COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

CHAIRMAN CARLOS BERUFF
COMMISSIONER PAM BONDI
COMMISSIONER LISA CARLTON
COMMISSIONER TIMOTHY CERIO
COMMISSIONER HANK COXE
COMMISSIONER JOSE FELIX DIAZ
COMMISSIONER ERIKA DONALDS
COMMISSIONER DON GAETZ
COMMISSIONER EMERY GAINLEY
COMMISSIONER ANNA MARIE HERNANDEZ GAMEZ
COMMISSIONER BRECHT HEUCHAN
COMMISSIONER MARVA JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER DARLENE JORDAN
COMMISSIONER ARTHENIA JOYNER
COMMISSIONER FRED KARLINSKY
COMMISSIONER BELINDA KEISER
COMMISSIONER FRANK KRUPPENBACHER
COMMISSIONER TOM LEE
COMMISSIONER GARY LESTER
COMMISSIONER PATRICIA LEVESQUE
COMMISSIONER ROBERTO "BOBBY" MARTINEZ
COMMISSIONER RICH NEWSOME
COMMISSIONER JEANETTE NUNEZ
COMMISSIONER SHERRY PLYMALE
COMMISSIONER DARRYL ROUSON
COMMISSIONER BOB SOLARI
COMMISSIONER CHRIS SPROWSLS
COMMISSIONER JOHN STEMBERGER
COMMISSIONER PAM STEWART
COMMISSIONER JACQUI THURLOW-LIPPISCH
COMMISSIONER CAROLYN TIMMANN
COMMISSIONER T. NICOLE WASHINGTON

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CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Good evening. I would like
to welcome everyone. We are the Constitution
Revision Commission, commonly called the CRC. Thank
you for hosting us here today.

My name is Carlos Beruff. I was appointed by
Governor Rick Scott as the chairman. There are 37
people on this committee, and we've been traveling
around Florida. This is our ninth stop. About
2,000 people have attended our meetings, about 700
people have spoken. And that's what we're really
here to do this evening, just to listen. So we
appreciate you taking time out of your life away
from your families to come here and speak to us.

I would like to start with the invocation,
which will be lead by Commissioner Gary Lester.
Please stand.

COMMISSIONER LESTER: Let us pray.

(Invocation given.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Commissioner Washington will
lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Thank you.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Commissioner Joyner will be
chairing the first hour of the meeting, and she will
be calling you up in the the order in which you
arrived. So, depending on how long you've been
here, you'll be at the top of the list. Thank you so much.

Commission Joyner, I turn it over to you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you, Commission Chair Beruff.

Welcome to Hillsborough County in Tampa. I'm so happy to see all of you here. As I call your names, would you please line up in groups of five or wherever -- the closest microphone. Please state your name. And do realize that some of you write like doctors and consequently I can't necessarily decipher some of these names.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: We're working on it together.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: But we'll start out with John Alverez, Glen Gibleuina, Sarah Stroker, Karen Roberts and Sandy Oestreich.

Please state your name.

MS. OESTREICH: Yeah.

MR. ALVEREZ: My name is John Alverez. Good afternoon. I'm 18 years old, by the way. I'm graduating from high school this Friday, and I'm going to be attending Florida State University later this year.

(Audience applause.)
MR. ALVEREZ: The goal of the constitution of any state, nation or government is to outline the powers granted to that state and to outline the protections granted to the populus from that state. The ideal constitution is one that's universal, binding, non-partisan and, most importantly, fair to all people.

As it stands now 16 million Floridians, the bottom 80 percent of our population, pays five times more of their income in taxes than the top 1 percent of our state. The reason for this is our state collects all its revenue -- well, most of its revenue through sales tax throughout the state. We currently rank second out of the 50 states for aggressiveness and abuse of the bottom income earners.

As a state so already far in debt and with so many citizens forcefully driven further into poverty by the system, we cannot allow this to continue. That is why my amendment proposes for the abolition of sales tax and the reinforcement of existing provisions to implement an income tax. This amendment is not the end all be all for income equality, but I do believe this is a grand step forward. This amendment does not set a requirement
for what the rate must be for the income tax, only
that the state must levy one in order to appease the
people of the state of Florida.

And, again, I must emphasize, we rank second
worst in this situation, and we also rank third
worst in treatment of people that are below the
poverty line and third worst for people that are
homeless. Thank you, again.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. GIBLEUINA: Hello, my name -- are we on?
Hello, my name is Glen Gibiencina. I'm a --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Can you repeat your
name?

MR. GIBLEUINA: Glen Gibleuina. I'm a
parental rights advocate and activist as well. I'm
reading the Florida Constitution Commission. The
back of it is done by the Florida Bar. I sent you
all an e-mail concerning the amendment I sent to you
regarding parental rights issues for the
constitution. And, the Florida Bar, they're part of
the problem, particularly the family provision. We
as parents have rights, constitutional rights, that
need to be protected. And that wrecking ball
continues to swing in our family courts, and it's
unacceptable.
I sent all of you an e-mail concerning these amendments. And one of the things that this commission should be -- it should stay engaged with the people that contact you. So I sent everybody on this list the amendment, my case number and also the notes. Now, when I normally e-mail or write my local representatives --

COMMISSIONER NEWSOME: Sir, could you step up to the microphone. We can't hear you down here a little bit.

MR. GIBLEUINA: All right. How's that?

COMMISSIONER NEWSOME: Thank you.

MR. GIBLEUINA: -- whether it's Jim Boyd or Steube or Galvano, any of my local reps, I get a return e-mail that says, you know, thank you for your interest. I got none of that from you. So, if you want to stay engaged, then write us back. Again, 32 or 37 -- however many were on the list -- I believe I'm warranted an acknowledgement when I write you. I expect an answer, just not here. We have a hero among you -- Erika Donalds. She was the only one that wrote back to me? Are you my hero? You should be a chair. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Good afternoon. Go
ahead, ma'am.

MS. ROBERTS: My name is Karen Roberts, and I am representing the Florida chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We're a grassroots organization consisting of committed Floridians, men and women, moms and non-moms, who are absolutely committed to ending gun violence in Florida. We respect Constitutional rights, and we believe that common sense gun laws go hand-and-hand with those rights.

I'm here today to speak in opposition to any change to the Florida Constitution that would weaken our gun laws. We must not use this review process to consider proposals that the legislature has repeatedly rejected over the years. And the proposal that we're most concerned about is the public proposal that would amend the Florida Constitution to allow people to openly carry loaded handguns in public places.

In 2016 the Florida Legislature considered and rejected House Bill 163 and Senate Bill 300, which would allow people to do open carry. In 2017 the legislature considered and rejected four different bills that would have allowed open carry of loaded handguns in public places. So the fact that this
has not gained any legislative support is because it has a majority of Floridians that also oppose open carry in our state.

Supporters often cite their justification for open carry as the Second Amendment and the Florida's constitutional right to bear arms, when, in fact, just this March the Supreme Court in Norman v. State upheld Florida's prohibition against open carry as it does not violate the Second Amendment and it does not violate the Florida Constitution.

So please we ask you to recognize the needs of Floridians and please keep us safe. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you, Ms. Roberts.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Sandy Oestreich.

MS. OESTREICH: Sandy Oestreich. And some of you know me, and I see you as friends. Good afternoon, Friends. I am Sandy Oestreich, professor emerita, former elected official, nurse practitioner. I'm unpaid advocate for new Florida Constitutional mandate to hold public hearing on all legislation that has been duly filed and cosponsored every year for a consistent ten years or more in the Florida Houses, but which have been consistently denied for open hearings for facts or votes, up or
Article 3, Section 7 ignores the process for hearings. Annual decisions by Florida Senate and/or Speakers of the House conserve to persistently deny open discussion and votes in an ordinate misuse of their influence based on what could be their ordinate or partisan leanings. Prejudging bills without real facts or hearings.

Example is the reignited proposed equal rights amendment surging nationwide. You wouldn't tell it by Florida. It acts only to make sex discrimination, male and female, a violation of the Constitution. That's all. It waits ratification votes by only two or more states, Florida included, which denies hearings, denies legislative progress for 18 years -- 18 years against equal rights amendment. That holds hostage to 36 states that have already vetted and voted to ratify so it can pass into the United States Constitution. Not dead. Nevada ratified just two months ago. Last year 94 percent of the public studied strongly endorsed it, female and male, both parties and so forth. No hearings can be blocked consistently year after year. Voters object. Constitutional lawyers raise concerns that Florida's persistent denied hearings
may rise to the level of aggregate of the United States Constitution First amendment right.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you, Ms. Oestreich.

MS. OESTREICH: Florida's hearing and vote on --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you. Sorry your time is up.

MS. OESTREICH: -- Article 3, Section 7 must be updated. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

MS. SROKA: Good afternoon, Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Ms. Sandra Sroka.

MS. SROKA: I'm over here, Commissioner Joyner.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Okay. Hold up a moment. Let me call the next five after you.

Diego Echeverri, Andrew Vila, Dr. Idelia Phillips, Harry Boggs and Terry Kemple. Thank you.

MS. SROKA: Thank you. Good afternoon, Commissioners. I'm Sandra Sroka, president of the League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County. Thank you for this opportunity to present our interests and concerns to you, and I would like to acknowledge the work and discussion and direction of
the Rules Committee this morning.

As many of you know, the League of Women voters is always interested in good governments. We, therefore, urge the Commission to incorporate these important principles essential to establishing public confidence.

One, a clear and meaningful process for public engagement and public input throughout the entire Commission process, including public hearings around the state after proposals have been reported by style and drafting and before the final vote is taken. Consideration for written and in-person comment and creating opportunities that would allow citizens from all around the state to provide input electronically to committees on issues important to them.

This last point is particularly important. To encourage and afford participation by those in both rural and urban areas, those who may have disabilities limiting their ability to attend or travel to a public meeting and the younger generation of electronic users.

Three, I support the efforts of the Rules Committee earlier today is trying to create additional transparency through the process and
respecting Florida's Sunshine Laws, including
provisions that provide a clear understanding that
records be open and accessible, providing public
notice of all meetings to discuss official business
to eliminate the appearance of taking business out
of the public eye and ensuring timely notification
for opportunities for input and submission of public
proposals.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

MS. SROKA: Thank you.

MR. ECHEVERRI: Good afternoon, Commissioners.

My name is Diego Echeverri. I'm a U.S. Army
veteran, and I work for Concerned Veterans for
America. CVA is a veterans advocacy group that
advocates the freedoms our veterans and military
families fought for.

Florida is currently home to 1.6 million
veterans. In fact, it has the third largest
military population in the United States. Last week
Senator Marco Rubio introduced the VA Accountability
and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, and it was
cosponsored by Senator Bill Nelson.

Concerned Veterans for America proudly
supports this bill and stands with Senator Nelson
and Senator Marco Rubio. Veterans need healthcare
choice because the VA is failing us. We need reform of the VA and choice for our healthcare. According to the VA's Secretary of Health, five of Florida's VA facilities have reported missing or stolen drugs. The pills that have the most amount of tablets lost include OxyCodone. Around $14,000 worth of pills have gone missing.

Last year VA staff here at the Bay Pines VA facility left a veteran's body in the shower for nine hours straight, and they tried to cover it up. Also in 2015, the Tampa Bay Times reported that buckets of rats and roaches were found above the ceiling tiles of a dining facility here at a Tampa facility. This is a shame. We need real healthcare for veterans, real transparency and real accountability at the VA.

I also would like to add that CVA would appreciate -- and other activists around the country would appreciate if you would refrain from infringing on our freedom of speech. We also ask that you please refrain from wasteful government spending. Defense secretaries from both sides of the aisle agree that the American's $19 trillion, and counting, debt is one of the greatest threats to our national security because it weakens our
economy, and it hurts our military readiness. Thank you very much.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you for your service.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Andrew Vila.

MR. VILA: Right here.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Okay.

MR. VILA: Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Would you repeat your name for the record.

MR. VILA: Andrew Vila. I'm with Generation Opportunity. I'm here to first ask that you simply not do anything and hold all us, the citizens of Florida, harmless. If this Commission does not see the need for putting something forward, we hope that it will be done in the most transparent way possible. And thank you all for doing that.

We also ask that if you must fix anything, please fix Article 9 of the State Constitution. We believe school choice has been under attack in the court system, and we hope that the CRC, if they do anything, will make sure that they ratify school choice in our state's constitution. Thank you.
COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Dr. Phillips.

DR. PHILLIPS: Good afternoon. My name is Idelia Phillips, president-elect and membership chair of the League Women Voters of Hillsborough County.

(Audience applause.)

DR. PHILLIPS: I appreciate the opportunity to iterate the League's concerns regarding the restoration of voting rights for former felony offenders. Florida is one of only three states that strip all individuals with past felony convictions of their civil rights, including their fundamental right to vote, even after they've paid their debt to society.

Floridians believe in second chances and so should the CRC by supporting the modernization of Florida's criminal justice rules to restore voting rights for Floridians, excuse me, that have fulfilled their obligations to society.

The lack of voting rights impact many areas of life -- denial of various business and professional licenses and permits, denial of financial assistance for post-secondary education, difficulty finding steady work, inability to hold office and other
disenfranchisements. Civic engagement and political participation strengthen our communities and improve our democracy. The right to vote directly links individuals, not only to their local communities, but also to state and national communities creating a vested interest in the success of those communities and guaranteeing them a voice in the democratic process.

The League of Women Voters support the automatic restoration of voting rights for former felony offenders, including support for a constitutional amendment to achieve the same. I thank you.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Mr. Boggs.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Excuse me. Excuse me. We have a lot of people that we want to listen to today. So if we would not -- use the cards. Do like this with your hands. But we would appreciate no other noise. Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Mr. Boggs.

MR. BOGGS: Harry Boggs. Good day. If by some chance the advocates -- my worthy opponents get their amendment out of the gate amongst you 37 towards the fall 2018 ballot vote, you'll hear more
from opponents like me, and we'll be squawking in
detail about the dangers of doctor-assisted suicide.
From Nevada -- this week from Nevada to Maine, those
forces have been citing their poll numbers. Their
poll numbers are very interesting, and they change
with the more detail that you give the respondent.
The more choices you give the respondent, the lower
their poll numbers rate.

For instance, only 5 percent of Oregonians who
are enrolled in the Oregon euthanasia -- I call it
euthanasia program. Only 5 percent of them who
were, as I say, victimized of the Oregonian system
have even sought out any mental health counseling.

Amongst those on the West Coast from
Washington to California, only 7 percent of those
respondents who are enrolled in programs said that
they had absolutely uncontrollable physical pain.
The rest, by in large, said that they were lonely,
humiliated or depressed. One west coast journalist,
in fact -- a writer for In These Times Magazine said
that he, in fact, if he could go back in time, would
help his own father seek self-deliverance through
these state program, except then, with baited
breath, he said this might be a problem for larger
populations of people in California, in particular
neighborhoods or communities that know little about
the program. He actually cited fears for
populations within the bayous and within the African
American communities in Los Angeles.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. BOGGS: So, in your considerations, be
careful what you --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: You can turn in your
information if don't get a chance to complete your
statement.

MR. BOGGS: More is forthcoming. Thank you
very much.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: So just remember that
you only have two minutes.

Now, the next five after Mr. Kemple.

Mark Klutho, Pat Frank, Eric Jarman, Elise Myseld
and Christopher Hopkins.

Mr. Kemple.

MR. KEMPLE: Thank you. My name is
Terry Kemple. I lead the Community Issues Council,
which is a local Christian ministry. On behalf of
myself and the 3,200 people who are part of our
ministry, I want to thank you for your service. I
know this can't be an easy task, going around the
state and listening to us. But thank you for doing
I just have one point. Based on the record of the deliberations of the 1978 Constitution Revision Commission, when they first discussed the privacy clause that's currently a part of the Florida Constitution, and the deliberations of the Florida legislature when they put it on the ballot, the intent was to protect citizens' personal information in a world where technology was making it easier and easier to find out about people.

The Center for Governmental Responsibility at University of Florida's Holland Law Center said the purpose of the amendment is to require the state to justify the reasonableness of its intrusions upon informational privacy. A report prepared by the center said the impact of the privacy amendment would be to constrain the collection of information about individuals and not limit public access to information properly collected.

Unfortunately, as has happened in a number of jurisdictions around the country, an activist court in Florida used the lack of specificity in the actual language of the privacy clause to enable themselves to impose their personal ideology on the people of our state. In this case it was the denial
of parental rights in the decision of whether a
minor girl should have an abortion. Not only did
they create this so-called right out of thin air,
but, in so doing, they overturned legislation passed
by the people's duly elected representatives that
insured that right.

I'm not asking you to rewrite the
constitution. I'm simply asking you to define that
clause the way it was meant.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Pat Frank.

MS. FRANK: I am Pat Frank. I --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Sorry about that
Madam Clerk. I was -- I'm in error. It's
Mark Klutho. Mark.

MR. KLUTHO: Mark Klutho. Well, I just heard
reasonable, but the problem is three
amendments -- Amendment One, medical marijuana, and
the solar amendment. These all overwhelmingly voted
by the citizens. What happens with them? The
legislature, with the solar, they want to throw a
wrench into the application. Solar is something
desperately needed.

Now, with the medical marijuana, where is it?
I mean, we have guidelines with states throughout
the union, and we're not getting it. And
Amendment One --

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Stand closer to the microphone, please. Can you get close to the microphone so everybody can hear you? Because what you're saying is important, but you're too far from the microphone. If you could get closer, that would be great.

MR. KLUTHO: 75 percent, Amendment One. And there will be zero dollars going to that when it should be 7 to $900 million coming from the doc stamps. Now, what do these amendments mean if the legislature won't do a damn thing when the taxpayer says this is what our vote is? Now, the way I see it, this is just a big farce.

(Audience applause.)

MS. FRANK: I am Pat Frank. I appear today representing my office as the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller of Hillsborough County. I would like to introduce the other clerks who are here today: Ken Burke from Pinellas County, Paula O'Neil from Pasco County and our own clerk, Carolyn Timmann, your colleague on the Commission.

Good afternoon, members and guests. Thank you for your dedication to the daunting job of framing Florida for the next 20 years. We have a serious
problem. For this year, as well as the past nine years, I and other clerks have faced cuts to our budgets by the legislature. Article 5 of the Florida Constitution was amended by the voters in 2004 to transfer the responsibility of funding clerk offices from the counties to the state.

Section 14(B) of Article 5 specified that the clerks, along with our judicial partners, would be funded from the locally collected fines, fees and costs which clerks collect. That is not being followed. Last year we collected, statewide, nearly $777 million. $409 million was kept by the clerks. $119 million went to the courts, state attorneys and public defenders. And, listen carefully, $248 million of our local dollars went to other purposes unrelated to courts.

The titles of clerk and comptroller do not excite the public, but we are the watchdog for the public. We are independently elected officials responsible for maintaining all court documents and preserving the county's funds. We must receive funds to operate appropriately.

I ask you to amend Section 14(B) of Article 5 so that clerks and their judicial partners are placed in a first priority -- first priority -- to
receive the local fines, fees and costs, which we
collect, based on our documented needs. Let us
spend our local dollars. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Eric Jarman.

MR. JARMAN: Hi. Good evening, Commissioners.

Thank you for letting us comment. I'm here to make
a comment about amendments to the constitution that
would affect a person's ability -- the law-abiding
citizen's ability to carry a weapon. I don't
believe the constitution is the place to do that. I
don't think we need any new amendments to the
constitution, and I believe the ones that were in
there should be removed.

On the second count, I'm going to make a
comment. I just recently had a friend die in severe
pain from cancer, and he had to wait, oh, a good
four months to try to get medical marijuana. And
that whole thing doesn't work. He should been able
to get it within days from an M.D. Thank you very
much.

MS. MYSELS: Hi. I'm Elise Mysels. I'm a
Land O'Lakes resident, and a Florida resident for
47 years. I'm retired, and I'm a registered
Democratic voter. Thank you for holding this public hearing. I stand before you today to expand on just one of my proposals -- open primaries on the basis of fair and just elections in our state.

To begin with, primary elections are publicly funded with our tax dollars and are not private elections. They are administered by government employees in public holding places using public owned voting machines. So I ask: Why are taxpaying citizens being locked out of the primaries? Is this fair?

