

The *Madison Policy Digest*

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Presented by: **The James Madison Institute**

News Briefs

* Due to official duties beyond his control, Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic has cancelled his trip to Tallahassee. JMI is working to reschedule his visit for next fall.

Featured Topics

**READY FOR A LONG BALLOT?
GET YOUR OWN MONEY
NOT IN THEIR BACK YARD
MORE ONLINE SUNSHINE
NOWHERE TO BE FOUND**

Florida Ballot Could Have Many Tax Plans

The Miami Herald
By Mary Ellen Klas
April 4, 2008

TALLAHASSEE -- The citizen panel with the power to put constitutional amendments on the ballot nears the end of its once-every-20-years review of state tax policy Friday with a packed agenda that may put as many as nine more proposals before voters in November. Among the measures it will consider: letting voters raise sales taxes to benefit community colleges, restoring public-school vouchers, and tamping down government spending with a rigid tax cap.

The broad range of ideas comes before the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission at its last scheduled meeting to decide which proposals make the ballot cut. But the variety may be more of a reflection of the ideological agendas of individual members than of the 13 months the panel spent listening to demographers, economists and average Floridians as it traveled the state.

Whatever the panel places before voters in November will take 17 votes of the 25-member commission on Friday, and will need to make it through a final vote at the end of April. For complete article click here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/458/story/482279.html>

Florida House Votes to Nix Campaign Finance

The Tallahassee Democrat
By Bill Cotterell
April 3, 2008

The House resoundingly rejected "welfare for politicians" Wednesday.

By an 82-34 vote, members approved a proposed constitutional amendment that would eliminate the 1998 voter-approved system allowing candidates to draw state matching money in races for governor and Cabinet.

If voters in November reject the elimination, the House also easily approved a bill to drastically lower the spending caps on state-subsidized campaigning.

For complete article click here:

<http://floridacapitalnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080403/CAPITOLNEWS/804030318>

Residents Like Idea of FPL Building Wind Turbines on Own Company Beach

The Orlando Sentinel

By Maya Bell

April 3, 2008

Protests by St. Lucie County residents derailed plans to build Florida's first wind farm behind the dunes of a public beach on Hutchinson Island. But those residents have no qualms about [FPL](#) erecting wind turbines near the company's own beach on the barrier island, according to a poll released Wednesday.

Nearly 82 percent of the residents responding to the poll, which was commissioned by FPL, said they support the utility's revised \$45 million proposal to put six 400-foot turbines across from its St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant.

And 59 percent of the 500 likely voters polled last month agreed that "we should do everything we possibly can" to reduce climate change, the survey said.

For complete article click here: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/state/orl-wind0308apr03.0.4840562.story>

Panel: Take Spending out of the Shade

The Miami Herald

By Mary Ellen Klas

April 3, 2008

TALLAHASSEE --

Against the opposition of several vocal critics from Broward County, the Senate Finance and Tax Committee approved legislation Wednesday that would force the state and all local governments to post on their websites all contracts over \$5,000.

"I like to think this is for the person walking around in their big, fuzzy slippers drinking coffee who wants to know how their money is being spent," said Sen. Ronda Storms, a Brandon Republican and the Senate sponsor.

Opposition came from the Florida League of Cities and a parade of opponents, all from Broward County.

Broward County Commissioner Ilene Lieberman warned that it would impose an expensive burden on county staff to post information already available to the public through Florida public records laws.

For complete article click here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/458/story/480854.html>

Opinion

Kelo, M.I.A.

Cato Institute

By Daniel J. Mitchell

April 2, 2008

The National Review

The Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision in 2005 generated a massive political backlash. *Kelo v. City of New London* endorsed the condemnation of private property for transfer to other private owners in order to promote "economic development." Polls showed that 80 to 90 percent of the public opposed such takings. Oddly, however, we've heard almost nothing of this broadly popular issue from the presidential campaigns.

Yet government officials continue to take property and transfer it to politically influential businesses. Last week, the Missouri supreme court ruled that local governments have the power to condemn property for transfer to private developers. Last month, federal courts applied *Kelo* to uphold the condemnation of dozens of homes and businesses in New York City in order to make way for a new NBA basketball arena and luxury housing projects.

Economic-development takings often transfer property from the poor and politically weak to politically powerful interest groups, such as developers. They also undermine economic growth in the community far more than they promote it. Often, they destroy preexisting enterprises that have greater value to the community than the ones established by the post-condemnation owners. Since World War II, some 3 to 4 million Americans have lost their homes to urban renewal and economic development takings; numerous businesses, churches, and schools have also been destroyed.

For original article click here: http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=9313

Quote of the Week

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort or convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

~ *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Cartoon of the Week



Dana Summers, *The Orlando Sentinel*

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 Leanna at 850-386-3131 or Leanna@jamesmadison.org

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