

## MADISON POLICY DIGEST

June 14, 2006

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- \*Property Rights Group Sues Riviera Beach Over Development Project
  - \*Grading System for Schools gets Fresh Criticism
  - \* Gov. Bush Defends Scoring Accuracy of FCAT Graders
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### PROPERTY RIGHTS GROUP SUES RIVIERA BEACH OVER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Although Florida lawmakers during the 2006 session passed a bill and sent voters a constitutional amendment to curb abuses of government's power of eminent domain, Mayor Michael Brown of Riviera Beach continues to push his redevelopment plans.

Mayor Brown met with Viking Inlet Harbor Properties to sign a contract that would allow the city to use eminent domain to take private property and convey it to the company for "redevelopment." The contract was signed shortly before Governor Bush signed into law the bill preventing the city from taking the property for that purpose.

The Associated Press reports, "The Pacific Legal Foundation, on behalf of Riviera Beach residents Jerry and Rene Corie, filed [a] lawsuit in Palm Beach County Circuit Court seeking to overturn a contract city officials entered into with a developer in the waterfront project.

"Last week, another pair of residents sued Riviera Beach, alleging the city violated state Sunshine laws which call for advance public notice of city meetings. That suit also seeks to nullify the contract." For the complete article click here:

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060612/APN/606120901>

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### GRADING SYSTEM FOR SCHOOLS GETS FRESH CRITICISM

Students have always complained that the way in which they are graded is unfair. They say essays in particular are graded arbitrarily, and that all it takes to get an "A-" rather than an "A" is one teaching assistant to have an off day.

And now the very schools that handed out these grades to students are expressing similar complaints of unfairness. They are upset over the State's grading scale for schools.

The (Sarasota) *Herald-Tribune* reports, "The state introduced the grading system eight years ago to provide an easy way to size up neighborhood schools and put public pressure on them to improve. It launched Gov. Jeb Bush's statewide education reform effort based

on the theory that accountability and competition would create better schools.

”Since then, some educators and parent leaders say they've learned the grading system is untrustworthy and ineffective at ranking the schools. And some school communities have decided to stop paying attention to the grade, even if it's an A.” For the complete article click here:

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060612/NEWS/606120406>

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#### GOV. BUSH DEFENDS SCORING ACCURACY OF FCAT GRADERS

Recently, the fact that some of the people who grade the FCAT do not have degrees in the subject field that they are grading has come to the public's attention. This has raised concerns across the state.

Governor Bush stated, “There has not been any evidence that there have been any problems with the folks who are grading these tests. Not one problem.”

The Governor went on to deny that there was any evidence “that even one test has been graded improperly.” He also said, “I would think that Sen. Campbell or whoever is carping about this ought to be worried about how we improve the quality of teaching for students, and make sure we get more and more teachers in the field teaching our students. That ought to be the focus of his energies. Not political posturing.”

For the complete article click here:

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/florida/sfl-ffcat14xjun14,0,3041397.story?coll=sfla-news-florida>

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#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.” (James Madison).

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#### OPINION OF THE WEEK

“Congress vs. Justice” by Paul Greenberg

“The founding fathers were great statesmen, not flawless prophets. Their hindsight was reliable enough, going all the way back to Athenian democracy, but their ability to anticipate the future wasn't perfect. (Whose is?)

“Consider Federalist Paper No. 57, which is often attributed to dear old, theoretical old James Madison. In it, he assures citizens that Congress would never abuse its authority under this proposed new Constitution because its members ‘can make no law which will

not have its full operation on themselves and their friends, as well as on the great mass of the society.'

“Good theory. Practice is something else.”

For the complete article click here:

<http://townhall.com/opinion/columns/paulgreenberg/2006/06/14/201118.html>

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