According to the Florida Division of Elections' website, over 3.1 million -- 3.1 million -- Florida voters are registered with no party affiliation, and over half of our young voters identify themselves as independents. So I ask: Why is it a requirement to join a party in order to vote in the primaries? Is this just?

Every taxpayer's dollar has the same value. But that's not what this rule supports, and political parties claim to be private associations. Instead, our government has become about what's best for the political parties, not the people. And locking so many people out of a public election is neither fair nor just.
I propose that we bring Florida into the 21st century. Only nine other states in the U.S. have closed primaries like Florida. We need open primaries so that our politicians have to answer to all our voters. We need open primaries so that our next generation of leaders begins participating in our political process. We need open primaries because the present constitutional language allowing independents to vote in primaries is being circumvented by inserting bogus write-in candidates.

I propose that this Commission put an open primary on the ballot. And I will leave you with just one final question. Is it fair and just to let the politicians or political parties who are doing the bidding decide if we want open primaries or the taxpayer voters of Florida? Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Folks. Folks. Really we want to listen to everyone and the interruptions will cut this short. So please use the cards and let people speak. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ted Apelt, Gene LaCross, Nicholas Milone, Kevin Youngberg and Carolyn Logan will follow Mr. Hopkins.
MR. HOPKINS: Thank you. My name is Christopher Hopkins. And earlier today I was here at your meeting with the working committee, and you couldn't even agree what you wanted to do in your own committee. The CRC should be an assembly of the people, not any appointed people like government employees or no Bar attorneys, no county commissioners or anything like that. This should be we the people doing this. Only electors of the people can amend the constitution. The constitution cannot be revised. We have a constitution that is by consent of the government. If we were teaching in our schools the constitution, the lights would be out in here tonight because we wouldn't need a Constitutional Revision Commission, because we would be doing it with we the people.

The CRC is clearly a political stand for appointees from the ruling class, the elite 1 percent, the politicians for our money.

Respectfully submitted, Christopher Hopkins. Thank you.

MR. APELT: Hi. My name is Ted Apelt. I'm from Land O'Lakes, and, as many you might be aware, the number of voters who identify as independent is greater than those that identify as Republicans.
and those that identify as Democrats. Yet, we have
a voting system in which only, we're told, that
Republicans or Democrats can win. The other people,
"Oh, they can't win, don't vote for them." And this
is because we have what's polarity voting where you
win by getting more votes than anybody else, even if
you're getting less than half the vote. That's
right. People can win with less than 50 percent of
the vote.

So what do we do? Well, in November,
Maine -- the state of Maine -- passed an amendment,
which I would like us to do in 2018, that allows
what's called ranked choice voting. How does this
work? You rank your first choice, your second
choice and your third choice. If your first choice
is not a top two, your vote goes to your second
choice. If they're not in the top two, it goes to
your third choice and so on.

And not only would this bring more
independents in and allow people to vote for the
candidate they really want to vote for, it would
provide very useful information. The dream party
voters, who's their second choice? The libertarian
voters, who's their second choice?

Right now we only know this from exit polling.
If you don't do the exit polling, you won't know.

With this, you would. So it would give people -- it would give third parties a voice, even if they don't win, because the Republicans and Democrats will be trying to get their votes instead of just marginalizing them and pushing them off into basically nonexistence. Thank you.

MR. YOUNGBERG: My name is Kevin Youngberg, and I'm from Clearwater, Florida. I'm a professional biologist, a retired Naval officer and now a Ph.D. student at USF. I wanted to discuss today Senate Bill 1304, which is the Black Bear Habitat Restoration Act. It was not fully approved, but some of the provisions of it were supported, and, thankfully, the black bear hunt was postponed until 2018.

But I just wanted to bring it your attention that I think it's important that the provisions of that act be included in the Florida Constitution so that we can maybe have some permanent protections for the Florida black bear. And that's it.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

MS. LOGAN: Hello. My name is Carolyn Logan. I'm a Florida native, and Tampa also. I'm requesting constitutional laws to be introduced that
would protect our Florida black bear. We were not able to protect the bears in our 2015 hunt that they had, but we did stop it from being repeated in 2016, '17 and '18.

Over six and a half million citizens from across Florida were represented by resolutions signed by the counties and cities statewide asking the State not to allow bear hunting in their vicinities. There's major opposition to the bear killing by the majority senate bill -- by the majority. The Senate Bill 1304 was introduced, the Black Bear Restorations Act -- Habitat Restorations Act. Excuse me. We need these provisions in place permanently added to our constitution to protect our bears with the following -- excuse me, I've never spoken in front of anyone before -- 15-year ban on bear hunts; no forest burning during denning months, which burns to death the infant bears because their too little to run away from the flames. Also, it protects the bears' food supply.

But the bill set aside a constitutional amendment to go even further and protect our bears permanently, banning bear hunts forever. The bears belong to the majority of the citizens under the Public Trust Doctrine. Fact, nature has designed
bears to self-regulate their population. They will not carry a pregnancy if food is scarce. No man is needed to regulate this population of our bears.

No unprovoked bear attack has ever taken place in Florida. Black bears are timid creatures and will run if given an escape. We have enough citizens in place that will further rally this bill, and we get it passed. Please give our Florida bears this chance. Help the citizens decide on the constitutional amendment --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Ms. Logan.

MS. LOGAN: -- banning bear hunting. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Mr. LaCross. Are you Mr. LaCross?

(Audience applause.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Please, folks.

MR. MILONE: Nicholas Milone.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: No, it's Gene LaCross that's next.

MR. LACROSS: Hi, Commissioners. Gene LaCross of Ocala, Florida. When I saw you all talking back and forth, it reminded me that the constitution is not really complicated. All states are supposed to mimic the federal Constitution. The people here
have the chance to do an assembly, vote for their
electors and also their ones in the committee, and
that's how it's done, by the people. And what's
going on here I think is unconstitutional, because
you're making things on your own and it's all being
filled by these different special interests. So
that's my take on what's going on. And I thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Mr. Malone. Before
you -- the next five: Jack Keates, Tyler DeMonde,
Paul Ford, Travis Smith and Sheilah Smith. Thank
you.

MR. MILONE: Hello. My name is
Nicholas Milone. I'm a local resident, and I'm an
ex-military vet. I'm here today to talk about the
state constitution and gun control. I do not
believe that any changes to the state constitution
should happen for gun control, the gun control
measures that are already in place should be removed
and that the choice for open carry to be considered.
I wanted to point out that by the Second Amendment
of the Constitution guarantees the personal freedoms
and rights, the fundamental right to bear arms.
Also, any changes are an infringement to liberties
of the citizens.

I wanted to also talk about some of the
pro-gun data statistics that are out there and
possibly that they are flawed. Also, gun control is
wrong. Even if the outcome is positive, the
individuals have a prima facia right to own a gun.
Also, for self defense and recreational purposes,
that right is infringed. I wanted to point out that
an armed population favors a decrease in crime.
(Audience response.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Please, let him speak.

MR. MILONE: Historically, the Supreme Court
in the District of Columbia vs. Heller, the Second
Amendment was upheld for the individual's right to
possess and carry firearms. I wanted to point out
that the Nazis used gun control methods in the
legislation in 1938.

Finally, I ask that this Commission consider
not making any changes to the state constitution
with gun control. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Tyler DeMonde.

MR. DeMONDE: My name is Tyler DeMonde. I'm
here to talk about the Fair Districts Amendments.
From the very beginning legislatures have fought the
Fair Districts Amendments, and when 63 percent of
voters approved them in 2010, legislative leaders
developed a secret plan to draw unconstitutional
districts out of the public eye. The hard work of
the Fair Districts Coalition, in court, uncovered
this scheme that was designed to draw maps that
favored the Republican party.

Now there's an effort to clear the way for
more unconstitutional map drawing in 2022. This is
unacceptable. Whether the maps are drawn in favor
or Republicans or Democrats, it undermines our
democracy. My question for this Commission is:
Will you promise the citizens of Florida that you
will not weaken the fair districts amendments or aid
and abet the people that want to cheat Floridians by
secretly drawing districts for their own political
purposes? Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Paul Ford.

MR. FORD: My name is Paul Ford. Now is the
time to stand up for the people of Florida. For too
long the balance of power in Tallahassee has shifted
to large private interests that are acting solely on
their own behalf and contrary to the welfare of
Floridians. Utility companies are stifling the
expansion of solar power which could be so abundant
in Florida. This is the Sunshine State. We should
be expanding solar power, not limiting it.
Insurance companies have segregated Florida so that we now pay the highest property insurance in the country. This is pushing homeownership out of reach for many middle-class Americans.

Private education companies are systematically dismantling our public education system in favor of for-profit institutions. Education is not for profit. It's an investment in the future of our state and its people.

The country's largest retailers and service companies continue to prevent the adoption of a livable wage that would raise people out of poverty.

This is but a few examples that occur on almost a daily basis across our state. A democracy is government by the people with one vote per person. Government is here to serve the people, not large corporate interest groups. Now is the time to return power to the people. Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Travis Smith.

Can we ask you all --

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Folks, please. This is the third time about the clapping. It has to stop or this meeting will go on forever. And that's fine with me, but I'm here to listen to everyone who has
signed up to speak. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Hello. My name is Travis Smith. I'm the Senior Pastor at Hillsdale Baptist Church up in the Citrus Park area. I'm here to request of this Florida Constitution Revision Commission a right and obvious wrong to restore the original intent of the citizens of Florida by amending Article 1, Section 23 to apply strictly to the rights of citizens to have their personal and financial information protected from the intrusion of government and businesses.

I've read the simple original intent of Article 1, Section 23 and understand that Florida voters and the legislature at that time were addressing informational privacy concerns of business and finance.

I'm at a loss to understand how liberal activists, judges of the Supreme Court, in 1989 can take the original intent of Article 1, Section 23 and by some convoluted, twisted exercise in mental derangement, mandate the right of minor children, many of whom are victims of rape and incense, to seek an abortion without parental consent.

The current interpretation of Article 1, Section 23 by the Supreme Court giving the minors
the right of abortion without parental consent not only prays upon the most vulnerable but is also a frontal attack on the family and parental rights to nurture, guide and protect their children's spiritual, mental and physical well-being.

Realizing the Florida Supreme Court has demonstrated a pattern of legislating from the bench and violating the fundamental principle that all political power is inherent in the people, I'm requesting that this Constitutional Revision Commission state in exact terms that the intent of Article 1, Section 23 is to protect informational privacy of Florida citizens and does not confer a right to abortion.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Before Ms. Sheilah Smith, we'll have Joe McDonnell, Nina Tatlock, Joseph McDonnell, Rebecca Myers and Melissa Holmes. Will you all please line up behind Ms. Smith. Thank you.

MS. SMITH: Hi. My name is Sheilah Smith. And I want to thank you for all being here taking your time. I really do appreciate it. And it's a privilege to stand here before you today and to know that you can hear the hearts and minds of Florida citizens. That's a great privilege that we have,
not only in Florida, but in these United States. So thank you so much for taking your time.

I am his wife. So I want to ditto everything that he just said. And I want to say that I'm a mother -- a wife, obviously, a mother, a grandmother. I think whenever we write provisions for our constitution we ought to make sure that they say exactly what they're intended to say, and that they are not able to be taken and misconstrued or twisted or turned, or however you want to term it, to incorporate something that the author did not intend for it to be.

And so, on the basis of just being a mom and a grandma, I'm asking you to rewrite that Article 1, Section 23 so that it will not allow abortion for minors without parental consent. I'm not for abortion anyway. I know that's going to get red cards everywhere. Don't care. That's my view and I'm here to say and I have the privilege of saying it. So thank you for listening.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Joe McDonnell.

MR. KEATES: My name is Jack Keates from Tampa.

MR. McDonnell: I'm Joe. Sorry.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Joe is up right now.
Joseph. Are you Joseph?

MR. McDonnell: Are you Joe too?

MR. KEATES: I'm 21.

MR. McDonnell: He may have been skipped, I think is what he's saying.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: We have Joe McDonnell.

MR. McDonnell: I'm Joe McDonnell.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Joe McDonnell first.

MR. KEATES: Do you want me to go or --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: I think the younger Joe is yielding to you, so go ahead.

MR. McDonnell: Please, sir. Please.

MR. KEATES: Sorry. I'm here to talk about a very, very popular subject here, and that's guns -- actually, gun rights, because our rights are all very similar, especially when they start getting restricted.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear you.

MR. KEATES: I need a taller microphone.

Our rights, when they are restricted, we start noticing it. The State of Florida has been good to people who happen to like, own and possess guns. That's not a crime in this state yet. We want to keep it that way. I should say I should. I'm not representing anyone here by myself.
The people in the state of Florida have it easy compared to other states. I don't want to see what's going on in Illinois or New York to come here. I want to read something. It may seem out of color for just a moment. This is out of the Florida Constitution, and it says, The Militia. The Militia shall be composed of all able-bodied -- all able-bodied -- inhabitants of the state who are or who have declared your intention to become citizens of the U.S.

That means, surprise, you're all members of the militia, like it or not. You can hate guns, but you're a member of the militia by law. It's in the constitution. The reason why I bring this up is because the fact of when you restrict gun rights, you restrict the ability of us to do something which we never think about, just like you never thought about what I just read, and that is the right to defend ourselves, defend our families, our homes and our state. Thank you.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Okay. Nina Tatlock.

I'm going by my order. I have two Joes. But you're the two, father and son here.

MR. McDONNELL: I'm 25. This lady over here
is No. 26. He's No. 27.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: No. I'm going by my -- the way that I call them.

MR. McDonnell: Okay.


MR. McDonnell: I'm fine. Go ahead, ma'am, please.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: He's 25, folks. Go ahead.

MR. McDonnell: I wish I was 25. My name is Joe McDonnell. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for allowing me to speak. Also, thank you for being here. I'm here as a citizen, a father and a veteran. I've watched as our inalienable rights to arms and self defense as cited under Article 1, Section 8 of the Florida Constitution have been taken away bit by bit. I'm here to speak for myself and those who could not make it to this event to say we would like our rights back.

In regards to this, I ask the Commission to reject any efforts to implement so-called universal background checks. The freedom to own must necessarily include the free right to purchase. There is no fundamental right that any court would
be allowed to be impaired in this manner. Would we allow the impairment of freedom of the press or freedom of religion only after review?

I also ask for an amendment that ensures that our judicial system will review all laws regarding firearms under the standard of strict scrutiny. This is the same standards review for other fundamental rights. So I question why is this particular right allowed to be ruled at a lesser standard?

I ask this Commission to submit as an amendment to remove the burden of waiting periods for the purchase a firearm. This is unnecessary and duplicative in light of the fact that the federal government already imposes a background check before being able to make a purchase.

In addition, I would request an amendment to be included which requires the state to recognize the right of citizens to open carry, as 45 other states already do, 30 of which without any permitting or licensing and with few, if any, problems.

And, finally, I would like to remind this Commission let us not forget the racist roots of gun control efforts in this state when the very first
infringements were enacted as a reaction to the successful efforts of armed African Americans in Jacksonville who were able to prevent a lynching. To this day these efforts that are eroding our rights are not about safety but are designed towards keeping people from protecting themselves and their loved ones.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Ms. Tatlock.

MS. TATLOCK: Hello. My name is Nina Tatlock, and I'm here to advocate for democracy in the state of Florida. I think our nation was founded on the premise of being a Democratic Republic. We need amendments that will open the vote to allow everyone 18 and up to participate. We need automatic registration, open primaries, automatic restoration of felon's voting rights after they have served out their sentence and punishment. We need publicly funded campaigns.

I also think ranked choice voting is a good idea. We need to remove all barriers to the ballot box. There are a lot of people who are not corporations who are showing up here, and we need to let them all participate in our elections.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.
Joseph McDonnell, II.

MR. McDONNELL, II: My name is Joseph McDonnell. I'm a 17-year-old competitive olympic bunker trap shooter, and currently a Life Scout with the Boy Scouts of America. I'm here to speak against the possibility of future actions to implement universal background checks. I believe any effort to impose these laws would impede on the rights of Floridians.

I am a member of the Scholastic Clays Shooting Program out of the Silver Dollar Club, and I have competed in Junior Olympics last year and qualified to go again this year. However, if universal background checks were implemented, this would not be possible. You see, when I first started out, my parents were not able to afford a gun for me. If universal background checks are implemented -- I asked to borrow a gun from my club. With universal background checks, this would be illegal. New shooters, such as myself and many others, would be barred from shooting simply because their parents were not wealthy enough.

Not only that, people's family members and close friends would be unable to borrow a gun from the owner in order to try it out. Universal
background checks discourage newcomers from shooting sports, and no one should be discouraged from exercising a right.

I would also like to talk about campus carry. Teachers and visitors should be allowed to carry, especially in the modern world with the rise of school-shooting occurrences. I don't want to increase my chances of dying simply because someone trusted a sign to keep out evildoers -- people with evil intentions.

Thirdly, I would like to ask you to guarantee the right of Floridians to open carry, just as 45 other states do. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Rebecca Myers.

MS. MYERS: Hi. I'm Rebecca Myers. I'm part of Indivisible Action Together Tampa Bay, 6,000 members strong. I'm also a Tampa native, a Navy veteran and I'm an aerospace engineer. I would like to implore the CRC to move our state toward an affordable energy system that relies on clean-energy sources like solar. We must avoid risky and expensive investments in outdated fossil fuels.

A focus on clean renewable energy helps consumers decrease our dependence on fossil fuels, increases Florida's economy and creates new jobs and
decreases our impact on the environment and climate change. Climate change is real. It is devastating, and it will affect our entire state. Please include proposals that promote a clean energy future for Florida and help slow the crippling effects of climate change.

I also have to add I'm a very -- I'm also very much for universal background checks. I'm against teachers carrying guns in school. My husband is a teacher. I used to be a high school teacher. And I am part of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Before Ms. Holmes, we'll have David Chestnut to follow her, Mickey Castor, Meghan Pietrowski, Salome Grasland and Sabrina Schultz.

Ms. Holmes.

MS. HOLMES: Thank you. I just want to say God bless you. My head is already about to explode. I'm just a mom who works and lives in this state. I would like to point out that part of the reason we need open carry is that if I'm out with kids and I happen to have my concealed weapon with me, if I move the wrong way and someone sees it, I could be in violation of the law.
Also, I would like to say open primaries, no. My family, we have one registered as Democrat and one registered as Republican so we have a voice in both parties. It doesn't mean we vote that way all the time. It's pretty easy to figure out. Thank you for you time and God bless you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Mr. Chestnut.

MR. CHESTNUT: Ladies and gentlemen and esteemed members of the CRC, it is an honor --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Would you put your name in the record, please.

MR. CHESTNUT: Pardon?

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Your name, please.

MR. CHESTNUT: Oh, David Chestnut. It is an honor and a privilege to speak to you today and a great concern of mine and many of my friends. I'm a member -- I'm a veteran and a member of multiple veteran Ameritage organizations. I come from one of the founding families of this country. All around our state and around this nation, veteran memorials have been under attack and are being used by vandals as billboards for social protest.

On April 11th, 2016, Veterans killed since 911 were dishonored as the statue of Operation Enduring Freedom at the Veterans' Memorial Park in
Gainesville was desecrated and destroyed. On July 4th, the statue of the namesake of Jacksonville, Andrew Jackson, was the target of vandalism. On July 4th, large orange letters were painted on the base of the statue. On October 15th, 2015, two times in one week, the Ocala Marion County Veterans' Memorial Park was vandalized. Flagpoles were bent to the ground and two eagle statues at the entrance to the park were destroyed. These are crimes against the memory and respect of our veterans and all of Florida citizens. These parks and monuments are sacred places of honor.

My question to you is what are you doing to preserve the honor and dignity of all veterans of the past, present and future. It is time to be serious about making Florida a pro-veteran state. Adopt the Soldiers and --

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. CHESTNUT: -- Heros Protection Act.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

Mickey Castor.

MS. CASTOR: My name is Mickey Castor, and I am a past president of the Hillsborough County League of Women Voters. As many of you know, the league is always concerned about issues of good
government. We urge you to incorporate these basic principles into your deliberations.

One, transparency, meaning open meetings, like this one, and records as our Sunshine Laws require. Two, meaningful public input with terms of engagement disclosed in a timely fashion so public comment is feasible when you get to the point of actual proposals, and a clear open recorded process for approval of proposals with in-person participation by the full Commission.

