturers how much they are allowed to sell a car for? Should the government be able to tell McDonalds how much to sell a hamburger for? When the question of government interference is posed in this absurd manner, the answer it receives is always a resounding “No!” Why, then, should the government treat an insurance company any different? It should not.

What the lawmakers need to be considering is why the state has such a big role in helping Citizens provide its services.

For the complete story, click here:

[http://www.sptimes.com/2006/05/24/State/State\\_insurer\\_has\\_a\\_f.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2006/05/24/State/State_insurer_has_a_f.shtml)

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#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it (Ronald Reagan).

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#### OPINION OF THE WEEK

“Less is More” by Constantin Gurdgiev

“Two recent studies released by UK and Swiss researchers provide some insight into the overall argument: is smaller government better for a country's non-economic well-being?

“First, a group of Swiss and Danish researchers from the WIF Institute of Economic Research in Zurich looked at whether government involvement in the economy is conducive to life satisfaction across 74 countries. The results show that life satisfaction actually decreases with higher government spending. This negative impact of the government is stronger in countries with a left-leaning median voter. It is alleviated by government effectiveness - but, crucially, only in countries where the state sector is already small. In general, a one standard deviation increase in government spending yields a median decrease of 4.42 percent in self-reported satisfaction by the voters, a drop in the degree of economic competition of 4.17 percent and a shift in voter preferences in rightward ideological direction of 4.15-9 percent.

“Another comprehensive study released by the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) in the UK summarized available data from various sources, to show that modern governments that spend less can, indeed, provide better public services, a better standard of living and more equitable incomes than high-spending governments.”

For the complete story click here:

<http://www.tcsdaily.com/article.aspx?id=052206B>

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