

The Dean Document

2012 Legislative Session

Looking forward to Week Five

Another week of the 2012 Legislative Session comes to a close with lively debate and action. The first major event happening this week was the Republican Presidential Primary taking place on January 31st. The hopeful presidential candidates toured across the state, making stops in Miami, Jacksonville, and Tampa. The candidates made major efforts campaigning in Florida, realizing its great significance for the primary, and more importantly in the general election this November. The candidates will now focus on Maine and Nevada to prepare for each state's caucuses, respectively.



The second major event this week was the passage of reapportionment in the Florida House of Representatives. The Florida legislative and congressional maps cleared the House, with a vote of 80-37. The redistricting maps will now travel to the Senate for final action. After a vote in the Senate, the congressional plan will go to Governor Rick Scott and the legislative plan will go to the Florida Supreme Court for review.

In addition, I was very pleased to see Senate Bill 1632, which recognizes the 40th Anniversary of Vietnam Veterans, pass its first committee. Along with this bill is SB 1080, urging Congress to initiate and support nationwide effort to commemorate the 40th anniversary of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. I find it a great joy and honor to properly thank and recognize the veterans who serve to protect our every freedom in America.

I hope through this week's newsletter, you stay up to date with all the current happenings taking place here in Tallahassee. As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office if I can be of assistance to you in any way.

Sincerely,



JEFFERSON COUNTY DELEGATION CALLS EMERGENCY MEETING



The Jefferson County Legislative Delegation, consisting of Senator Charlie Dean, Senator Bill Montford, Representative Leonard Bemby, and Representative Michelle Rehwinkel-Vasilinda, met Monday evening with constituents to discuss local issues facing the community.

The most discussed topic was the recent announcement by Department of Corrections Secretary, Ken Tucker, to close seven prisons around the state, including Jefferson Correctional Institution. The Jefferson County Courtroom was filled to capacity with local citizens wishing to have their voices heard. The Delegation listened intently to the passionate pleas from JCI employees, their family members, business owners, and local leaders.

“This was a meeting which pulled hard at the heartstrings. Anyone with any compassion would have to rethink the strategy we are receiving from DOC after hearing public testimony of this magnitude,” stated Senator Dean after the meeting.

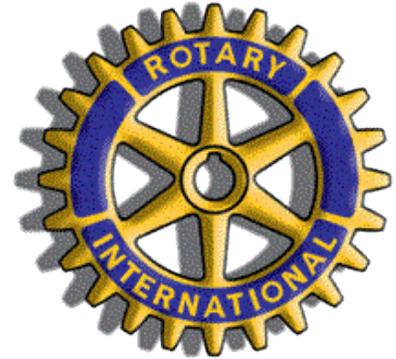
According to members of the Jefferson Legislative Committee, led by Julie Conley, JCI represents 177 jobs, approximately 10% of the workforce in the county. Closing this facility would have devastating consequences not only for the employees at JCI, but county functions and local businesses as well. Jefferson Department of Health Administrator, Kim Barnhill, detailed how the closure would impact her facility from the loss of inmate patients to the outdoor maintenance provided by JCI work crews. Jefferson Elementary Principal, Valerie Thompson, described how this move has already impacted Jefferson students preparing for the FCAT.

“These children aren’t worried about their performance on the FCAT. They’re worried about mom or dad losing their job!” Thompson exclaimed.

By far, the most heartfelt testimony came from those currently employed at JCI. “Unlike many institutions in this state, it was easy to get a sense of family among these workers,” said Senator Dean. “If someone’s vehicle is broken down, the others are eager to pick them up and take them to work. This sense of community will be lost if JCI is shuttered.”

Senator Dean and the members of the Legislative Delegation, alongside the members of the Jefferson Legislative Committee, have been working diligently with Governor Rick Scott and the Department to find an alternative solution in order to keep JCI open. The Delegation is currently seeking to cease the transfer of JCI inmates until a resolution can be reached.

KINGS BAY CLEAN UP



On Monday, a group headed by Art Jones of Kings Bay Rotary Club and Captain Mike Birns of the Manatee Eco Tour Association, led a movement to help clean up Kings Bay. With the help of forty volunteer college students from Georgia, they set out to remove the large amounts of Lyngbya algae from Kings Bay. Lyngbya is an invasive algae which destroys the native vegetation and removes the oxygen out of the water.

Equipped with only permits to remove it by hand, these volunteers set out with rakes to attempt to remove this algae. Armed with the mantra *"one rake at a time,"* these volunteers were able to remove six tons of algae in a three hour period. The algae was taken to composting areas in Lecanto and Inverness, where it could be turned into a fertilizer and not return to Kings Bay. This algae was turned into very nutrient rich fertilizer which serves multiple purposes.

When asked, Captain Mike Birns said he would like to keep cleaning Kings Bay on a monthly basis and eventually weekly. Birns also said they have recently received appropriate permits to remove the algae mechanically as he hopes this will help increase the amount of algae removed. His long term goal is to create revenue from the sale of the compost and create jobs removing the algae.

If you are interested in volunteering or helping the effort to clean up Kings Bay contact Captain Mike Birns via email at capparrot@aol.com.

Septic Tank Update! SB 820 Moves on to Budget

Senate Bill 820, sponsored by Senator Charlie Dean, passed the Senate Health Regulation Committee by a unanimous vote on Tuesday. Senate Bill 820 repeals the overly expansive language of Senate Bill 550, which passed during the 2010 Legislative Session. Senate Bill 820 gives local governments more control of the septic tank inspections and allows counties without a first magnitude spring to opt-in to the once every five years septic tank inspection and counties containing a first magnitude spring to opt-out of the program.

Furthermore, it allows local governments to adopt the evaluation program in all of its jurisdiction, or just parts of its jurisdiction. The Budget Committee will be the final stop before Senate Bill 820 heads to the Senate floor for a final vote.

Citrus County Enterprise Zone Moves on

Senate Bill 806, which would allow Citrus County to apply to the Department of Economic Opportunity for an enterprise zone, passed its second committee. This legislation is designed to encourage economic development and restoration in blighted or economically depressed communities.

The Senate Community Affairs Committee gave its unanimous approval of Senate Bill 806 sponsored by Senator Dean. Florida has 62 enterprise zones in total. Citrus County would be aligned with neighboring counties Hernando, Levy, Marion, and Sumter, which have Enterprise zones. The next stop for this legislation would be the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Finance and Tax. House Bill 371 is the companion measure being sponsored by Representative Jimmie T. Smith.



This Week in Photos

Senate District 3 Staff

Legislative Aides:

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Kathryn Ingler
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Madeline Rosenfeldt
Brock Magruder
Allison Kraemer
Ashley Paine
*Intern of the Week



President of College Central Florida
Dr. Jim Henningsen



Florida Library Association



Florida Professional Firefighters



Florida Farm Bureau

*Send us your predictions on the final score of the Super Bowl.
Closest prediction will be published in next weeks Dean Document.*