The League is also interested in the specific issues you will address. I am personally concerned about any possibility of undermining the fair districts amendment. Some of you I saw on the panel in 2010. I worked very hard to educate voters throughout Hillsborough County on the then abuses of politicians who entered into secret backroom deals to rig political districts and elections in order to hold onto political power. I found voters eager to support greater fairness and to encourage more competitive races when they would have real choices.

In fact, as you've already heard, 63 percent of voters, statewide, supported fair districts. However, the League fears that there may be efforts to pressure the CRC to propose constitutional
amendments that would severely undermine the fair
districts amendments. We urge the CRC to reject any
attempt to change the way the fair districts rules
work. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Salome Grasland.

MS. GRASLAND: Hello. Thank you for hearing
me today. I'm asking you to defend Florida's
privacy amendment. This amendment was added to the
constitution by Florida citizens in the 1980s to
keep the government from unrightful intruding on our
personal lives.

This amendment is especially critical in
protecting a woman's right to medical privacy with
special regards to abortion access. Every natural
person has the right to be let alone and free from
governmental intrusion into the person's private
life, and this includes women.

When I step into Planned Parenthood, I should
not fear that my personal documents and intimate
procedures become scrutiny of the government. I
should not have to fear that my standard of medical
care for my sisters, my mother and my friends
received being impaired in any way by irrelevant,
idealogical arguments.

I urge you to preserve the Florida
Constitution's strong protection against political interference with a woman's right to control her own body. I urge you to ensure that protection guaranteed under Florida's privacy clause of the constitution continues to protect a woman's most personal and private decisions regarding her own body. I urge you that this body not make any attempt to circumvent Florida Supreme Court decision in order to pander to interests of a few vocal individuals that are trying to further their ideological agenda at the expense of a woman's ability to make these most personal and difficult decisions for herself.

Please preserve it, as is the privacy clause in our constitution. Because of Florida's constitution explicit right of privacy, the right of privacy is a fundamental right within Florida, including the fundamental right to an abortion. We urge to preserve these fundamental rights of privacy for women in Florida. Do not tamper with or eliminate the Florida Constitution's explicit right to privacy, which protects a woman's personal and private decision making regarding her pregnancy. Do not reinterpret the right of privacy to exclude a woman's decision making regarding her body. Thank
COMMISSIONER JOYNER: After Ms. Sabrina Schultz we'll have Sara Johnson, Karen Mullins, Dr. Rick Garrity, Diane Lestdriff -- and you can correct me when you come up -- and Francisco Pierre-Louis.

MS. SCHULTZ: Thank you, Commission Members. My name is Sabrina Burton Schultz. I represent the Diocese of St. Petersburg on a wide range of life, peace and justice issues. I'm also speaking to the privacy clause today, and I'll be submitting to you written testimony from Catherine Ingham. She's one of my youngest and strongest volunteers for a program we call 40 Days for Life. This is a prayer campaign but also a campaign where we reach out to women and men going into abortion centers to offer them real support and referrals to crisis pregnancy centers.

Catherine was 16 years old when she discovered that she was pregnant. The afternoon that she discovered she was pregnant, she called an abortion center, and she was booked for a procedure the next morning. There was no counseling at abortion clinic, and, in fact, she was scolded by the nurse and the abortionist to stop crying while she was on
the table. Had she had a 24-hour reflection period, Catherine believes that her decision may have been very different. Furthermore, Catherine was not required to provide an ID at the clinic, and she was able to fill out the consent forms, in fear, with false information.

Catherine suffered in silence for years following her abortion, as do many of our clients through Project Rachael Post-Abortion Healing Program. And when she finally told her parents what had happened, they acknowledged that they would have supported her throughout her pregnancy. But, in her fear as a young teen, she could not see that.

Had parental consent been in effect, Catherine could have been spared her years of guilt and shame and her child would be alive with us today.

Parental consent prior to abortion is a good law. It has been struck down by our state courts but upheld at a federal level. I ask you to consider to amend the Florida Constitution to clarify that our state's privacy clause is not intended to grant greater rights to abortion than the U.S. Constitution. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Sara Johnson.

MS. JOHNSON: Hello. I'm Sara Johnson the
Central Florida Field Director for No Casinos. Our organization was founded back in 1978 by then Governor, Reubin Askew, at a time when casinos were limited to Las Vegas. The influential casino industry was attempting to expand to other regions of the United States and had their eyes set on Florida. But it was well understood that Florida's 1968 constitution prohibited in the expansion of gambling. That didn't receive voters' approval, as evidenced by casino's persistent attempts in 1978, 1986 and 1994 to pass constitutional amendments, which Florida voters overwhelmingly rejected each time.

Only recently has case law obstinated where the power expand gambling. Now, when casinos want to come to Florida, instead of asking Florida's voters for approval, they go straight to Tallahassee to lobby legislators.

We believe this shift violated Article 10, Section 7 of Florida's current constitution, which treats lotteries, other than the types of parimutuel pools authorized by law, as the effective date of this constitution, are hereby prohibited in this state. Of course the term lotteries in this section means casino-style games, not the Florida Lottery,
which was approved -- which is a form of gambling added to the constitution after approval from the Florida voters in 1986.

Not only is it important to clarify and reaffirm Florida's Constitution regarding who has the right to expand gambling in Florida, we also believe it's important to restore citizens their right to decide whether casinos should move into the community next to their families and places of business. It's for these reasons that we support the Florida Voter Control of Gambling Amendment.

Deciding whether Florida becomes the Las Vegas or Atlantic City shouldn't be up to the legislators. It should be up to the voters of Florida.

And it's the position of No Casinos that this right already exists in Florida's constitution but requires clarification. We hope that you will consider this in your proposals. Thank you so much for your time and your work on behalf of our great state.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Karen Mullins.

MS. MULLINS: Good afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to listen to us this afternoon. My name is Karen Mullins. I'm the current president of North Pinellas County Democratic Club. I'm not here
representing the club, but I do have a few issues.
Hello, Chris.

First of all, we are the Sunshine State, and we're not utilizing solar. There are provisions within our constitution. We have -- Pinellas County's visitor bureau uses the song "Solar Power Every Hour," and we're not utilizing it.

The next is medical marijuana. This legislation this term did not allocate funds, did not walk the walk. This passed by super majority, and I'm wondering why this government is not listening to the people.

The next issue is women's rights. Women's bodies. They're not only -- women's health affects everything we do. We are undoubtably the support of each and every community, and you take away our rights piece-by-piece by putting together legislation that mandates a death certificate for a fetus. I'm not understanding this, and I'm not liking it. We need the support of the state -- the support of the government to help women, to help people all over this state to utilize and get healthcare, not take it away.

One more -- I lost it completely -- one more thing --
COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you. Your time is up. Thank you so much.

Dr. Rick Garrity.

DR. GARRITY: Rick Garrity. Thank you members of the CRC for the opportunity to present concerns and suggestions to enhance Florida's future. My name is Dr. Rick Garrity, and I'm speaking from a background of over 40 years of working to protect Florida's natural resources.

First let me address land preservation and water protection. Preserving ecologically sensitive and valuable lands over the lands in Florida is essential to conserving water, which is why I urge the Commission to consider proposals that acquire and restore lands necessary to protect drinking water sources and to protect water qualities in our rivers, lakes and streams.

The best way to look at the hydrologic cycle and the flow of rainfall off the land and onto rivers and estuaries is to think in terms of slower is better. The more wetlands that you have to allow floodwaters to flow through, the better and cleaner the water will be that eventually reaches the rivers, bays and streams. This also has a side benefit of decreasing flooding because the flood
flows have already been captured by the wetland systems.

Access to clean water sustains our growing population of 20 million residents and our rivers, streams and lakes and springs. It's the reason so many people chose to live in Florida, this wonderful state. And so I hope the Commission will bolster protections for our rivers, lakes and streams and recognize that all our livelihoods depend on access to clean water.

I would like to discuss also a future sustainable Florida. Florida has the potential to be among the top solar producing states in the country, but we currently generate only 1 percent of our energy from solar power and trail behind even states like New Jersey. Awareness and support of forward-thinking solar policies in Florida is growing, but we need to purposely move our state towards an affordable, resilient energy system that relies on clean energy sources like solar and avoid risky and expensive investments in outdated fossil fuel. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

Diane Lesedeff.

MS. LESEDEFF: Diane Lesedeff from Clearwater.
May it please the Commission. I rise to raise with you several, several fundamental points, and I've heard many citizens worry about what the Commission is going to be doing. So I would like to just set forward a couple of principles. First, I ask that you reject, repeal or watering down voter-approved constitutional amendments which have already passed. There are people who worry that you're going to do that with fair districts, with solar, with medical marijuana and with other issues. You shouldn't be doing that. It would be very poor public policy. I ask also that you take no action to diminish existing rights.

Now, I've heard some of the debates here in the prestation of the history about the women's right to privacy and bodies and the constitution. I have heard other recitations of that history in 100 percent diametrically opposed versions. Please don't fall for a story that has no basis and fact.

Third, I would like to ask you to take action to help achieve a fair and just society in Florida, something that you all can do, and, by advancing those causes, you'll add to the legitimacy of your efforts. And, finally, I would like to ask you to stay away from the various special-purpose tweaks.
favoring special interests. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Francisco Pierre-Louis.

The next five -- Darrel Salchert, will you come on up, please? Followed by Dani Dahlberg, Pete Franco, Stephanie Owens and Jamie Delgado.

You have it.

MR. PIERRE-LOUIS: Yes. So my name is Francisco Pierre-Louis, and I'm a student here at Hillsborough Community College. I didn't just come here as a student, but I come here as a concerned citizen considering the fact that we don't have, you know, open primaries to open the -- you know, basically to have everybody involved to make sure that we have an actual democracy in the state.

Now, another thing is that there is a lot of corruption, and one of the things that I have here is an anticorruption act. Basically what that includes is not just open primaries but a ranked choice voting so that people could rank in order based on who they want to vote for and remove the spoiler effect. And it really alleviates all the tension that divides us, not as a state, but as a nation.

And another thing is that we also -- this bill also removes super PACS because it's -- you know,
one of the biggest issues that we have is that
people's voices aren't being represented. And, with
these PACs and these special interests and these
lobbyists, you know, people feel like you have to
scream to have their voices heard, and I don't think
that's fair. So, anyway, that's pretty much what I
have to say. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.


MS. DAHLBERG: Hi. I'm Dani Dahlberg.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Oh, okay.

MS. DAHLBERG: Thank you for your service.

I'm requesting three changes to increase citizen
representation. First, I ask that you close the
write-in loophole in elections. Candidates get
someone to run against them as a write-in,
effectively limiting those voters that can
participate in their party. By the time it gets to
a general election open to all registered voters,
there's really not any choice at all. If you won't
close the write-in loophole, open the primaries. At
the end of last year almost 27 percent of registered
voters in Florida were a third-party or independent.

Second, I ask for ethics reform. That
legislators be barred from working with or colluding
with, in any way, political action committees. They're raising practically unlimited funds from special interests and then doling out favors to each other using this money. They are no longer representing the voters. I'm tired of FPL, Big Sugar and AT&T and others getting everything they want while the legislature doesn't touch things they were told to do by the voters, like implementing rules for medical marijuana and funding environmental programs as required in Amendment 1.

Third, local government home rule protection in the constitution should be strengthened against Tallahassee interference. Legislators put tax cuts on the ballot and campaign on those cuts, but they don't cut their revenue. They cut local governments and expect local governments to figure out how to deal with a budget shortfall. Tallahassee cries foul when Washington D.C. mandates anything to them, but they have no problems mandating on down the line to local governments. They do not -- they're not father knows best, and they have to stop having unlimited authority.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Pete Franco.

MR. FRANCO: Thank you all for being here
today and doing this. My name is Pete Franco. I'm from Pinellas County, retired Army officer. Basically -- so I was going speak on just a few, and I have one specific, and then I'll write in a few, namely one. Just to rattle off a few, with respect to the Second Amendment, absolutely if there's going to be anything done or not done, do not infringe on the Second Amendment. So whatever is going to happen, don't infringe on it.

Term limits. I definitely support -- and I think it's just come out recently Speaker Corcoran has suggested term limits for the Supreme Court and the state appellees. Absolutely support that. They judiciary has gotten, in my opinion, at the state level and at the federal level, out of control, and it's time to reign that in. I would like to see voter roll scrubs. I would like to see voter ID. I mean voter ID for even food stamps.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Please speak into the microphone.

MR. FRANCO: Okay. And absolutely no to open primaries. One specific for here with respect to a statute, and they're with respect to electioneering under elections, 106.011, 106 --

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: The microphone, please.
MR. FRANCO: -- 106.011, 106.03 and 106.113

with respect to what an elected official is allowed
to do or not do for, for instance with respect to
pushing a tax referendum. The distinctions between
information and lobbying and the distinctions
between what a government official can do, for
instance go around to a community mayor and kind of
push for it. And a lot of this has to do with one
of the bills that's in our community right now. The
barter regional tax bill that's going on. So thanks
for giving me a chance to speak and thanks for being
here today.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Stephanie Owens.

MS. OWENS: Good evening, Commissioners. I'm
Stephanie Owens, second vice president of the League
of Women Voters in St. Petersburg. I am here
representing a collation of 16 statewide
organizations. And on behalf of all Floridians we
implore you to set a set of clear and transparent
guidelines and ground rules for your actions.

Earlier today you provided a list of 17
recommendations to your Rules Working Group, and we
would be happy to provide the rest of you with this
information as well. The proposed draft rules
deviate from the previous rules in four very
significant ways.

First, a lack of transparency and respect for the Sunshine Rule. Second, a lack of articulated provisions for meaningful public engagement. Third, the potential for leverage and influence over Commission members, and, fourth, an unclear track record for approval of proposals.

Rule 2.61 -- 216 removes the requirement that proposals reported from committees be placed on the calendar for consideration by the full Commission. This gives the Rules and Administration Committee the power to eliminate proposals from consideration. That change should be rejected.

As civically engaged Floridians, we deserve an assurance that we will have a chance to comment on any proposals before they are recommended or placed onto the ballot. I spent the day with the Rules Working Group. An amazing group. Worked very diligently to have robust and great conversation, but your Rule 9 says that their work is just a recommendation to the Rules Committee and that the Rules Committee could, in fact, reject those recommendations.

So for all of you who are not on the Rules Committee, you may want to be, or your voice won't
be heard either. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Thank you.

Jamie Delgado.

MR. DELGADO: My name is Jamie Delgado. I
would like to touch on two topics, and first is
to --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The microphone.

MR. DELGADO: Is that better?

My name is Jamie Delgado. I would like to
talk about two topics. The first is in favor of
fair districting. In America we believe the virtue
of competition. Competition drives us to perform
better and to innovate. We can only have
competition in our poll processes when our districts
are drawn to foster competition. I hope that the
CRC refrains from placing any initiatives on the
ballot that serve to undermine fair districting.

In the short term it may be attempting to hand
one's party a gerrymander advantage, but, in the
long term, allowing for partisan districting will
deteriorate the quality of officials that the public
sends into government.

The second issue I want to touch on is the
right to privacy. Our laws have not kept pace with
technological advancement. In the private sector,
corporations and Internet service providers can mine and sell our personal data. While the government sector, the public has to contend with mass surveillance. Instead of placing an initiative on the ballot to curtail privacy rights, I believe the CRC would better serve the people of Florida by providing its citizens with the opportunity to expand our privacy rights. That's it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Commissioner Joyner is going to call two people that were called previously that haven't come up, and then we're going to break for five minutes so that our stenographer can take a break with her hands, and we'll reconvene.

COMMISSIONER JOYNER: Darrel Salchert and Meghan Pietrowski.

They are not responding. So we will now have our break. Thank you.

(Whereupon a recess was taken.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Good evening, again. We are going to reconvene the meeting. Commissioner Lee will have the gavel, and he will be calling people to speak in two-minute increments. Please remember to be civil to each other. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Lee.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Two
things. First of all, I apologize in advance. Some of these names look pretty easy, but I'm going to butcher some. I promise you it's not personal. I'll do my best. Along with Commissioner Gaetz, we'll try to get through this.

Second thing is you're getting close to two minutes, and we've got to cut you off. We've probably have gotten your concept, probably understand what it is you're talking about. We're making notes and summary. And so you can always submit your information as a follow-up.

With that we're going to start with -- we're going to have Matt Jordan, Kadi Eubanks and Jill Casciello for our first three. We have 100 speakers left here so -- Mr. Jordan, you're recognized, sir. Go ahead.

MR. JORDAN: Yes, sir. I'm Matt Jordan. I'm here on behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to speak in support of two tobacco legislative control amendments that were added to the state constitution through the citizens' initiative process.

Article 10, Section 20 of the Florida constitution was passed in 2002 by more than
70 percent of Florida voters. The amendment prohibits smoking in most indoor workplaces, including restaurants. We know that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and breathing even small amounts can be dangerous.

Article 10, Section 27 was passed in 2006 by more than 60 percent of Florida voters. The amendment mandates that the state allocate a portion of tobacco sale money for tobacco prevention. The resulting program is administered by the Florida Department of Health. You probably know it as Tobacco Free Florida.

According to the Florida Department of Health, the program has saved the state $3.2 billion in state healthcare costs. Annual smoking-related healthcare costs in Florida has decreased 15 percent from 2006 to 2015 as a result of fewer adults smoking.

While the program has made remarkable progress, smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease. 7,400 Floridans continue to become smokers each year. There's still work to be done. ACS stands ready to provide any additional information this body may need in order to protect those important public health provisions.
of the Florida State Constitution. Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak and for your service for our great state.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

Kadi Eubanks.

MS. EUBANKS: Hi. My name is Kadi Eubanks, and I am here to speak on Article 1, Section 23. I was going to reiterate what that article was, but I think you're all very well aware of what that is by now.

This section of the Florida Constitution has been relatively unchallenged with the exception of how it relates to women's private healthcare needs and decisions. As soon as the vagina is mixed into the equation, we have legislators scrambling to limit the freedom of choice, regardless on how it affects women and their families.

On January 21st, I marched with over 20,000 people in downtown St. Petersburg in support of women's economic and reproductive rights. You say you're here to listen to the voices of the people of Florida. Well, we've spoken out.

Floridians overwhelmingly rejected an attempt to limit the privacy clause in 2012 when they voted down Amendment 6 on the ballot. Eighteen sister
marches were held in various counties in the state of Florida on January 21st. There have been protests and campaigns to voice concerns about the horrendous legislation proposed in the 2017 Florida legislative session. We're here. We're speaking. And I implore you to listen. Do not threaten the fundamental rights of privacy for women.

Additionally, I would like to support a public proposal, 700.135, creating further protections of basic rights, which amends Article 1, the Declaration of Rights, Section 2, Basic Rights, by adding sex, color, ethnicity, age, familiar status, marital status, military status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, employment status and pregnancy as protected classes. As the country expands its definition of diversification and inclusion, it's our duty to do the same on a constitutional level. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you. Next, we'll have Jill Casciello, and then we're going to have Carl Waldron and I believe it's Penny, or Perry, Hunter.

MS. CASCIELLO: Hi. Thank you, Commission members. I'm Jill Casciello. I'm the Assistant Executive Director at Guiding Star Tampa, a
comprehensive women's healthcare center, many of whom are confronting unplanned pregnancies. When
our clients find out that they're pregnant, they come to us scared and unsure of their options.
After a few days of counseling and consulting with our staff, women tell us that they have had time to process the life-changing nature of pregnancy, allowing them to make a more measured decision.

A reflection period law would greatly benefit the women of Florida. I submitted to you in writing a testimony of one of our many clients who continues to grieve her unborn child 19 years, one month and two weeks later and who regrets not reflecting on her pregnancy for a 24-hour period.

We also meet women who have take the first dose of a chemical abortion and then come to us desperate to reverse their decision through the abortion pill reversal protocol. We serve women who regret their abortions, who experience post-abortion trauma, and wish that could have had more time to consider their tragic decision.

Although a good law to this effect was passed in Florida, and this kind of law has been upheld by the federal courts, the Florida courts recently enjoined this requirement. So I ask you to please
consider an amendment to Florida's constitution clarifying that our state's privacy clause does not intend to grant any greater rights to abortion than the United States Constitution. Thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you.

