

The
Madison Policy Digest

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Presented by: **The James Madison Institute**

“CELEBRATING 20 YEARS AS FLORIDA’S PREMIER FREE-MARKET THINK TANK”

JMI News Briefs

* In an effort review the results of the Legislature’s special session on property taxes and to outline what still needs to be done, The James Madison Institute is hosting a forum where an outstanding panel of experts will address current tax and budget issues. The event will be held on Thursday June 28, in Tampa. More information is available at www.jamesmadison.org.

Featured Topics

**FIRST HALF COMPLETED
WE SAW THIS COMING
WHAT NOW FOR CITIZEN INITIATIVES?
THE TRUTH ON INSURANCE**

Crist signs Part 1 of tax-reform bill, OKs vote date

Tallahassee Democrat

By Aaron Deslatte

June 22, 2007

Gov. Charlie Crist signed the first salvo of a \$24 billion property-tax cut Thursday that he promised would bring "meaningful" relief to Floridians and "fire up" home sales without forcing Draconian cuts to local services.

The new law forces cities, counties and special districts to freeze, cut and cap their property-tax collections - meaning an average \$174 reduction on the 2007 tax bills of homeowners.

It also caps how quickly local governments can increase their revenue collections in future years to a combination of the rate of construction and household-income growth.

Crist also gave his blessing to the Jan. 29 date voters will decide the centerpiece of the tax reform - expanding the size of resident homeowners' homestead exemptions for those willing to give up the popular Save Our Homes tax cap.

For complete article click here:

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070622/CAPITOLNEWS/706220347/10/NEWS01>

Hillsborough County Set To Raise Trash Rates

Tampa Tribune

By Anthony McCartney

June 22, 2007

TAMPA - Hillsborough County is poised to raise its fees for residential trash collection for the first time in years.

Currently, residents in unincorporated areas pay \$170 for pickup and disposal services. Under a plan presented to county commissioners today, the fees would go up \$23 next year, and residents would pay \$207 by 2009.

Solid Waste Director Barry Boldissar said the increases would be the first significant hike in at least a decade. He said even with the increases, Hillsborough County residents would pay significantly less than other communities in the Tampa Bay Area and Florida.

The county receives trash collection fees through an assessment on residential tax bills that are paid annually.

For complete article click here: <http://www.tbo.com/news/metro/MGBGI5FP73F.html>

Citizen tax plan gains momentum

Broker rallies diverse groups around measure expanding scope of "Save Our Homes"

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

By Michael Pollick

June 20, 2007

There is a feverish race going on to offer alternatives to the Florida Legislature's "Super Exemption" constitutional amendment, which is already plugged into the Jan. 29 ballot.

At the head of the pack is Cuban mortgage broker Bernie Navarro.

The Miami man's group, Citizens for Property Tax Reform, has gotten top legal talent to draft a workable constitutional amendment that they call the "30-40-50 Plan." The group is also raising money, gathering signatures and scrambling to find volunteer managers for each Florida county.

Navarro and his chief supporters plan to meet soon with another citizen's action group with deep west coast roots, the Florida Taxpayers Alliance.

For complete article click here:

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20070620/BUSINESS/706200659/-1/xml>

Opinion

Real insurance crisis still to come

The Stuart News

By Randall G. Holcombe

June 1, 2007

Floridians need to take one extra precaution this hurricane season. Not only should they review their emergency plans and stock up on supplies, but they should also say a little prayer that Florida is spared Mother Nature's wrath this year. That's because Florida's citizens will be on the hook for more of the losses if the 2007 storm season resembles those of 2004 and 2005.

Blame the Legislature's January special session. In their haste to do something to calm angry constituents, lawmakers with the laudable goal of making property insurance more affordable and available passed some flawed legislation.

That legislation had two key elements. It expanded the state-run catastrophe fund that offers reinsurance to the insurance industry, and it lowered the rates of Citizens Insurance, the state-run property insurer, to make them competitive with private insurers.

Both changes shift the liability for storm damage from insurance companies to Florida's citizens. If we had another Hurricane Andrew or another season like those of 2004 and 2005, we would be liable for more of those losses.

For complete article click here:

http://www.tcpalm.com/tcp/opinion_columnists/article/0,2821,TCP_24463_5564608,00.html

Quote of the Week

“If we wish to preserve a free society, it is essential that we recognize that the desirability of a particular object is not sufficient justification for the use of coercion.”

– Friedrich von Hayek

Cartoon of the Week



Andy Marlette, Independent Florida Alligator

Speakers' Bureau

Need a speaker for your next event? JMI's team and network of scholars are available to headline or participate in your organization's next gathering. JMI staff will help you match the topic with the appropriate speaker. To learn more contact Thomas at 850-386-3131 or Thomas@JamesMadison.org

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www.JamesMadison.org

The Madison Policy Digest is a free, weekly e-newsletter that summarizes Florida's top public policy headlines from around the state, complete with topical research and comment by The James Madison Institute. Suggestions and feedback are welcome at Thomas@JamesMadison.org.