Mr. Waldron.

MR. WALDRON: Yes. I'm Carl Waldron, and I have three items that I would like to speak to. One is the term limits for appellate judges and supreme court justices. I oppose the idea of placing term limits on them. And, as a taxpayer, I oppose the desire to expand school choice, either through charter schools or tax-credit programs. And I also would like to say that the constitution, as its written now, with the clauses for privacy, those need to stand. We don't need to be taking away our privacy rights, which the courts have indicated block restrictions on abortions. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir. Next -- is it Hurber or Hunter?

MS. HUNTER: Penny Hunter.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Okay. I knew it was Penny.

MS. HUNTER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER LEE: And after you we're going
to have Bill Person and Gerald Goen. Go ahead.

MS. HUNTER: My name is Penny Hunter, and I'm talking today in support of adding open primary for Florida. I've been a Republican for over 45 years, and I can't imagine why we've closed our primaries and not allow about half of our population to vote. Not everybody is a Republican. My husband is Democrat. I think he has a right to vote too. And since many of our elections are decided in the primary and we've had so many people that have signed up to be a write-in candidate who never show up in the district to even show their face, and the only reason they've showed up at all was just to close the primary so Democrats or independents wouldn't have the opportunity to vote. And I think that's wrong, and I think you should change it.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you. Mr. Person.

MR. PERSON: Thank you, Senator.

My name is Bill Person. I'm from Hillsborough County. I'm the candidate for Hillsborough County Schools. I was last year, and I'm currently running district-wide. I retired from the local school district in 2011 as the General Director of Administration for Hillsborough County Schools. I'm the former chair of the Florida Department of
Education School Choice Parent Advising Committee
for the entire state of Florida. I authored the
school choice plan in Hillsborough County. I served
35 years. I've been retired six years. And 20
years seems to be the theme tonight. What happens
with our public schools over the next 20 years?

Traditional public schools are a great value
to our community and to our state. Charters,
vouchers and privatization is a symptom of failing
public schools, not a solution. A well-run,
fully-funded public school system has little to no
need for charters, vouchers and privatization.

I kind of like the constitution as it is. Why
don't we follow it for public education? Less
funding, less support from our leadership in
Tallahassee means a greater need for alternatives,
such as charters, vouchers and privatization.

Charter schools are the first step to full vouchers.

Full vouchers are the first step to full
privatization, and Tallahassee washes their hands of
public education.

Many of us in here were treated very well in
public education. And many of us are successful
because of a fully-funded public education. Let's
not return to a dual school system which required a
federal desegregation court order. Tallahassee's efforts are going to return us to a dual school system, which is inherently unfair, illegal and unacceptable. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Mr. Person.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER LEE: Gerald Goen. And then we're going to have Michelle Prieto, Wayne Johnson and Patricia Hall.

Yes, sir, you're recognized.

MR. GOEN: Good evening. My name is Gerald Goen. For 23 years my wife and I have lived at 1104 Clippers Way in Tarpon Springs. I'm active in community government with the Budget Advisory Committee. I'm president of my homeowner's association. I'm on the statewide board of the Unitaria Universalist Justice Florida. In all three groups I'm an advocate for solar.

Three years ago in Tarpon Springs we invested $50,000 to build a pilot project on top of the wastewater building. It was partly to silence me, but you know the darn thing is producing positive results. So much so that the 2017 budget has $150,000 for more solar at the new R/O plant. My appeal to you is to structure the constitution, the
regulation of law, so that businesses, especially homeowners, can have solar at the lowest possible cost. I know the fossil fuel industry will work against the idea but time is a wasting.

Last week I saw a documentary interview of a congressman from South Florida describing the effects of sea level rise, salt water intrusion into drinking wells and threats to their power plant, roads and airports. He says climate change is real, and it's time to act. Some say past time.

It's not just South Florida. On bright sunny days with no storm happening, we have experienced similar flooding in Tarpon Springs. I implore you to act and to act now to make solar a reality making Florida the sunshine -- making Florida the shining example should not be hard given all the sunshine that we have. I thank for listening. I thank you for your public service. I've submitted these remarks at the table. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

Ms. Prieto.

MS. PRIETO: Hey, my name is Michelle Prieto. I am with the organization (inaudible). As an advocate for immigrants and Latinos, I have two requests. One, continue language access and
simultaneous interpretation in different languages, as well as subtitles for all CRC meetings, media advisories, written material and videos to give all Floridans full accessibility and opportunity for participation.

Two, regarding Article 5 of the Florida Constitution, diversifying our courts as part of a ballot measure. Florida used to be a model for the nation how judges were selected, but not anymore. The Governor has an outside influence on who nominees for judges will be, and, therefore, the Governor essentially has the heaviest hand in the make up of judicial nominating commissions. This politicizes what should be a non-partisan process and destroys any chance at diversity of our courts.

You can change that. Allow the voters to decide if they want to continue with the process that does not allow for diverse judges to be nominated to reflect the diversity of the state; allow voters to decide if any current or future governor can manipulate our judicial system so as to be in control of a second branch of government; allow voters to decide if they want judges to determine their fate being heavily political due to the process that put them there. You have that
responsibility. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Good afternoon. I'm Wayne Johnson from Hillsborough County. In 2015 the FDLE reported over 93,000 violent crimes in Florida, including over 1,000 murders and over 10,000 forced sexual offenses. It's a dangerous world out there. Never let anyone interfere with natural instinct for self-preservation and rights of defense.

30, 40 or 50 years ago I was able to handle myself in a physical conflict, and on many occasions while in the Army in Korea, Africa and Southeast Asia, I did defend myself and others. Now I'm walking with a leg brace and supporting myself with a back brace, and I find I'm too old or disabled to fight while unarmed.

As I, and many others see it, the Democrats are the party pushing gun control, and the Republicans support the people's right to armed self-defense. We the people of Florida gave the Republican party candidate for president 120,770 more votes than the Democrat candidate.

During the last two gubernatorial elections we gave the Republican candidate more than 60,000 votes more than the Democratic candidate at each election.
We have had only two Democrat governors in Florida elected since Jimmy Carter took office. Our State Senate is 59 percent Republicans, State House 63 percent Republicans, our U.S. House delegation is 59 percent Republican.

The message to all concerned is we the people of Florida stand behind the party that stands for people's right to armed self-defense and support the party that supports gun control. We ask this CRC to support the great majority of citizens in this state that prefer the right to be armed citizens, rather than disarmed subjects.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you for your service, Mr. Johnson.

Patricia Hall. And then we're going to have Margie Freeman, Cesar Grajales and Carlos Lamoutte.

MS. HALL: I'm Patricia Hall. I have a story about an amazing Florida real estate scam perpetrated on taxpayers, parents and children, as the byproduct. It's called for-profit managed Charter School USA owned by John Hage with a dizzying 345-plus separate companies, LLCs, he and his pals purchased land or old buildings, build a bare-bones school building for 1,100 to 1,200 children, pay off the mortgage of $9 to $16 million
in 16 months and then they charge exorbitant lease and rental fees of $2.6 million per year for one school, Winthrop, in Brandon. That's 25 percent of all the education dollars allocated for the children.

He owns more than 70 schools and all the related companies that do food service, hire teachers, clean buildings, et cetera. His lobbying corp had paid many millions to legislators, Governor Scott and now school board members. At least three of seven school board members in Hillsborough County have taken large contributions from for-profit charter companies. Susan Valdez took more than half her campaign funds from this crowd.

Hillsborough County is opening 12 new charters in August to make over 50 charter schools here while we have existing schools half empty. Pinellas County has 17 charter schools and is holding the line with a less-friendly approach, no new charters.

The highly regarded CREDO study from Stanford University in California matches students based on achievement levels. In five of seven of the largest cities in Florida, they proved public school students had higher scores than charter students,
and, overall, Florida has the worst record in the
United States with our charter-friendly laws in this
three-year study.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Hall. We
appreciate your testimony.

Margie Friedman.

MS. FRIEDMAN: Hello. Thank you for coming.
Thank you for staying. My name is Margie Friedman.
I'm just a person. I just live here in Florida. I
vote, and I care. And I believe in the right to
bear arms. Sorry, but I do. I also believe in the
right to drive cars. And when you drive a car,
there are rules. You can't drive drunk. You need a
license. You need to be a certain age. You have to
follow the rules of the road, et cetera, et cetera,

It seems simple to me. The American Journal
of Medicine reported in February that the U.S. rate
of gun deaths is 25 times higher than the combined
amount of the other top 22 developed countries.
Really? Can we ignore that kind of stuff? I don't
think so. We have the most firearms per capita in
the world and suffer the greatest because of
firearms. What are we doing wrong?

We are six times more likely -- you and I are
six times more likely to be accidentally killed by a firearm. We have half the population of those other combined 22 countries -- half the population. It's not because we're so highly populated and we have more guns because we have more people and we're crowded into cities. It's none of that.

82 percent of all the guns deaths, we account for that, versus those other 22 countries. We also account for 90 percent of all women killed with guns. That's you and me, Commissioner Bondi.

COMMISSIONER LEE: I'm going to have to cut you off. I apologize.

MS. FRIEDMAN: That's okay. I could keep going, but I think you get the point.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Yes, ma'am. Thank you so much.

Mr. Grajales. Did I get that right?

MR. GRAJALES: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

MR. GRAJALES: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the CRC. My name is Cesar Grajales. I'm the Florida Collations Director for The Libre Initiative. The Libre Initiative is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that is working for the Hispanic community, just not in the
state of Florida but across the nation.

Today on behalf of The Libre Initiative I ask you to please revise and fix Article 9 of the state constitution. We hope you will reword to ensure and qualify school choice options in Florida. School choice has enabled Florida to have great achievements, gains, for lower income families, minorities and children with disabilities over the last decade.

At The Libre Initiative we firmly believe school choice should be part of the state constitution. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

Dr. Lamoutte.

DR. LAMOUTTE: Yes. Thank you, Commissioners, for giving me the opportunity. My name is Dr. Lamoutte. I'm a practicing OB/GYN in Florida for the last 19 years. And I'm the medical director for two pregnancy care centers in Hillsborough County, and I'm part of an abortion pill reversal registry in the nation to prove to the FDA that we can safely reverse the effects of the RU-486.

I do about 225 deliveries a year, and about 10 percent of those, 20 or so deliveries, come from those clinics, moms that change their mind and
decide to carry their babies and not proceed with
termination or abortion.

The two issues that I would like for you to
consider is consider reinstating the 24-hour
reflection period before an abortion and consider
reinstituting the parental consent.

The 24-hour reflection period truly allows for
proper informed consent. I cannot think of any
surgeries -- and I do surgeries two days a week. I
cannot think of any surgeries that we do on the same
day, except for a life-saving procedure, such an
epitopic pregnancy or a torse ovary or something
like that, somebody bleeding. Elective abortions
are exactly that, elective. Okay? If you don't
allow for the 24-hour reflection period, you're not
going to have truly informed consent.

As far as parental consent is concerned,
the -- I can tell you I've had countless number of
patients that have decided to carry their babies
because of parental support. And if you take that
away, you're losing lives. Okay? I became a doctor
to save lives, to do no harm. And this is what I'm
proposing, these two measures. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.
Susan Smith. We have Victoria Roush, Mark Creek and
Dianne Wheatley. Smith, Roush, Creek and Wheatley.

MS. SMITH: Hi.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Go ahead, Ms. Smith.

MS. SMITH: Susan Smith from Odessa, Florida.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Commission today. However, I don't think your members fairly represent the population. The partisan nature of the appointments reinforces the perception among the vast majority of Floridians that the system is, once again, being rigged. Nevertheless, I'm here to speak. My request is that this Commission add language to Article 9, Section 1 of the Florida Constitution in order to strengthen and protect the rights of children to a uniform, efficient, safe, secure and high-quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high-quality education.

This is the paramount duty of the Florida Legislature, yet session after session they undermine that right. They starve overburdened traditional public schools while diverting our tax dollars to unaccountable charter and voucher schools. With the deceptive term "parental choice," they avoid their duties to support and adequately fund education, while furthering efforts to monetize
and privatize the very foundation of our democracy.

Conflicts of interest abound as they enrich themselves, their relatives and friends through charter and voucher schemes. These schemes widen, rather than narrow, the divide between haves and the have-nots. One need only look at House Bill 7069 to see how this travesty is being perpetrated. The bill was rushed through in the final hours of session in secret without proper hearings, yet the impact on our children would be devastating.

You have the ability to give voice to those children next year through the amendment process. I urge you to be that voice by strengthening language in Article 9, Section 1 to prevent the harm that's being done by the Florida Legislature. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you. Ms. Roush.

MS. ROUSH: Hi. My name is Vicky Roush. I'm a private citizen from Hernando County, and I appreciate the opportunity to publicly urge you, the Constitutional Review Commission, to take no action to weaken Article 1, Section 23 that addresses a person's right to privacy.

As the Florida Supreme Court had ruled, again and again, laws restricting access to abortion care violates the privacy clause of the Florida
Constitution. Any weakening of that clause would be seen as a backdoor attempt to circumvent the high court and to insert ideology and religious tests into the intimate and personal and private decisions made between a woman and her doctor.

Also, attempts at weakening the amendment would clearly be seen as a way to limit access to women's reproductive care choices, including the legal and constitutionally-protected medical procedure known as abortion. Some advocate that the state should have agency over a woman's body, most do not. Women must be trusted to make their own decisions with accurate medical advice and -- from their practitioner without governmental or religious intrusion.

Reproductive care choices are private decisions. There are perhaps no decisions more private. And I would urge you to preserve the explicit privacy protections afforded by the people of Florida in Florida's Constitution as they relate to reproductive choice and access to abortion care services. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, ma'am.

Mark Creek. Is Mark here?

All right. Ms. Wheatley.
MS. WHEATLEY: Good evening. My name is Dianne Wheatley. I'm from Pinellas County. I want to thank you each of you for serving on this Commission, and I'm certainly grateful, as a Floridian, that you are traveling around the state to hear our concerns.

Now, relative to the constitution, I believe that there have been many wise predecessors that have enacted these many laws. I encourage you to look at these and maybe not fix what isn't broken.

I would like to say though in the area of the fair district litigation, legislatives claim that they should be excused from testifying about how the maps were drawn. They said that they had a legislative privilege. Since the constitution now prohibits drawing districts with intent to favor a party or incumbent, the constitution should make clear that there is no legislative privilege in redistricting cases. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Wheatley.

Karen Karinja, if I said that.

MS. KARINJA: Karinja.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Please come forward.

Aymee Laurain and Jerry Shuman.

MS. KARINJA: Good evening, members of the
Commission. My name is Karen Karinja, and I'm president of the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County. I'm here tonight on behalf of the League to urge you to respect the responsibilities that you are given, that have been placed before you. So it is important for me at this time to remind you to function independently of legislative issues. Speaker Corcoran and President Negron, who appointed almost half of you, have publicly announced that they want the CRC to offer certain revisions, some of which the League is opposed to, such as legalizing school vouchers, eliminating fair districts, allowing state money to go to religious institutions, putting term limits on judges and otherwise interfering with the operation of the courts as an independent branch of the government.

Why are these legislators leaning on you to take up these very controversial issues when the legislature has the power to put amendments on the ballot? Another question for those legislative appointees: Will you allow these leaders to be setting the agenda of the CRC, or will you exercise totally independent judgment before trying to alter our constitution? We urge you to think
independently and to act independently.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. Laurain.

MS. LAURAIN: Hi. I'm Aymee Laurain, and I'm the director of Imagine Our Florida, a science-based non-profit. I'm a veteran, and I was born and raised here in Tampa Bay. I've enjoyed seeing sights through Florida and throughout the world. So it disheartens when I see other countries and other states making more progress, environmentally, than we are. It disheartens me when I see our state's environment deteriorating.

It's clear that the current constitution was established in a time when a lot of these issues regarding our environment were not brought to light. Florida has some of the most unique flora and fauna in the country. Our biggest industry, tourism, heavily depends on the health and stability of our environment. How can we have a tourism industry when we have dead fish in the estuaries down south, when we have urban sprawl, when we have unstable wildlife populations, when we have Enterococci bacteria at our beaches? And our third largest industry, our export industry, which Florida is No. 1 in the country, was actually damaged when
Deepwater Horizon happened.

We need better oversight and more modern approaches to better protect our wildlife, natural resources and land. I'm currently working on a proposal that would encourage more sustainability and would protect biodiversity within our state. I hope you chose to put biodiversity on the ballots.

More biodiverse ecosystems actually adapt better to change and recover more quickly from disasters. We need to stop focusing on reactive plans and update our constitution to reflect proactive protection for biodiversity. That includes diversity in ecosystems, genetic diversity, species diversity and diversity among the trophic levels, including larger predators, whether they're the apex predator, such as the Florida Panther, or opportunistic predators, like the Florida black bear.

Our constitution should reflect the values of the Public Trust Doctrine. It should demonstrate respect and ethics within our wild spaces and promote overall health from habitats, wildlife and humans.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Laurain.

Mr. Shuman. And then we're going to have
Scott Shoup, Javan, or Javan, Frinks and
Guyann Bracken-Fray.

Yes, sir.

MR. SHUMAN: Good evening, Commissioners. My
name is Jerry Shuman, and I have to change my order
of comments just a little bit. Since I've been here
this afternoon, several times, again, I have heard
people talking about democracy. The founding
fathers did not leave us a democracy. The
constitution guarantees we the people a Republican
form of government, which means that the people are
on top.

Okay. My topic for this evening was to be the
proverbial chicken-or-the-egg debate, but we're not
going to go into that because it goes without saying
that we the people preceded government as we know
it. We the people banned together to relinquish
some of the delegated authority to our elected
servants who were, and are, expected to perform
their duties as we the people instruct them to.
That is our public servants are expected to perform
their given tasks with the consent of the people.

Article 1, Section 1 of the constitution of
the State of Florida states that all political power
is inherent in the people. Why is it then that we
have a Commission of 37 people, many members of the bar union, and all politically appointed, meeting in some -- in many cities throughout the state who have been charged with what should be presented to the voters of the state as constitutional amendments? The only way that a constitution can be changed or altered is through the amendment process authorized by we the people. The people must elect delegates from the ranks of the electors of the state. We don't want people appointed by politicians. You don't represent us.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Mr. Shuman. I apologize, but you're out of time, sir.

MR. SHUMAN: Okay. So I might be seeing you again.

COMMISSIONER LEE: I hope so.

Mr. Shoup?

MR. SHOUP: Right here.

COMMISSIONER LEE: You're on.

MR. SHOUP: My name is Scott Shoup. I'm from Tampa, and I wanted to sway you from considering House Speaker Corcoran's idea or bill -- I don't think he filed it -- term limits for Supreme Court. I think that will undermine the legal integrity of our judges, and I think they'll be more concerned
about life after they've been termed out. And I
don't think it really worked out too well for our
representative 20 years ago, what's evolved in
Tallahassee, with lobbyists and so forth.

Also, in terms of school choice, I
complete -- completely, excuse me, agree with this
gentleman here. But what's especially galling is
people who are writing these charter bills have skin
in the game. They have family that are actually
working for these companies, and it's an insult
really to public education and teachers. So thank
you very much.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

MR. FRANKS: Javan Franks.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Mr. Franks, you're on, sir.

MR. FRANKS: I will be submitting a proposal
to significantly increase funding for public
education, including increasing teacher pay,
supporting after-school programs, a more equitable
sharing of those funds across communities and making
college free in the state of Florida.

You're probably thinking we can't afford that,
or where will the money come from? If we can afford
to give corporate welfare and tax breaks to those
that don't need them, then we can afford to give our
children a brighter future. Nearly every problem we face today is because we continue to underfund education, at the same time college is becoming more expensive.

Go to the CEOs of Lockheed Martin, Mosaic, Publix or any company and ask them, do you want a tax break, or do you want to locate to a state with the best educated population in the nation? Better education leads to higher pay, more innovation in every sector, lower healthcare costs, less crime and lower incarceration rates, less poverty and lower birthrates.

The erosion of our educational institutions is the greatest threat to America, and this is an issues that cuts across all racial and ethnic minds. If you do not support increased funding for education, you are sending a clear message that some children matter more than others. You can fix this problem.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Mr. Franks.
Guyann Bracken-Fray. Then we're going to have Ciara Kauffman, Michael DeLoach and Reverend Russell Meyer.
Bracken-Fray?
MS. KAUFFMAN: Am I next?
COMMISSIONER LEE: Yes.

MS. KAUFFMAN: All right. My name is Ciara Kauffman. I'm here on behalf of the Huddle in the Harbor Reproductive Rights Team, and I want to urge this Commission to preserve the right to privacy in the Florida Constitution without change.

The Florida Supreme Court has clearly stated this applies to a woman's right to choose. They said we can't conceive a few more personal or private decisions that one can make in the course of a lifetime. I have personally experienced how deeply private this is. I've dealt with three years of infertility and pregnancy loss. And being pregnant is deeply personal, deeply emotional and incredibly challenging.

I am fortunate the laws didn't dictate what medical treatments I could have when I was trying to become pregnant. They didn't dictate how I had to deal with my miscarriage or my stillbirth. We need to give that same compassion to women and men dealing with unplanned pregnancies. And there are others that are in far, far more painful situations, dealing with desperately-wanted pregnancies that incompatible with life.

The right to privacy in our constitution lets
these men and women make their complex decisions,
these difficult decisions, with their families and
with their doctors, and not with the government.
They value that right, the same way I valued my
right to make my choices.

The Florida Supreme Court and Florida voters
have repeatedly supported Article 1, Section 23
as-is. On that basis, and, frankly, out of your
compassion towards Floridians, I urge you, and our
team urges you, to protect the explicit privacy
rights in the Florida Constitution. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you. Is
Guyann Bracken-Fray here? Okay. I just wanted to
double-check.

Mr. DeLoach.

MR. DeLOACH: I am Michael DeLoach. I know
I'm tired, and I'm sure you guys are tired. So I
will be brief. I think the biggest issue facing
Florida right now is, honestly, transparency at the
state level. I urge the Commission to consider
reviewing, not only the exceptions in the Sunshine
Law, but the sort of flagrant disregard for the
Sunshine Law by the state legislature. I think that
the budget and all of our bills should be developed
in an open and honest manner in front of the public,
and that it shouldn't be developed behind closed doors.

And the last piece is I realize that probably one of the biggest issues with developing those things out in public is the time of session. So I urge the Commission to consider a constitutional revision to extend legislative session beyond 60 days as an ongoing factor so that laws can be developed that actually represent the people. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

Reverend Meyer.

REVEREND MEYER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for your journey to justice in Florida. I'm the Reverend Dr. Russell Meyer. I'm the executive director of the Florida Council of Churches and the pastor to two congregations here in Tampa. I'm also the chair of the faith-based Reform Justice Campaign.

In Florida nearly one of out two families is less than a paycheck away from poverty. Poverty is the single biggest drag on this state's economy and development. And when we look closely at what is the social construct that generates poverty in this state, it is one institution. It is the criminal
justice system. And at the center of the criminal justice system are two of the primary things that must be addressed constitutionally in order to address poverty and put us all on the road to prosperity.

One is rights restoration. When people finish their time, they should have their life back. They should be able to live with their family. They should be hirable. And they should be able to rent a place. They should not have to live underneath the bridge because they have to continue to check off the box and be subject to a continual second-class citizenship. That creates poverty, not just for them, but for their families and for their children.

The second item is to end the death penalty in the state of Florida. Nearly 350 people, plus, are sitting there right now. If we were to successfully execute every one of them, we would spend over $1 billion just to do that. Do not use my taxpayer money to kill people. That is against the law of God and ought to be the against the law of the state of Florida. We do not need the death penalty. We can protect society by putting people in a place where they don't harm the rest of us for the rest of
their lives.

So these two things alone would make Florida far more successful than any other business plan that you would enact. Make them constitutional.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Reverend.

Is Susan Maslar here? Do we have Susan Maslar? Andrew Learned, I believe, Mark Rueden and John Maxwell. I'm not seeing a Susan Maslar. Okay. Andrew Learned? Mark Rueden?

Go ahead, sir.

MR. RUEDEN: I'm Mark Reuden.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Step closer to the mic.

MR. RUEDEN: My name is Mark Rueden. I grew up with open primaries in Wisconsin. I was a moderate Republican. Ballots there allowed us to vote for who each of us liked best in the primaries, for all the parties. However, as I was more moderate than Republican, recently I have found very few moderates to vote for in the general election. Many of us tend to cherry-pick our news from the Internet in such ways to reenforce our preexisting beliefs. Since the Internet provides an abundance of news sources, it is very easy to be caught in this echo chamber. Closed primaries can have the
same effect, allowing views to become more extreme
over time.

One of my degrees is in mathematics. There
exists an entire mathematical discipline allowing us
to understand the effects of open and closed
primaries. It's called game theory. So you should
ask yourself are you tired of severe partisan
animosity of extreme ideologues and special interest
gaining our system to obtain positions of power?
Would you rather govern with reason and logic and a
needed compromise, instead of hewing to political
dogma? Then you might support open primaries.

I understand that elections are a popularity
contest, but governing should not be a political
war. Allow moderates to compete. Be a moderate.
Let Florida lead our country toward a brighter, more
reasonable future. Open primaries can help save us.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Learned? John Maxwell.

MR. MAXWELL: Thank you. I'm going to talk
about something that the mainstream media is mostly
blacking out, and that is elite sex trafficking of
children by politicians and other people who are
extremely powerful businessmen and women.
In the Podesta e-mails which the mainstream media is not covering, there is coded language of pedophilia from John Podesta. I mean, I'll read some of those e-mails. This is from the Sandlers, which is a billionaire family. They say, "Mary and John -- "

COMMISSIONER LEE: Mr. Maxwell, if I could get you to focus on what our constitution and --

MR. MAXWELL: Are you going to black it out too?

COMMISSIONER LEE: I may. We're here to talk about Florida's Constitution, and not what's going on in federal government.

MR. MAXWELL: Well, it's happening in Florida too, and --

COMMISSIONER LEE: Just do us a favor, try to keep your focus on what it is you would like to see us change to improve the Florida Constitution.

MR. MAXWELL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, sir.

MR. MAXWELL: Well, that doesn't sound very democratic to me. I was going to say something the media is blacking out, and now I'm being blacked out here.

Would you guys like to hear the e-mails?
(Multiple audience response.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Excuse me. Excuse me.

MR. MAXWELL: In the Florida --

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Excuse me. You can take and write your thoughts you want to share with us and link it to our website, but this not the forum to read e-mails that have nothing to do with what this Commission --

MR. MAXWELL: So the e-mails were just going to show that it happens. You know, I was just going to show that happens. People don't understand that's happening. Then I was going to suggest things to the law that we can change.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Okay. Why don't you give us -- if you want to do that, you have 11 seconds. Okay? But you have all the time in the world to write and upload into our weblink, and it will be clear --

MR. MAXWELL: It will be --

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Everything you said will be in public for everybody to see on their computer at their leisure. Thank you very much.

MR. MAXWELL: This Commission is bullshit.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Carmen Ines Schumacher.

And then we have Beverly Ledbetter and Jan Shelly.
Ms. Schumacher?

MS. SCHUMACHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LEE: You're recognized.

MS. SCHUMACHER: What do you mean?

COMMISSIONER LEE: You may speak.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Welcome.

MS. SCHUMACHER: Hi. My name is Carmen Ines Schumacher. We must preserve the right to privacy in Florida. Article 1, Section 23 of the Florida Constitution adopted --

COMMISSIONER LEE: If you could get just a little closer to the microphone for us. Thank you.

MS. SCHUMACHER: Yes. Hi. My name is Carmen Ines Schumacher. We must preserve the right to privacy in Florida. Article 1, Section 23 of Florida Constitution adopted by Florida voters in 1980 provides for a specific and explicit right of privacy and should be preserved without change. Specifically, it provides every natural person has the right to be left alone and free from governmental intrusion into the person's private life, except as otherwise provided herein.

This section shall not be construed to limit the public's right of access to public records and meetings as provided by law.
Article 1, Section 23. There is nothing more important or fundamental than my right to chose whether or not I carry a pregnancy to term. It is a right that I have treasured and celebrated with my own children, because, as an immigrant, I have heard firsthand of back-alley clinics where women have had abortions that were not always successful.

Since I came to this country I found the freedom to chose to be as important as my right to privacy. So please respect both of them. My children have grown believing in those principles. So don't make me a liar. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Ms. Ledbetter.

MS. LEDBETTER: Thank you. There are four areas of concern that I would like to address the Commission on, and the first is Article 1, Section 3. It's so nicknamed the Blaine Amendment, which currently prohibits revenue -- tax revenues to go to religious institutions. As a Christian, I urge you to keep this prohibition in our constitution to prevent any unintended consequences.

Article 1, Section 23 of our constitution provides for a specific and explicit right of privacy and should be preserved without change. The CRC should not threaten the fundamental right of
privacy, especially as it is applied to women.

I also stand with those who support closing
the write-in candidate loophole which undermines the
fairness of our election system. And, lastly, I would like to say that I stand with the League of
Women Voters, and I hope that the CRC does nothing
to weaken the Fair District Amendment by allowing
secret meetings out of the public eyes and allowing
the legislature to impose rules on this court system. 63 percent of Floridians voted for the
Fair District Amendment, and we need to keep this in
the constitution. Thank you.


MS. SHELLY: Hello. My name is Jan Shelly, and I am here partially as a mother, partially as
someone who is involved in the women's march and is
now in the Safety Harbor Social Justice Team. And mostly I think I'm here as an ex-public defender.
And I'm quite sure Ms. Bondi and Commissioner Sprowls, and so forth, knows a lot
about what it's like to be in a criminal courtroom.

I don't know that many people know what it was like, at least in St. Louis, Missouri, on Friday.
Friday was sentencing day. On Friday a lot of very poor, mostly black, mostly minority people were sent
to prison, and that was a sad and unjust system.

It's the same system we have in Florida. At least in Missouri, however, I could tell my clients who were 20 years old and were going to be away from their babies and their girlfriends and their moms that, at the end of this, you had repaid what happened. You had made amends. You are now going to come back to be part of society. I could tell them that they could have a job. They could have a family.

I was absolutely astounded that in Florida someone who has committed a felony, and that could be a lot of different things as you all know, is then that their right to vote is taken away for their entire life.

The system from the beginning is very dehumanizing to somebody who was convicted of a criminal offense. And I can also tell you, from being a federal prosecutor, that prosecuting the law against corporations was a whole lot harder than prosecuting the law against poor black people in St. Louis.

Here's the deal: If you guys don't help us and don't give our 1.68 million citizens their right to vote back, strangely enough, one out of five, and
maybe four, depending on the statistics, of those whom are African Americans -- if we don't give those voting rights back, then you have done a terrible disservice to everything --

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Shelly.

MS. SHELLY: -- that I thought I stood for as a lawyer. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Shelly. I have another card. I think this is a repeat -- Dr. Carlos Lamoutte. I believe he already spoke. Deborah Salvensen, I believe it is, Blannie Whelan and Angie Purkis. I hope I got those somewhat close to correct.

Deborah.

MS. SALVESEN: My name is Deborah Salvensen. I'm a resident of Spring Hill, Florida, for four years, and 18 years in Tarpon Springs, Florida. Florida is one of only five states with an explicit privacy provision in its constitution which guarantees each person the right to be left alone and free from governmental intrusion into his or her private life. This privacy amendment, which was added to the constitution directly by Florida citizens in the 1980 general election, was intentionally phrased in strong terms in order to
make the privacy right as strong as possible.

The Florida Supreme Court has consistently ruled that laws restricting access to abortion care violate the privacy clause of the Florida Constitution. For this reason anti-abortion opponents will make it a priority to try to convince the Constitution Revision Commission to place one or more proposed constitutional amendments on the 2018 ballot that would eliminate or weaken Article 1, Section 23 of the Florida Constitution, the privacy clause.

The last time politicians tried to weaken the privacy clause in Florida's Constitution, Florida voters overwhelmingly rejected the attempt. Proposed Amendment 6 on the 2012 ballot was an effort to limit the privacy clause in our constitution, and it was soundly defeated by Florida voters, 55 percent to 45 percent.

I urge you to preserve the Florida Constitution's strong protection against political interference with a woman's right to control her own body. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. Whelan.

MS. WHELAN: Yeah, Hi. I'm Blannie Whelan. I
am a mom, grandma, volunteer, a college professor
and a nurse practitioner. In my work in my career,
I never really thought of it as a career, but a
service. And I feel that my job is to treat my
students or my patients in the best way possible,
one that is the right thing to do and to listen to
their opinions.

I'm not an elected official. For those of you
who are, your job is to represent, is to be of
service, not a career. It shouldn't be considered a
career. It should be considered servicing people.
And sometimes that means going against your own
opinion, because you're listening to what the
people -- all these wonderful people are saying
here.

I just briefly -- I don't want to repeat
everything that's been said. There's some lovely
comments that have been said here. I did want to
talk about voting rights and increasing the ability
to -- for people to vote. I would like to see
constitutional changes to increase voting. I would
like to see that when somebody turns 18, they
automatically have the right to vote. I think there
are other states that do that, and certainly other
countries that do that. Also, open primaries.
And I would also like to see that nobody gets
elected if they don't have 50 percent of the vote,
and that means that sometimes there has to be a
runoff between the top two. I think if you
have -- if you can't get 50 percent of the popular,
you shouldn't be elected.

The main issues I want to talk about is voting
rights, and I would like to see that -- and I'm not
going repeat everything that everybody said, but
voting rights restoration for ex-felons. Please,
they're citizens. Give them their rights back.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. Purkis. And then we're going to have
Gerald White, Maryann Akey and Catherine Durkin
Robinson.

Ms. Purkis.

MS. PURKIS: Yes, good evening. Thank you for
hearing us today. I am here -- I'm a new graduate
of a Master's degree in nursing. Over the years I
have voted Republican, Democratic and Independent.
I'm a 34-year resident of Pasco County in Florida.
And it has become very apparent to me that our
government and our electoral system has been taken
over by those who seek profits. They optimize
control over our elections in hopes of winning. Our
civil rights are being squeezed. These actions continue
to disenfranchise certain groups of voters. It's
become an art form honed with each election by both
major parties. Even when citizens want to support
their party locally, they're blocked.

I have a group of friends who went in support
of President Bush -- so it's been a little while
ago -- to a Republican club meeting, and they told
them, "We don't know who you are. We don't know
your friends. This is a private party. You need to
leave. Don't come back." I know another gentleman
who was Democrat, and he was removed from the club
meetings because he missed three consecutive
meetings.

These private corporations that call
themselves the RNC and DNC -- and I'm not an
attorney, but, for lack of a better term, are
racketeering our system. They take money from
questionable and unknown sources. They don't allow
open participation in meetings. They manipulate
elections by gerrymandering, influencing processes and
staffing of polls, and they block voting areas and
groups.

This is cause for great concern. This is
control of our rule of law, and that means we are
not governed of by and for the people, which I
understand is a federal document. However, I
believe it applies to states as well. So this new
system of government that's being created does not
hold truth to inalienable rights as self-evident,
and it is one that does not respect life, liberty or
pursuit happiness. Please open the primaries for
all citizens and correct this.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you for your
testimony.

Mr. White.

MR. WHITE: Good evening, Commissioners.

Gerald White, Hillsborough County Community
activist. First, welcome to Tampa Bay. I hope
you've enjoyed your stay here in our community.
Attorney General Bondi, it's good to see you.
Senator Rouson, it's good to see you. Senator Lee.
Senator Joyner, a dynamic representation of
Tampa Bay.

I was here 20 years ago. I was 34 years of
age. I'm now 54, a father of four. One of my
daughters graduated from West Point. She's now an
officer in the military. It's just great to be
here. Great to see you all. Great that you all are
taking in our concerns here in Tampa Bay.

One amendment that passed in 1998 was the Cabinet -- the Florida State Cabinet Reform. The issue, Article 4, Section 4, the Florida State Cabinet, I was in support of that. I wanted that changed. I wanted the governor to have more power. Looking at what has taken place and how the Cabinet of the state of Florida has worked in the last 20 years, I would like to see the Secretary of State seat placed back into the Cabinet of Florida. I think that's something we need.

I think you keep hearing the cry related to voting, related to participation of citizens, and it seems as though we need to have that seat back into the Cabinet at the highest level of Florida state government so this individual can carry out the needs and the will of the people.

So I'm requesting that you all review -- look at this amendment that you, the Commission, placed on the ballot. Look at all the issues that have come in the last 20 years and make a decision and place the state -- the Secretary of State back into the Florida Cabinet and allow all the Floridians to vote on this position. And I look forward to seeing you guys 20 years from now when
I'll be 74 years of age.

COMMISSIONER LEE: We look forward to seeing you too, Mr. White.

Ms. Akey.

MS. AKLEY: Thank you very much. My name is Maryann Akey. I'm a Tampa resident, born and raised, and a lifelong Democrat. I came here to speak on open primaries. Many other people have raised the issues as to why it is such an important issue in the state of Florida for the Commission to put an amendment to open up our primaries to everybody that has the right to vote by our constitution. Our constitution did not say you can only vote if you're a Democrat, or you can only vote if you're a Republican. If you're an American citizen, you have the right to vote in this country. And it's not an issue that should even be brought before a commission. It's just common sense that we all have that right to vote.

And as I sit and I listened to all the problems that we have in our state, if more people are brought into the process to vote, a lot of these things would go away because more people would be able to be our elected officials, not just a Democrat and not just a Republican. Anyone.
This lady here should have as much of a right to represent the people of this state as anyone, not because she's a Democrat or because she's a Republican. And I would also like to ask the Commission to maybe lead this country in a constitutional amendment to get the money out of our politics.

Citizens United has been disastrous for our democracy or our republic, however you want to look at it. Money is buying our elections. Corporations are not people, and they do not have the right to put unlimited funds into our elections and decide who is going to be our representatives.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you.

MS. AKEY: So that's what I would like to say, and thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Yes, ma'am. We have Catherine Durkin Robinson. And then we have Jim Hoefling, it looks like, and then Sharon Balic, or Balic, and Jessica Lewis.

MS. ROBINSON: Hi. My name is Catherine Durkin Robinson. I have the privilege of organizing over 200,000 families in Florida who chose magnet schools, virtual schools, home schools, charter schools and private schools. These are
mostly minority, low-income families or families who
have children with special needs.

We respectfully ask all of you to please
consider any amendment that preserves their right to
chose the best school for their kids. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you.

Jim -- tell me how wrong I am.

MR. HOEFLING: Close enough. My name is
Jim Hoefling. The reminder that I remain
estooped -- and I'm not 22 years old anymore -- is,
by itself, a little disconcerting when I paid
attention to the last two full meetings and every
person that listened. Perhaps I'm being just as
sincere as yourselves in attempting of presence. I
have only one related point and that is with all of
your efforts and of the cities the attempt to bring
in numbers and numbers of persons hoping they could
explain what they would like, what causes are
sincere that are demanding legislation, attention by
government, the missing numbers of persons who are
not here are those who I'm curious about. Is there
any, at anytime, an opportunity for all of the
remaining persons who wish have a factual input,
with or without a vote, et cetera, their expressed,
their considered, their reason before persons like
myself or yourselves -- you seem to me to be paying
attention -- for all of us?

Is there any other mechanism, written or
otherwise, that would provide the opportunity for
those to have their considered input to this kind of
decision?

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Mr. Hoefling.
We do have a website. Chairman, do you want to
speak to that?

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Yes. We have a website
where you can turn in your testimony.

MR. HOEFLING: Thank you. I don't treat
digital communication with --

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: But more --

MR. HOEFLING: -- of a unique individual human
person that I see here. Good evening.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: But, more importantly, what
we'll do is we'll come back again, which is how we
best reach citizens, as by being available in your
cities, within an hour's drive, at least two more
times before we finish this process.

(Audience applause.)

COMMISSIONER LEE: Ms. Balic and Ms. Lewis.

MS. BALIC: Yes. Good evening, and thank you
to the members of the Commission for holding these
hearings. My name is Sharon Balic, and I live in Lutz. I'm a retired state college administrator and high school science teacher. I've lived in Florida for 28 years, and I'm a registered Democrat.

I am here in support of open primaries in Florida. I believe that no American should be required to join a political party in order to exercise their right to vote. According to a study conducted in February of 2017 by the League of Women Voters Florida, more than 3 million Floridians who identified as no party affiliation were disenfranchised during the 2016 primaries and denied a voice in the election process granted to them by the U.S. Constitution.

In Florida, elections are paid for by the taxpayers, including those who were locked out of the process. Additionally, under the closed primary system, elected officials are often persuaded by narrow party basis while other constituencies and viewpoints are excluded.

In the 2016 primary, less than 24 percent of registered voters decided who would represent the other 75 percent. An open nonpartisan primary would require -- excuse me -- all candidates to appear on a single primary ballot. All registered voters
would participate, and the top two winners would move on to the general election.

Candidates would then have to reach out to all voters. States with open primaries have found that open primaries create more competition, increase voter participation and create a more productive and representative legislature.

Again, referencing the League of Women Voters Florida study, between 2004 and 2016, there was a 64 percent increase in nonparty affiliated registered voters, 40 percent of these voters are age 18 to 34. If Florida is to remain a thriving technologically-advanced and economically-vibrant state, we must reverse apathy and low voter turnout and actively engage the next generation of leaders in the democratic experience.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Balic.

MS. BALIC: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: And we're going to call -- let's see, we have Jessica Lewis, David McCallister and Sarah Robinson.

MS. LEWIS: Hi. My name is Jessica Lewis. I wanted to thank you guys for coming to listen to us. And thank you for everyone who came to speak. You guys are the heros. I have three things to ask of
you. One, reproductive rights, women's bodies and
decisions about our bodies are our individual
private decisions alone, no one else's. I'm asking
you to preserve privacy protections in Florida's
Constitution, especially as they related to women's
access to abortion.

Second, climate change. Florida needs a
climate action plan, period. Three, felon's rights
restoration. Felons deserve to have their rights
restored once they've served their time. Restore
their right to vote as soon as they are finished
with their time.

And, also, I lied about only having three
topics. Four, expand Florida conversation lands.
Five, constitutional amendments. What happens to
these amendments when we actually vote in favor of
them? You guys are the leaders. You're the
decision-makers. Some of you are the 1 percent. If
you're a Florida legislator, like you,
Senator Rouson -- you're my Senator -- represent us.
If you are a business owner, treat us, your
workforce, well. Enforce Floridian's will by making
constitutional amendments stick. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. McCallister.
MR. McCALLISTER: Yes, thank you. Good evening, Commissioners. My name is David McCallister. I was born in Miami. I'm a sixth-generation Floridian. I live in Hillsborough County now, and I'm a member of the Hillsborough County Veteran's Memorial Park and Museum Committee.

Florida prides itself on being a veteran-friendly state. And we also have pride in our law enforcement officers, firemen and first responders. Yet, the monuments and memorials, these heros -- to these heros have next, to no, protection.

In the last two years, as Mr. Chestnut said earlier, more and more uncivil disrespect has been shown as people with an aggressive agenda are vandalizing these memorials and using them as public billboards to splash their hate-filled slogans in the public landscape just to shock and get attention, as a slap in the face to our veterans and heroes.

This is not free speech. It is criminal acts. And, yet, the penalties are so minor and so haphazardly applied that there's less protection for a monument in a county courthouse square or a public park or cemetery than there is for a phone booth at
This legislative session, Senate Bill 418 and House Bill 529, The Soldiers and Heros Memorial Protection Act was introduced. But, while the House members supported this unanimously in all their various committees, individuals in the Senate leadership, Democrat and Republican, effectively squashed it for no good reason.

Therefore, since the legislature has let Florida's veterans and first responders down, we come to the Constitution Revision Commission to ask for the chance to embed respect for veterans and heros, and their memorials, their physical memorials, in the constitution and let the citizens vote in an actual election. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Mr. McCallister.

We're going to have Sarah Robinson and then Andy Warrener and Michael Girard. And then we're going to take a seven-minute break after Mr. Girard.

Ms. Robinson.

MS. ROBINSON: Hi. I'm Sarah Robinson. I stand before you as a Floridian for 38 years. I've seen a lot of changes, the biggest being the sheer number of people who now live here. We have passed New York and are now the 30 largest state in the
union with over 20 million people.

And, because of this, I've seen a lot of farmland and green space disappear over the years, permanently changing our landscape. While development has meant jobs for some, as the housing crisis proved, it is not a sustainable economy, and it's putting an incredible amount of pressure on our land, air and water.

Springs, rivers and lakes are becoming polluted and our aquifer is threatened as well. We cannot continue on this path. I was very disappointed when the growth management laws of the 1980s were eliminated in the name of less government regulation under the current leadership in Tallahassee. Floridians have consistently voted for strong common sense environmental laws.

So whatever steps you take, I urge you to do so with honor and respect for the will of the voters who care about Florida's natural environment in combating sea level rise and stronger more dangerous hurricanes due to climate change.

Secondly, voting rights. We have a bad reputation and are often the laughingstock of the nation. The 2000 presidential election comes to mind, but there were so many other examples. As a
southern state, Florida has a sad history of denying African Americans and other minorities their rights to vote. And, just recently, Governor Scott ordered a shameful and unnecessary purging of voter rolls that mistakenly withdrew American citizens and denied them their basic rights to vote.

I was ashamed of my state when I recently learned that we were only one of three states in the nation that do not automatically restore a citizen's right to vote upon completion of their sentence after a felony conviction, the vast majority of them nonviolent offenses. Forty-seven other states do, but we make it ridiculously hard. I urge you to support the restoration of voting rights.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Robinson.

Andy Warrener.

MR. WARRENER: Warrener, that's correct, sir. First, I would like to thank the Commission for being here. The ninth stop. Wow, that's great. I would also like to give a quick shout-out to this stenographer here who has somehow written down every single word of this. That's been the most amazing thing I've seen all day.

My name is Andy Warrener. I'm a citizen of the great nation of the United States. I'm a
resident of Florida, and I happen to live in Odessa. I am a no-party affiliate voter. And I'm actually running as an independent candidate in Florida House District 64 next year.

I wanted to address the Commission because I feel like the will of Florida voters is being thwarted. Two recent amendments came through. Amendment 1, in 2014, the Water and Land Conversation Amendment, and also Amendment 2 in 2016, the medicinal marijuana amendment.

Those are high bars. It's very difficult to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot, first, and then, furthermore, approved. It's an extremely high bar. Okay. That bar was passed by both of those amendments. And, furthermore, when it got onto the ballot, Amendment 1, in 2014, The Land and Water Conservation Amendment, received 74.96 percent of the vote. That's over 4.2 million votes. I personally have not seen a greater mandate by the voters of Florida since I've been alive or conscious of it.

To add to that, Amendment 2, in 2016, received 71.32 percent of the vote, over 6.5 million people approved that one. That was, obviously, a presidential election year. 2014 being a midterm,
low turnout, understandable.

Now, the legislature has now finished. And I'll give them some credit for Amendment 2. They did come up with something for that. But, as far as Amendment 1 is concerned, The Land and Water Conservation Amendment was designed to post money for the state to use to acquire conservation lands. I don't know about everyone else in this room, but I took a good hard look at the state budget, and I didn't see a dollar in the state budget set to acquire those lands.

That's a huge miscarriage, and I ask the legislature -- the Commission if they would clarify or create language in the state constitution that would adhere the legislature to those constitutional amendments. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Thank you for your testimony.

Michael Girard.

MR. GIRARD: Yes. Mike Girard, Orlando. I've been here since 1986. I'm a junior and also a veteran officer. Thank you, Commissioners. I'm actually going to talk, hopefully, about several things, but certainly to start with the Second Amendment.
The right to keep and bear arms is not about sports. It is not about hunting. Its purpose from the founders is to throw off tyranny. That was its function. And the constitution, by the way, doesn't grant rights, and the Bill of Rights does not. It restricts government. That's what the Bill of Rights does.

In the state of Florida there is no right to keep and bear arms. It is a right being treated like a privilege. If I have to ask permission, if I have to have a permit or a license to carry and be told how I'm going to carry, I am being used for a privilege. It is a privilege only that I'm being granted, not a right. And I would like to point out that the Second Amendment forbids any restriction, regardless of whatever our court says, on the right to keep and bear arms suitable to a contemporary soldier.

And I will read this from, by the way, Tench Coxe, who may be one of your ancestors. He says, "Their swords, and every terrible implement of the soldier, are the birthrights of Americans. The unlimited power of the sword is not in the hands of either the federal or state governments, but, where our trust in God it will ever remain, in the hands
of the people." That was Trench Coxe, February 20, 1788.

And, by the way, on open primaries, I don't want a Democrat selecting my candidate, if you don't mind. So let's not have that. Okay? Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER LEE: Okay. We will -- the Commission will stand in recess for seven minutes or upon the call of the Chair.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: It is 8:17. We will reconvene at 8:24.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Good evening, everyone. If everyone would take their seats, we're going to reconvene this meeting.

Commissioner Bondi has the gavel. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you. Okay. Samuel Saporta, Ciara Kauffman, Emily Cruz, Andrew Heneen and Thomas Smith, please come forward.

And our first one is Samuel Saporta.

MR. SAPORTA: Thank you. It's actually Joe Saporta.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Okay. It says Samuel.

MR. SAPORTA: Sorry. There's not another one
here, is there?

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Is this you? Are you here to talk about open primaries?

MR. SAPORTA: No, I'm here to talk about --

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Wrong person. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Maybe if you spell it, they --

S-A-P-O-R-T-E. Samuel?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Daniel.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: All right. Samuel, we're going to take a pass on you. Okay. Ciara Kauffman.

Ciara. Okay. Emily Cruz.

MS. CRUZ: Hi. My name is Emily Cruz, and I'm just here as a parent and past teacher. I worked for the public school system for four years -- these past four years. I recently quit my job because it contradicted with my ethics.

Step Up for Students Scholarship has given my son the opportunity to choose a school he wanted to go to, or that we thought was best for him. Before that, he was in a public school in a deaf classroom where the teacher didn't know sign language and the interpreter only signed during story times, ignoring his signs when he requested to use the restroom and that he was hurt.
The public school system failed my son, and I was fortunate enough to find a private school here in Clearwater. We lost our home in Lake Mary that we owned because we stopped paying our mortgage and started paying tuition. And thanks to the Step Up for Students Scholarship and the Gardener Scholarship.

He has multiple special needs. He's hearing impaired. He has hydrocephalus, epilepsy, cerebral palsy and he's deaf. And no school, up until this point, in Orange or Pinellas County was able to accommodate him until we found this private school called Blossom. And I just wanted to say thanks for making that available, and I hope that that program continues. Thank you.

MR. HENEEN: Hello. I want to discuss two proposals I submitted on the website. Sorry for speaking fast to get through them. First, many others have mentioned fair districting. A proposal I submitted last night and is awaiting moderation on the website addresses this by using software that determines legislative district boundaries. It's too complicated to explain with my limited time, but, basically, the legislature would vote on metrics, such as comportment of districts, how well
districts represent minorities and political parties and other constitutionally-mandated considerations.

In separate votes, the legislature would decide the weight to give each metric. Software would then crunch the numbers and determine the best district map that balances the metric. The software and all input data would be public without restrictions incumbering reverse engineering or similar ways that the public can scrutinize or analyze the way the results were obtained.

Second, also awaiting moderation on the website, is a proposal to annul Article 5, Section 15 of the Florida Constitution which the Supreme Court of Florida has interpreted to give it both the exclusive legislative and judicial power to decide what constitutes the practice of law, and, thereby, the unauthorized practice of law.

It would then give the legislature the power to define the unauthorized practice of law and would require the state to define the unauthorized practice of law in terms of actions, conduct or speech, unlike current codification of defining the practice of law.

Why? First, I'll comment why I believe Article 5, Section 15, the dual legislative judicial
nature of the Supreme Court of Florida under that is currently in violation of the due process clause of the U.S. Constitution. When people bring constitutional challenges to UPL of regulations and the Supreme Court would have to determine whether its own justifications satisfies strict scrutiny. Second, shifting the authority to a less biased rule-making body should allow software developed by non-lawyer corporations -- for example, software development by non-lawyer corporations to provide basic legal services at a cost that the average person can afford, something currently prevented by ethical rules banning lawyers sharing legal fees with non-lawyers and banning corporations from practicing law.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Andrew, thank you very much. You can submit -- Andrew, you can submit all your written notes, and we will get them all online. Thank you.

And, Thomas, before you speak, if we can go ahead and call up Cathy Protopapas -- I'm sorry, I'm killing your name -- Denise Yettaw, Chris Pastura, Bradley Litterow and Donald Kiernan.

And, Thomas, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Thank you for this opportunity.
I'm here to advocate for addition to the Florida Constitution for the provision of free post-secondary education to adult residents. Those with contemporary technical skills have higher levels of employment, stability and higher wages than those who are unskilled. Those with Bachelor degrees have a lower unemployment rate than those who did not have degrees.

Completion of a community college Associate's degree program makes completion of a Bachelor's degree program easier. Recently the states of Tennessee and Oregon will offer tuition-free community college to adult residents beginning in 2018. The state of New York will offer tuition-free two and four-year degree programs at public colleges and universities beginning in 2018.

So I would offer this wording based on the wording that's similar in use in Tennessee and Oregon. "The State of Florida shall provide tuition-free education to Florida residents at Florida community colleges and public technical schools who meet the following criteria: One, the resident must be at least 18 years of age; two, the resident must have been a permanent resident of the state of Florida for at least 365 days prior to
enrollment; three, the resident must not have
received a degree from a college, university or
trade school prior to enrollment; and, four, after
enrollment, the student shall maintain a grade point
average of at least 2.5, as determined at the end of
every semester to maintain tuition-free status".
That's all I have.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.
Cathy, could you say your name, please.

MS. PROTOPAPAS: Cathy Protopapas. We've
already talked about campaign finance reform, but I
think in order to gain the public trust and to not
have conflict of interest, it's important that they
pass -- it's similar to Move to Amend has a proposed
28th amendment to the constitution in which it ends
corporate personhood and that they represent natural
people.

That is important in regard to putting a
conscious into our democracy, because when money and
corporations rule, we do not have ethics. We have
power and corruption which basically rules. We do
not have integrity in our system. And in order to
have that integrity, you've got to represent human
beings, because human beings have a conscience, and
they will -- that will create a self-governing
democracy, which will create laws which will work for the benefit of humanity. But that has to go to the international level, to the UN.

Another thing is that I did pull a lot of things from the South African Constitution. They have a lot of good things in there. But one of them is in regard to human rights, that they have a commission, and they review how the Bill of Rights are working in regard to housing, healthcare, food, water, Social Security, education and the environment. So if you've got those accountability institutions in place, and people's human rights are protected, it's going to fix issues in regard to your education system.

Because I come from Canada, and they have a social safety net. And I think one of the main issues in the United States, and, particularly in the state of Florida, is the choice to use mass incarceration over social services.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Cathy, thank you very much. You can submit the rest of your notes, and they will be posted on our website.

MS. PROTOPAPAS: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Denise, could you pronounce your name, please?
MS. YETTAW: Yes. You don't want to try?

Denise Yettaw.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you. I had it right then.

MS. YETTAW: Good job. My name is Denise Yettaw. I'm a Florida native and a St. Pete resident. Also, I'm a descendent directly from the Mayflower as well. I'm a single mother of two teens. I'm here to talk about women's reproductive rights.

Because Florida's Constitution contains an explicit right to privacy, the Florida Supreme Court has long held that it embraces privacy interests and extends more protections than does the federal constitution, which contains only an implicit right to privacy. Regardless of your religious or idealogical views on abortion, we urge the CRC not to threaten these greater protections for Floridians. Polls of Floridians, and specifically Florida voters, have consistently found that a majority of Floridians support legalized abortion. Of the more than 25,000 people who participated in the Women's March St. Pete, and rallied right here in Tampa Bay, made it loud and clear in January, we do not want access to our reproductive rights.
attacked through a legislative process.

We do not want healthcare providers, like
planned parenthood, defunded and we certainly don't
want women's rights undermined in our state
constitution. The last time politicians tried to
weaken the privacy clause in Florida's Constitution,
Florida voters overwhelmingly rejected the attempt.
Proposed Amendment 6 on the 2012 ballot was an
effort to limit the privacy clause in our
constitution, and it was soundly defeated by the
Florida voters, 55 percent to 45 percent.
I also support restating felons' rights to
vote. I support open primaries. And I don't
support open carry. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.


Bradley -- and can you pronounce your last
name, please?

MR. LITTEROW: Bradley Litterow. Hello,
Commissioners. Thank you for your time. Thank you
for your attention. Yesterday 22 people died. They
died waiting for organ transplants that were not
forthcoming, and this is something -- it affects all
sorts of people -- children, adults, people of all
races, people of all ages. And this is something
that the state of Florida could change. The state of Florida could enshrine in our constitution a requirement that organ donation be mandatory, not optional. But we're not going to do that, and the reason we're not going to do that is because we all understand the importance of people's right to control their own body, even after they die.

And so I suggest, instead, that we enshrine that instinct and that intuition that we share into our constitution ensuring that the right to bodily autotomy and control of one own's body is enshrined in our constitution, regardless of the -- to enshrine in our constitution that no person has the right to use our body, to use our organs, regardless of their age or their relationship to you. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Donald. Is that you?

MR. KIERNAN: Donald Kiernan.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: While you're coming up, sir, could these other come up. Gary Gibbons, Taria McCray, Louis Carliner, Carl Dahl and April Thanos, I believe -- T-h-a-n-o-s.

Go ahead, Donald.

MR. KIERNAN: Hi. My name is Donald Kiernan.
I'm from Clearwater, Florida. I'm a retired machinist. I'm married to my beautiful wife for 37 years. I have two children and three grandchildren. I'm here today to express my concern for Florida independence.

I want a nonpartisan primary election according to the Florida -- I'm sorry. In my opinion, Florida independents want a nonpartisan primary election. According to the Florida Division of Elections, over 3 million Florida voters are registered as no party affiliation. I am. That's 25 percent of our elector, and they're barred from voting in the primary elections.

Now, due to past gerrymandering by both parties, safe districts still exist for both major parties. And, unfortunately, most of the races are decided in the primaries, instead of the general election. I would like for all of Florida citizens who are registered voters to be able to chose their candidates rather than political parties doing it in the backrooms. Regardless of your party affiliation, all to appear on a single primary ballot with all voters voting for their preferred candidates in the primary, then the two top candidates would advance to the general election,
and, if needed, a runoff.

In closing, please change the loophole for the major parties and return the power back to us, Florida registered voters. This Commission has the responsibility to the voters of Florida, and you have the opportunity to right the wrong that has gone on for the last 20 years. It's up to you guys. Thanks very much.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir.

Gary Gibbons.

MR. GIBBONS: Good evening. My name is Gary Gibbons. I'm from Tampa. I'm a lifelong resident of Florida, fourth generation. A very wise man once said that we'd all be better off if the legislature met about once every five or ten years, rather than every year. And, likewise, it's a good thing that this Commission only meets once every 20 years.

The Florida Constitution should be something that we don't easily amend. I want you to, first and foremost, do no harm. Do not take away any rights from us. Please use restraint in the number of amendments that you propose. Don't put five or ten amendments on the ballot. The Florida Constitution should be amended with restraint. Once
something is in the constitution, you can't get it out.

Having said that, amendments are often the only way for the public to address things which legislators fail to act upon. So please don't do anything that would make citizen-initiative amendments more difficult to pass. And don't do anything to overturn any previously passed public-initiative amendments that we've voted on.

Don't raise the voting percentage for passage above 60 percent. And you would be doing us a service if you would allow us four years to gather the signatures -- the 800,000 signatures.

There's a lot of issues that -- as a lawyer, I would like to see you do one thing, and that's restore public voting rights for felons. There should not be four people who make that decision.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Taria McCray.

MR. McCRAY: Good evening. My name is Taria McCray, and I represent the Roosevelt Institute and its initiative to restore voting rights to people convicted of felons in our state and once they've completed all the terms of their sentences.

Florida is often criticized as being one of
the most volatile states in the presidential
election with the potential to swing elections to
the left or right. What's not talked about is the
laws dating back to Jim Crow period embedded within
its constitution that bars 10 percent of Floridians
from voting from the polls. The law
disproportionately disenfranchises African American
and other rational minority votes. It's high time
to end this embarrassing characterization through
restoration of voting rights with those with past
felony convictions and unify our state.

We must automatically restore voting rights to
people in our state convicted of felony convictions
once they have completed the terms of their
sentences. We are Floridians, and we are
big-hearted people. We believe in second chances
and opportunities for those who have paid their
debts back to society.

As Florida is just one of three states with a
voting ban, the disenfranchisement of people with
felony convictions from voting draws serious
questions about the legitimacy and accuracy of
previous and future presidential and gubernatorial
elections. And the inclusion of all Florida adults
in the election process will yield a fair and more
transparent elections demonstrative of the values that we share and the vision that we hold for our state.

And if we expect leaders and policies which represent our values of what we care about, we must make it a the point to include every one of us in our election process. We need an amendment to the constitution to automatically restore voting rights to those with felony convictions in our state.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Louis Carliner.

MR. CARLINER: I'll make sure I'm close enough to the mic. I concur with the need for the open primary because it would eliminate the write-in spoiler trick that really denies people the right to get the candidate of their choice. However, I would like to add an instant runoff feature with maybe a run, place and show columns where one could vote for his first choice, his second choice and third. And, from that, it would ensure that the ultimate winner be in the primary or the general election has at least a 50 percent majority.

I would also feel that we need to go with an independent commissioner to do the redistricting, like Iowa, and I believe Arizona, has done. And I
would also like to see a provision where -- term
limits have not worked out the way people expected
them to be. But, as an alternative, put in a
recall -- citizen's recall vote provision to remove
a bad candidate. This would keep the situation we
have with the lobbyist and the staffers since they
are the only ones who really know fully the system
from being able to weaken the ability to our
legislature to function and to pass laws favored by
the citizens.

And then, finally, we might want to consider a
proposition-type scheme like California uses where
you don't have to keep cluttering up the
constitution in order to be able to have laws which
reflect citizens' will.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Carl Dahl. Carl. April Thanos, T-h-a-n-o-s.

All right. The next five, Reverend Lois
Rogers-Watson, Eugene Watson, Harland G-r-e-c-h-e,
or Harland Greeve. I can't read it. And I believe
it's Connor Darken or --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He left.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: He left? Connor left,
okay. Phil Walters. If you could all come up. No
one. Okay. Oh, I'm sorry, we've got someone.

Who do I have?

MR. WALTERS: Phil Walters.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Great. Thank you.

MR. WALTERS: Good evening. Just a few things I want to point out after all the speakers, but since you're all educated and learned people, we are a constitutional republic. A constitutional republic, okay? As you all make these decisions to go into the constitution, remember not everybody votes. We're not a democracy. If you read history, you know what the history of democracies are. It's my rule, just by definition.

But, anyway, what I really wanted to talk about -- veterans' monuments. Our veteran monuments are being desecrated out there. They're being removed. I know in Gainesville there's actually a monument downtown that is on an actual battle site. There were battles right there in Gainesville. Voted to remove. One over in Orlando. We need to do something about this. Rewriting history does not solve any problems.

Bear hunting was brought up.

Commissioner Gaetz, you know about bears, do you
not?  All right.  For those of you that don't, the FWC is set up as a constitutionally separate non-political organization.  They're biologists.  I was at that last meeting and recommended a bear hunt.  We were shut down.  My liberty, my fellow hunters' liberty was denied by hecklers' veto.

Okay.  Hecklers' veto.  A small amount of people just raising hell about we don't want to kill a bear.

Those of you who have to live in close proximity of the predators will find out what the problem is.  There's people that -- we love our wildlife, but you have to have leeway in dealing with it.

Federal laws.  Sometimes in the constitution -- many of you all are elected.  Our legislature and Governor should protect our people from often the laws that are illegal and shoved down our throat by the federal government.  That's something you all should look at at times.  Protect us, the people, from these guys that pass laws and try to instill them, like unfunded mandates is one that comes to mind.  So please keep that in mind.

But, anyway, thank you all for your service.

I appreciate it.
COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you. Byron. He only did an initial O or D. Byron? I'm just going to start calling some and -- Bob Wieland. No?
Wayne Schucker, Teresa Miller, Rochelle Reback -- Shelly? I don't see you. Sydney Eastman, Michael Cripe. Oh, who do I have? Oh, Teresa. Okay. I can only see with my reading glasses. Now I can see you.

MS. MILLER: Teresa Miller. Because the privacy act has been misinterpreted by the Supreme Court, a young girl is allowed to have an abortion without parental knowledge. This is emotionally, physically and spiritually a tragic situation. Often it has lifelong consequences. Please restore this amendment as it was intended, to protect privacy, not promote an act that is detrimental to both the baby and the mother. I'm proud to say I'm pro life by birth, not by choice.

With respect to Amendment 2, we keep hearing 71 percent of the people voted for it. Well, that's true, but the reality is that only 40 percent of eligible voters voted for this. It's not an overwhelming majority. And I believe if they better understood that amendment, that many of them would have voted no. However, because the Supreme Court
allowed the amendment to have the term "medical" and be associated with marijuana, many of them were mislead and had false hope that this is some sort of miracle drug.

In essence, now our Department of Health and legislators are tasked with regulating a drug that is not a prescription drug, as it keeps being referred to, is illegal under federal law, is a Schedule One DEA substance, is not supported by medical associations, nor research, is addictive, often causes a variety of physical and mental impairments, some of which are permanent, can't be sold in pharmacies but can be grown in the backyard, and it's a cash-only product.

To say we've added fuel to the fire of the opioid epidemic is an understatement. Please don't wait 20 years to revisit this. The people need to better understand this amendment. And please do not allow any form of medicine to be put forth and for our people to be doctors and pharmacists. If we don't put an end to this insanity, the next thing we're going to do is legalize heroine as a pain killer.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Teresa.

Rochelle is not here. Sydney is not here.
Michael Cripes is not here. We are going to move on. John Carl Browning, are you here? Okay. John, while you walk up, I'm going to call some more names. Mike Suarez, Russell Patterson, Lakeisha Black, Faithe Estes, Michael Ledbetter, Kathleen Riley. If you are all here, please come on up.

Okay. John.

MR. BROWNING: My name is Jonathan Carl Browning. I'm from Brooksville, Florida. And what I was here to talk today about was an emergency, stuff that's been going on with our constitution. And I just wanted to see if I could pass an amendment to repay the people for where they took the money from them when they were in jails. When officers arrest you and they put you in jail, they go to the statute where they took the money, and you look underneath it and says any person in the jail that's a prisoner. So they've been taking the money. But really you're really an arrestee when you first come to jail. You haven't even went to court yet. You're an arrestee. And it don't list that in the statute. So they've been taking the money from all these people.

And then, when you go to court, when you get...
an attorney, and he files a motion for discovery, all documents pertaining to the case, the state's attorneys hides it from your attorney.

So I feel it's an emergency. If you're going to hide stuff, then you have to come up with a way to repay these people. Even when you go to court -- say I go to court and I'm drunk, the State is going to argue all day long, you were intoxicated. You didn't know what you were doing. But, hold on, you entered into a legal obligation with me when I'm asleep in my cell. Take the money. Get them out of there.

I've personally had people shake the pepper spray in front of me because I'm looking at this machine. They took my money and put it in the machine. They said if you try talking to that machine, sir, we're going to put you in the mental ward. What do you mean? Well, we take the money, and we put it in a machine.

In Hillsborough County, Commissioner Reding had some ordinance passed to -- a resolution that any means possible, you can take the money from a person in the jail. I know it sounds crazy. I've never seen a law where you can take money while I'm sleeping. You're saying I'm drunk and don't
understand what's happening. So in the morning, when I am sober, where's my money? Don't you remember, sir, we have a legal obligation with you? Don't you remember? Talk to them. So I go court, and I won my case in court, and I ask them, where's my damn money? Well, I'm going to get my money back by any means possible so --

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you very much. You can submit your statements in writing online.

MR. BROWNING: You already know. You know it.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you very much.

MR. BROWNING: I'll get my money back in any means possible, and then we'll deal with it in court. But you've got to repay the people.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

MR. BROWNING: You took the money. You've got to repay them.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Mr. Suarez.

MR. SUAREZ: Thank you. Welcome to Tampa, and, to our Tampa Bay Commissioners, welcome home. My name is Mike Suarez. I'm a Tampa City Councilman. I'm representing an at-large district for the last six years, and I'm member of the Florida League of Cities. In my capacity as an elected official, I've seen our city have meaningful
and significant effects on our citizens' lives. Our state constitution under Article 8, Section 2 numerates the creation and powers of municipal government, the essentials of home rule are defined in that section, and it's the basis for all local governments who provide governmental, corporate and proprietary powers and to effectively conduct municipal government.

These powers have been, for the most part, exercised judicially to provide services necessary for cities to flourish. In our city we have enjoyed steady growth, and they're recognized as one of the leaders in job creation and economic development. This is no accident, but a concerted effort by the Mayor, our City Council and our citizens. The mechanisms we have employed to make Tampa one of the top 50 best places to live includes the amenities we have provided outside the essential services, such as police, fire, clean water and solid waste pickup.

No city can function without these powers and the ability to expand their services to meet growing demand. However, we do need additional tools to continue to be the center of economic activity for our county and the entire west coast of Florida.

Currently, only counties are allowed to hold
referenda for the passage of additional revenue through sales taxes, which makes it extremely difficult for cities to continue to grow. I urge this Commission to amend Article 8, Section 2 to allow cities of 200,000 or more in population the option of allowing their citizen the freedom to raise revenue for municipal purposes. I also urge this Commission to continue to protect the powers that charter cities currently have without undue interference from the state. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and thank you for being here in Tampa today.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Councilman.

Russell Patterson.

MR. PATTERSON: Hello. I'm Russ Patterson. I'm a career United States Air Force officer, retired several years ago, and, as of July 1st, I'll be a retired Hillsborough County school teacher.

As a school teacher I noticed, that the school I was at, that the facilities, especially the music facilities, are worse than what I had as a middle school student or junior high school student in Texas. It's unbelievable how poorly Florida funds public education. And I believe we need to put stronger language in our constitution to make sure
that the legislature actually does their job and funds public education so that we'll actually have the best in the nation.

I also stand in support of open primaries, especially closing the write-in loophole. Then I echo what Councilmember Suarez says about local controls on taxes.

Now, I also have to say something about my brother in arms, the Army veteran, about the malitia. You know, I think it's a great idea that we have a malitia and so folks that own guns need to get trained every month on their guns, and they need to go and do duty for two weeks in the summertime as part of the militia. I want us to remember that the Second Amendment wasn't about controlling guns. It is about controlling slaves. And we need to make sure that we don't allow guns in our schools, guns in our churches and open carry is just an awful idea. So thank you very much for letting me talk, and do your job, please.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir.

Lakeisha Black, Faithe Estes, Michael Ledbetter.

MR. LEDBETTER: Thank you for the opportunity, and I will try to make this brief because the hour is late, and I know all of you all are fatigued. So
thank you for staying this long.

I am Michael Ledbetter. I am the product -- a proud product of the Florida schools and the preeminent University of South Florida. I think our Florida Constitution should ensure total equality for every citizen without limitation.

It should include automatic restoration of all citizenship rights to every felon upon completion of their sentence. Three, maintain the right of privacy for every citizen, regardless of age. Four, continue a complete separation of church and state, this includes prohibiting the legislature from funding religiously-affiliated schools. Five, disavow K through 12 voucher funding for charter and private schools. Six, keep the judicial terms and independents that they have as currently defined. And, seven, and finally, strengthen fair district amendments to require sworn, explicit legislative intent. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Mr. Ledbetter. Kathleen Riley. I'm going to keep calling names. If you're here, please come forward. Richard Warrener, Theresa Tessie Ferlita, Daniel Paul Zutlar, Dr. Rick Garrity, Lee Essrig. I'm going to keep going. Kent Bailey, Pam Eliopulos.
Sir, could you state your name?

MR. WARRENER: Richard Warrener. Odessa resident since 1978. And to echo Mr. Ledbetter's comments, thank you all, Commissioners, for staying to hear us.

One topic, minimum wage. As you all know, in 2004 the citizens of Florida took upon themselves to do the right thing by establishing a minimum wage for our state via a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment. It passed by over 70 percent. The stated purpose was to establish a wage sufficient to provide a decent and healthy life for workers and their families.

However, the current minimum wage is $8.10. Clearly, the intent of the amendment has not been achieved. With only one opportunity for the CRC every 20 years, now is the time to do the right thing by increasing the minimum wage to a level which would actually accomplish that purpose. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir.

Theresa Ferlita, Daniel Paul Zutlan, Dr. Rick Garrity, Lee Essrig, Kent Bailey.

MR. BAILEY: Good evening. Kent Bailey, Chair of Tampa Bay Sierra Club. Since 1944, the water in
Tampa Bay has come up a total of seven and a half inches. The first couple of inches took 46 years. The next couple of inches took only 20 years. And, in the last seven years, the water has come up an additional three and a half inches, almost as much as in the preceding 66 years.

Zillow says that 6 feet of sea level rise will cost Florida $413 billion in lost real estate. But, long before that, soaring insurance rates will have forced millions of Floridians into foreclosure. Mortgages will have become unobtainable or, at best, unaffordable, and our economy will be on its way to a collapse. But we are not helpless in the face of this disaster.

There are more than 300,000 jobs waiting to be created in a transition to renewable energy in Florida alone. Two-thirds of these jobs will not require a college degree. The average wage of solar workers is $26 an hour. And, in Georgia, farmers are getting $300 to $700 an acre renting out to solar companies.

Today, Florida remains one of the only four states that prohibits third-party sales of energy to the grid. So I call on you tonight to bring forward an amendment that will remove the prohibition of

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir.

Pam, bear with me for a second, because while you're speaking --

MS. ELIOPULOS: Bring them on.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Excuse me?

MS. ELIOPULOS: Bring them on.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Oh, all right. While Pam is speaking I'm going to ask that you all come up. Flandra Ismajli. I'm sorry I'm hurting your name. Sandra Odom, Andrea Braboy, Thomas Cabrero, Tim Heberlein, Stephanie Baxter Jenkins, Daniel Fittro, Dewitt Bunch, Danica Fields and Austin Collier.

Pam, go ahead. Thank you.

MS. ELIOPULOS: Thank you. And bless you all for sitting through this. My name is Pam Eliopulos. I'm a 20-year resident of Hillsborough County, a former prosecuting attorney, and I stand here to ask you please end the farce in Florida of not allowing any sort of hope of restoration of felon's rights. It's an embarrassment, and we need to end it now.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Pam.
All right. Flandra.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Would you announce your name? Go ahead.

MS. BRABOY: My name is Andrea Braboy.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Thank you. We'll find you.

Go ahead and speak.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Go ahead, Andrea.

MS. BRABOY: Again, my name is Andrea Braboy.

I'm a resident of the New Tampa area of the City of Tampa, and I'm a retired senior military officer. And I'm really going to talk about Article 6 and Article 8 primarily.

And Article 6, Section 2 should be rewritten to state every citizen of the United States who's at least 18 years of age and who is a permanent resident of a state, shall be automatically registered to vote and shall be an elector of the county of permanent residence.

Article 6, Section 3, the oath, should be changed to simply read, each eligible citizen, upon registering, shall subscribe to the following: "I do solemnly swear or affirm that I am qualified to register as an elector under the constitution and
laws under the State of Florida".

That part about protect and defend the
constitution, as a retired military officer, I know
what that means. It cannot be proven the way you
can prove if somebody is eligible to vote. So it
really serves no purpose.

Article 6, Section 4, disqualification. As
you've already heard before, I also believe that any
person convicted of a felony who has completed the
terms of the sentence should have his or her rights
to vote immediately restored.

Article 8, Section 5, local option. I'm going
to make this real easy. Okay, I, like a lot of
people, have a concealed carry license. I know how
to use firearms. I also have, like most of you
have, a Florida driver's license. I had to prove I
was competent to use a certain kind of vehicle to
get this. I don't have to do that for this. That's
wrong. I know that people who may be competent in
handling a handgun probably can't handle a rifle.
So please reconsider that particular section. If
you're going to handle a deadly weapon, you better
know how to use it. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, ma'am.

Flandra is not here. Sandra Odom,
Thomas Cabrero. Thomas, come on up.

MR. CABRERO: Hello. I look forward --

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Can you talk a little closer, please?

MR. CABRERO: I look forward to meeting each and every one of you guys individually. Anyway, I just heard about this meeting very recently. I just got off of work at MacDill. I'm a civilian helping them build a new building. And, at my age, for being a new citizen to this county and this state, I can see, historically, how things have changed from 1776 to before Florida was called Florida. To understand how much time I have to get on every topic that I can bring to light that's already in the books of law by man kind of thing.

But to touch on few that touch me is a baby -- a woman's right is her right, obviously, but to take a life that's what's considered is a baby is considered a life. Also -- I have a little bit of time left. The hate crimes, also I wanted to touch a little bit on that. Juveniles before and after -- obviously, next time I'll be a little more prepared than 30 minutes as I write, and I've been writing as I've been -- I look forward to seeing you guys in the Capitol of Florida.
I apologize. Oh, yeah, and also about the right to carry, if you feel the people that don't need to be carrying, that's the type of direction you should be -- obviously, first responders is the type of thing. And, just to close it off, I look forward to meeting everybody individually, and also the Governor. And nobody appointed me here to be a civil person in my right to speak, and I look forward to speaking to you again.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you for coming.

Thank you.

Tim Heberlein, Stephanie Baxter Jenkins, Daniel Fittro.

MR. FITTRO: Hi. I wanted to just speak in favor of a few things. Open primaries, as a lot of people said before, I'm in favor of that; voting rights restoration; eliminate corporate money in politics; eliminating super delegates in Florida. I would like to see us do like California did with State Bill 542 and have single-payor healthcare and Medicare for all. And also increase support for our solar power, like many people mentioned here.

Just two facts, Vermont gets 18 percent of its power from solar. That's Vermont, which is, you know, way up north. Burlington, Vermont gets
100 percent of its power from green energy. That's 214,000 people in the metro area. So we have, you know, Tampa/St. Pete, just a little bit larger than that. If we could have our two counties running on 100 percent renewable energy, that would be awesome. Tiny countries such as Italy, Japan and Germany each create more solar power than the whole USA, so we're falling way behind in that. Legalize industrial hemp, which can be used for fuel, clothing, paper products, packaging materials. I work in a school, and I see so much waste and so many things that we use and throw away that are not even recyclable or we don't have a chance to recycle them, plastics, et cetera.

I would like see us do like New York did and make college tuition free through public funding, which some people spoke on as well today. And we must protect net neutrality. There's an FCC vote coming up soon. If we can at least protect it for Florida residents, that would awesome. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: And you were Dewitt, right, sir?

MR. FITTRO: Pardon me?

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Your name was?
MR. FITTRO: It's Danny Fittro -- Daniel Fittro.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you. Dewitt Bunch.

Thank you.

MR. BUNCH: My name is Dewitt Bunch, and I wasn't really planning on speaking tonight, but I just sat here and watched and listened. So I have a few things of my own. We'll see how many I can squeeze in.

The first one is open primary. I've got four words for you: Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump. The least popular of all time. That's who we get. What else is there to say about it?

Next is medical marijuana. Technically, I'm against it, because I don't know why a plant is illegal. You want to know why it's illegal? Because somebody said it makes white girls listen to jazz and go out with black men. Look it up. It were perfectly legal until then. Why is it still illegal in most places, and why is there so much difficulty getting it? You have the pharmacies who have Marinol, marijuana in a pill. You have beer companies and liquor companies, they don't want to lose their business. That's all it is, is business.

Let's see, there's gun control. There are
several groups of people that were here and most of these groups have three different subjects that they agree on. One of them was gun control, the other is pro-abortion and --

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

MR. BUNCH: -- the one they don't mention is vaccines.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir. You can give your notes if you have more to say. Thank you.

Danica Fields.

MS. FIELDS: Hi. I'm Danica Fields. I'm the Executive Director of Kids Need Both. It's a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate those who are impacted by high-conflict families. And it has been my own personal experience, and also the experience of many of the people that I teach, that we're a highly competitive nation. It's not a surprise. However, when you're dealing with children, children can be destroyed over it.

There was -- Lee and Stargel tried to get something passed a year ago to try to get the children out of the middle of high-conflict custody tug-of-wars, and it was shut down.

And, in my own personal experience on the local level, I went through a five-and-a-half-year
custody battle. I went from stay-at-home mom to fighting to have part -- some visitation with my children. And the children were devastated in the whole process, and their lives -- part of the childhood was taken away from that. And that could have been changed if the judges -- if there was something that was mandated on the state level of children's bill of rights or something so that the judges personal opinions don't take a part of it, because children should by just their birthright -- they should have a meaningful relationship with both parents, and equally.

And I'm glad to say that, through my pain and suffering, I have been able to make and -- I'm a state author of a co-parenting curriculum, and my job is to educate those who are impacted so that we can make a difference in children's lives.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, ma'am.

Austin, is that you? Austin, if you can hang tight, and if the rest of you folks can come forward. Joe Saporta, Joan Noble -- You, Y-o-u, Z-h-o-y, Bill Bunkley, Gary Stein, Leonard Schmiege -- sorry about that -- Joseph Sook and Ron Weaver.

Austin, go ahead.
MR. COLLIER: Hello. My name is Austin Collier. I've lived here my whole life, graduated at Sherman High School last year. I'm attending HCC now. This is my city. But my mother is from Mexico, and my father is from Germany. I'm the only one actually born here. So I have seen other worlds, have seen what things can and actually are.

The first thing I want to touch on is medical marijuana. I have Crohn's, and I was diagnosed in 2013. And it actually does work. I'm not sure what it is, and I think we need to do more research into that. But they had me on pills, and they were moving me into injections, but nothing was working. I missed almost nine weeks of school. You can't do that in high school.

In 2014, when they did pass the Charlotte's Web, those things did help, and I was actually able to go to school and to get a job. And I work at a bank. I'm able to get up in the morning. These things actually do affect real people. On expansion of that, the drug's here. So we need to recognize that and understand that. If you don't believe me, I can take you to where I live, Sulphur Springs, it's everywhere.
On voting, I don't agree with open primaries mostly because you pick a party and you pick your candidate, and, if you don't agree with that candidate making your party, pick a new one.

On guns, coming from Mexico, I've seen what happens when guns are taken away. I've seen what happens when guns are put in the wrong hands. 200,000 people -- and it's the second most deadliest country in the world. And we like to look at Western Europe and say it could be, but we don't look at Eastern Europe. We like to look at Canada and say it could be, but we don't look at Mexico.

We have to understand where we actually are. Understand the demographics and understand that it's not the guns, it's the culture of violence towards police and violence towards our communities and one that glorifies drugs and guns. And we need to educate, not ban things that allow people protection. That's all I have to say.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Joseph Saportas.

MR. SAPORTAS: You guys are holding up very well. I'm Joseph Saportas. The one thing I really want to talk about is there is no citizen's initiative to be able to remove an elected official.
In other words, we need an amendment that will allow citizens to say, you're not doing your job. Otherwise, it's term limits, arrests, or whatever, or being voted out. I would like the Commission to consider putting that amendment in so we can at least make legislators more responsive to the voters. You know, do the job. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir.

Joan Noble.

MS. NOBLE: Good evening, Commissioners. I appreciate you all being here so late. I know you could be like making a lot more money than you are sitting here. So thank you, again.

I have two issues. One, I would like you to consider voting against, or not supporting, judicial term limits. That's absolutely a crime in my book. And the reason I say that is already we have recall by votes for any judge that the populus thinks needs to be replaced, and those recalls come up on a regular basis. We also have aged out for any judicial state appellate judge or Supreme Court justice who reaches a certain age. They need to leave the bench.

We need to keep our judges out of the political realm as much as possible and protect them
from the politics. We also would lose the expertise of the people that have been voted in because of their expertise and/or appointed because of their expertise. And so term limiting this expertise would do nothing but a disservice to our community.

The second issue that I'm very passionate about is that healthcare always needs to include mental healthcare. We have a stigma in Florida against mental healthcare. 70 percent of the people who need mental health treatment in this state can't get it -- cannot get it. 660,000 adults have severe mental health issues, and close to 200,000 children. Nearly one-half of our population struggles with much less devastating forms of the same issue of mental health.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you so much, ma'am. You can submit any written statements to our website. Thank you for being here.

You, can you pronounce your name for us -- for me?

MR. ZHOU: Thank you. It's You Zhou.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

MR. ZHOU: Good evening, Commissioners. Thank you for coming and staying up so late. I really appreciate the opportunity to speak.
One gentleman talked about organ transplants tonight. Today I want to bring up the topic of organ tourism and organ trafficking. How many people die yesterday waiting for an organ? I think it's 26 or 27. And how long can you wait for an organ, maybe a kidney or liver? Maybe two years, three years. But, in China, the situation is different. You can get an organ in weeks, in months. As result, a lot of people coming to China for organ transplant. It's called organ tourism -- even some Floridians.

But they don't know where is the organ source. The organ source are from the prisoner of the countries. They are killed for their organs. There are hundreds of thousands people who are put into prison because of their beliefs. And these people in the prison become an organ pool for the government in China. And they kill these people for their organ, and they're sold in enterprise. You can even find them online, like 50-some dollar for a kidney. You can get a kidney or liver in one month.

What's happening in China is related to everyone, even in Florida. Several years ago a friend told me that they had a film screening in Daytona Beach and a lady come after that with tears
and she say she witness one at a Chinese hospital
and a U.S. man getting an organ in one month. And a
lot of efforts have been put forward. Last summer
U.S. Congress passed --

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Sir, thank you. I'm
sorry. You're making some very important points.
If you could submit them. They will be online for
us to read. Thank you.

MR. ZHOU: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Mr. Bunkley, you're up.

MR. BUNKLEY: Thank you, General Bondi --
Commissioner Bondi. I'm sorry. Members of the
Commission, thank you for this late hour. I
appreciate you hanging in. My name is
William Bunkley. I'm president of the Florida
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Among
others, I represent the Florida Baptist Convention,
which is the affiliate of the Southern Baptist
Convention. The Florida Baptist Convention is
comprised of about one million Florida Baptists and
3,000 churches statewide. I've represented the
Baptist Convention in the legislative area for the
last 21 years.

I rise to speak to call attention to
Article 1, Section 23 -- well spoken of tonight, and many issues -- of the Florida Constitution, more commonly referred to as Florida's so-called right to privacy.

Arguably, it is the most misapplied passage in the entire state constitution. There is no doubt in my mind that the original drafters of this language had no idea, nor any intention, that it would be used to arrive at such a wide assortment of unrelated decisions desired outcomes requiring an active judicial contortion when no other legal provision would fit.

For decades I've shaken my head on numerous occasions when the right to privacy provision was misapplied to thwart the will of the people by way of the majority vote of their duly-elected representative, as well as their duly-elected governor.

This is your opportunity to rein in this excessive judicial overreach. It is time for our courts to rule based on the original intent of Florida's right to privacy protections, not to apply a self-granted legislative prerogatives.

Simply put, we want our judiciary to be the umpire that simply calls the balls and strikes based
on the rules of the game. No longer should we see
the will of the people you served away by a
non-legislative branch of the state government.
Thank you for your service. I wish you well on your
19 additional stops.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Bill.

Gary Stein.

MR. STEIN: Thank you very much. I met many
of you during your very first listening stop at the
University of Central Florida, and I thank you for
the opportunity to speak again, since many of you
were serving in Tallahassee at that point in time.

My proposal is now currently online as
Public Proposal 100200, and it's entitled "Regarding
the removal of the slang term marijuana in Florida
law to be replaced with the proper term cannabis."
You would hard pressed to find a slang term anywhere
in the Florida law and the U.S. Constitution, but it
does exist in Florida law, and that slang term is
marijuana. Now, my good friend Senator
Dennis Baxley often states, words matter, and this
particular word has a particularly negative history
and impact. And this is why he originally submitted
this proposal to drafting for the Florida Senate.

This word came to us from a 1937 law, and it
was placed there using a campaign of racism and misinformation. Harry Anslinger, the very
commissioner of the Bureau of Narcotics, used depression-era hatred of immigrating Mexicans and
African Americans as the engine to make his idea of making cannabis illegal, after prohibition ended,
despite the fact it was on the U.S. pharmacopeia. Anslinger was quoted in saying ridiculous and
revolting things, such as the primary reason to outlaw marijuana is its affect on the degenerate races and a reefer makes darkies think they're as
good as white men.

If you check the Harper Collins Spanish-English Dictionary for the proper Spanish translation for cannabis, you'll find that is cannabis, not marijuana. And, even in Mexico it is a slang term, like mota. It originated in the 1880s when Mexican pheasants tried to pronounce the word they had heard from Chinese workers whose Mandrin word for it was (foreign language spoken).

A slang term has no place in Florida law. My proposal requests that we place each and every incident of the word marijuana with the proper term cannabis and right this 80-year-old wrong. And my proposal is hard copied, and it's available to each
and every one of you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir. You can submit it. Leonard Schmiege.

MR. SCHMIEGE: Schmiege.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: I'm sorry. Can you pronounce it for us?

MR. SCHMIEGE: My name is Leonard Schmiege.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

MR. SCHMIEGE: I'm the director of a Florida political committee sponsoring Initiative 1509, which would raise the minimum wage in Florida to not less than $10 per hour and leave the current annual cost of living increases in place.

I can tell you how the average voter feels about this, because we polled them. In July of 2015, StPetePolls.org conducted an all-email poll by inviting, by email, over one million Florida voters to participate in our survey. The 2,788 respondents were weighted by party, age, gender and race. We found over 65 percent would vote for an amendment raising minimum wage to $10 an hour, and, furthermore, 23 percent would support raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

I'm not asking you to give the lowest paid workers a raise. But I urge you to give the voters
the chance to do so. The last time this happened
was on November 4th, 2004, when 72 percent of
Floridians voted to raise the minimum wage to $6.15
an hour. That minimum wage is now $8.10 an hour,
thanks to automatic annual increases for inflation.
Commissioners, I believe this is a very small ask
for the lowest paid workers in Florida.

To recap: One, the amendment is very simple.
It's virtually identical to the existing language.
We just change the number. Two, polling shows it
will pass successfully. Three, it will be an
immense help to the poorest and some of the hardest
working Floridians. For those interested in
contacting me or reviewing the proposed Amendment
1509, it can be found online at the Secretary of the
State's website. The committee is named League of
Voters, Extraordinaire.

One more thing. Commissioners and others
participating tonight, we plan to conduct another
statewide survey by emailing 1.5 million Floridians
a survey on minimum wage, but I would like to
include a few other issues as well. I would
encourage other groups to contact me about the
surveys so we can consider including their issues as
well. I thank the Commissioners and the public here
tonight for their time.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Joseph Sook.

MR. SOOK: Yes. Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here tonight at the Commission meeting. I would like to thank all the Commissioners for being here. I would like to thank you. I would like thank you Commissioner Sprowls. You're also my representative. I live in Dunedin, Florida, in Pinellas County.

I'm talking about tonight -- I want to talk about my concerns with medical marijuana. I've read numerous cases about both this Commission and the legislation seems to be bent on how much we can put more and more regulations on what the people passed, instead of making it easier and more obtainable to get.

Now, I was reading also there's a senator -- I believe it's Jeff Brandes. He wanted to make it have a free-market system, similar to other states have done, but the bill is never considered. Instead we have these bills that are considered that are lobbied hard by Caldena (phonetic) and the same groups -- these anti-Florida drug organizations that continue to try and block the will of the people. I
mean, the more interest they have in it is money. They don't care about saving people's lives, which is what the people of Florida wanted with this amendment.

And it's unfortunate that's really not being considered by the legislature. I mean, I hope it is soon. But I just haven't really seen much being done with that. I just really hope that the legislature and the Commission find a way to really do that, whether it's an amendment or a law, to make it easier for patients to get access, instead of having to drive to like a pharmaceutical company just to get Marinol, which is ridiculously expensive. I mean, a lot of people cannot afford some of that. There are people who are suffering, and I just think that's really unfortunate.

I also think it's important that we look at the reasons why marijuana is still criminalized, which is also a problem.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Weaver.

Sir, did we miss your name?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. I submitted my name. I just --

COMMISSIONER BONDI: We have more people that
I'm going to call. Thank you.

Mr. Weaver -- Ron, while you come up, let me go ahead and call some other names, if I could.

MR. WEAVER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: If you folks could come forward. Frank Borja, Joe Welbourn, Dylan Lobo, Ella Coffee and Thomas Cabrera. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Weaver. Nice to see you.

MR. WEAVER: And you. General, Commissioners, my name is Ron Weaver. I'm a Tampa attorney, and I would I like to rise for two occasions. One, the urgency of transportation funding alluded to by our great chairman of the City Council, Mike Suarez, but I would like to add to that. I have a property rights proposition for you as well.

That we change that 200,000-people trigger in Article 8, Section 2, as advocated by Chairman Suarez, and not leave out the Brandons and the hundreds of other communities in the state that deserve their 100,000 people or more to have the ability to vote to use the unused discretionary sales tax available in that jurisdiction. And I believe you could give the Brandons and the other hundreds of communities around the state the same benefit as the Article 8, Section 2 proposed

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amendment for cities over 200,000, that they too get
on the fair transportation funding and the urgent
need for transportation funding without the
awkwardness of the current technique of waiting for
1.3 million other people to come together in
political will in order to solve each of your
transportation problems, whether your jurisdiction
is 50,000. And I thank Manatee County,
Mr. Chairman, for a half-cent sales tax and the
political will and the courage of Manatee County for
a half-cent sales tax, and others among you for the
courage of your funding transportation. But we need
to get the mechanisms to others.

Property rights is the second issue. The
current Constitution Article 1, Section 10,
protection of the property from taking without
compensation, is outdated. The 1995 Bert Harris Act
has, unfortunately, been frustrated by the adoption
by the legislature of a prohibition of use of the
Bert Harris Act indirect effects upon property
rights, including a marine fire station approved
against an owner named Smith in Jacksonville.

He brought the property in good faith, and
then the local jurisdiction adopted a marine fire
station in the face of his good-faith purchase of
his property. The courts, under the Bert Harris Act, threw out the claim. And then the legislature amended the law to say indirect effects upon property owners by zoning next door cannot be enforced under the Bert Harris Act. That needs to be fixed by the constitution.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Mr. Weaver. Would you submit that online too?

MR. WEAVER: Of course, General.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

Frank Borja. Frank?

MR. BORJA: Good evening. It's an honor to be with all the highest representatives of the State of Florida. I was in class, and I wasn't fully prepared to speak. So I apologize if I sound out of topic.

I'm here to talk about two things. First thing is education. I think that every race, everybody in any tax bracket should have all resources available to get an education, because that is the key to a lot of things, solving a lot of problems. People aren't incarcerated. You know, there's no teenage pregnancy. You know, ordering food at fast food places, people aren't competent. So I do feel that we need to allocate all the
resources possible to education. It's for the future. This is something that's -- we shouldn't have issues over trying to learn. It's a key to a lot of us, a way out. So please I know that the funding for the public -- that the education is low. Let's try to find some money for us, because the teachers need it. We need it. And if they're not getting the proper funding, then we're the ones that are suffering. And it goes on at the Hillsborough, Ybor City Campus, which I can go into further.

Secondly, I want to say that one of the founding fathers, Mr. Henry Plant, had etiquette signs at his hotel. I think that we're going away from that as a state of Florida. I think we should all come together and be more caring. I think we should have signs around. For example, in St. Pete there's signs on Central Ave -- you are my sunshine. We don't have that here in Tampa. Signs reflect, and people see these things. I think we should have them in nightclubs also. You know, take care of that person. Do not take advantage of her. Respect one another. And I think they'll register. And that's something you guys could put in the constitution. You have the power do that now.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you. Thank you for
your thoughtful statements. Thank you.

Joe Welbourn.

MR. WELBOURN: Hi. I'm no stranger to testifying. So when I found out you guys were here, at about 7:30, I couldn't waste the opportunity, because normally when I get in front of you, it costs me a 3 o'clock wake up and a long drive to Tallahassee.

I'm here to talk about Florida's water. I've been fighting this battle with Captains for Clean Water for over a year. Members of the Commission have personally been involved with me in my efforts to get clean water flowing south in Florida. Thanks to the courage of Senator Negron and Bradley, and some of the other House members that supported the House side of the bill, we do have a bill.

The sad part is during this one-year process of learning how corrupt the Florida Water Policy has become at the hands of very, very large corporations, I also learned that Amendment 1 from 2014, which was passed with 74 percent popular vote, has also been squandered. In closed-door meetings with others of your colleagues, I've learned that the money that was supposed to be used for restoration and Florida clean water initiatives have
been used for salaries, for cars, for palm trees, for stuff that has nothing to do with what the original amendment was designed for and passed for by popular vote.

So for the colleagues of this Commission that voted for clean water and good water policy, I commend you. For those of you that voted against it, shame on you, because all of you are drinking water, and that water didn't come from Italy. It comes from our aquifers. It come from the Everglades. It come from Florida. So if you don't understand Florida water quality, you better educate yourself, because we're coming. This is a movement, and we're going to change it. And if you're against water and you're pro sugar, you're going to pay the price. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Dylan Lobo.

MR. LOBO: Yes.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Mr. Lobo for being so patient.

MR. LOBO: Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity and for waiting so long to give me this opportunity. I know it's late. I'll make it quick. Just a couple of points. I wanted to express concern about the FCC putting in this
opportunity for ISPs to sell our personal information or to -- because if a lot of them are going to profit for a service that they charge us for, we should have the right to determine whom my privacy -- whom my information is sold to. Google and Facebook don't profit from it. They provide a free service. So when they sell the information, they're not really charging us it. But, when we pay for it, we should have the right to determine who my information is sold. It's a question of privacy.

The second thing is also I wanted to express the -- that it's important that Florida fund public education and fund public transit, because when companies are looking to relocate to Florida, they're looking for a world-class state city and world-class cities. Having infrastructure and good education -- a good educated workforce is like primary on their list. It's more important than anything else, including lower taxes. So I would definitely encourage you to support good public education. Having a good educated workforce, skilled and ready for the 21st and 22nd centuries. And open the primary because we ask taxpayers to fund these primaries. So it would be good if we have the opportunity, even if you're an independent,
to go and vote at these primaries, because those are the candidates who are building our future. And I know, together, you all have the best interest for us. You want us to be a world-class state, and so do we. So I think we could have a good partnership. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you, Mr. Lobo.

Ella Coffee.

MS. COFFEE: Am I the last one?

COMMISSIONER BONDI: There's one more.

MS. COFFEE: I was going to say let's take a picture for Instagram.

Anyway, my name is Ella Coffee. And I thank you all for being here on the Floridian's Speak and listening. I certainly appreciate that. I feel well-represented. My former senator, Senator Lee, is here, and my current senator, Senator Rouson, and definitely a mentor, Senator Joyner, who has listened to me in the past. So I feel well-represented.

But what I would like to have on the record this evening is Article 9, Section 1 states the education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the state of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the State to make adequate
provision. And, paraphrasing the rest of the section, to obtain a high-quality education, the legislature must make adequate provisions. And, in order to make those adequate provisions, it means you must fund school districts.

I feel that the legislature has almost committed a crime, broke this law, by failing to make those adequate provisions by moving in a regressive manner. They've rolled back spending per child this year. We're spending maybe $7,100 per student, without an adjustment for inflation. Maybe if we built higher-education institutions based on our third grade population versus prisons, where we're spending 18 to $19,000 per prisoner, then our per pupil spending would increase.

What I'm asking of the Constitutional Review Committee is that we have a provision that forbids regression in the Department of Education, with an increase in the Department of Corrections. Our laws must reflect our values. The education of our children are not always reflected in our budget but should be stated strongly in our constitution.

Thank you all.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: Thank you.

And our last speaker is Thomas Cabrera.
CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Actually, he's already spoke.

COMMISSIONER BONDI: He spoke. Okay. We are finished for the evening. Thank you, everyone, for coming.

CHAIRMAN BERUFF: Thank you for this evening.

(Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded at 9:49 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA    )
COUNTY OF PINELAS   )

I, Melinda McKenna, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the proceeding; and that the foregoing pages are a true and complete record of my stenographic notes taken during said proceeding.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorneys or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 2nd day of June, 2017.

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Melinda McKenna