

HERNANDO TIMES

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Charges filed in ranger's killing

Jurisdiction issues delay charges despite a confession from three months ago.

BY JACK EVANS
Times Staff Writer

A Tampa Bay-area man was charged with murder Friday in southeast Georgia, three months after he turned himself in to authorities and confessed to killing his girlfriend, a park ranger who lived in Hernando County.

Jeffrey Michael Morrison, 42, also is charged with concealing the death of another, according to jail booking records in Camden County, Georgia. On June 22, in that county just north of Jacksonville, detectives found the body of 43-year-old Mitzi Babb floating in a waterway.

Babb's daughter, Constance Harris, said she'd been in touch with authorities as they prepared to transfer Morrison from central Georgia's Peach County, where he was being held on other charges, to Camden County. She said when she spoke with a detective Friday night, she was told authorities interrogated Morrison, but he gave them little information.

Although the case is moving forward, she said Monday, she's trying to come to terms with the feeling that she'll never know exactly what happened in her mother's last days.

"I'm trying to understand that I'm never going to understand," she said. "I don't think I'm ever going to hear truth come from his lips."

The week after Babb's body was found, officials said Morrison would face charges in her death, but they had to determine which agency had jurisdiction. Camden was one of at least four counties involved in the events surrounding Babb's death.

The Camden County Sheriff's Office and the office of the district attorney for the region did not respond Monday to requests for comment.

Babb, who lived and worked at the Withlacoochee State Forest's Croom Motorcycle Area, went missing in Hernando County on June 19. The next day, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office announced it was looking for her.

On June 21, the same day Hernando deputies said they were looking for Morrison, authorities in Peach County issued a warrant for his arrest after police said he broke into his sister-in-law's house there, stole two guns and set a fire in the living room. That evening, Morrison pulled into a state agricultural inspection station. See RANGER, 16

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Know Your Candidates

Before you vote, take note



RON BORRESEN | Times

Tampa Bay has nearly 2 million registered voters who have much to consider this election. Voting has already begun by mail. Starting in 10 days, early voting begins for some. By the time "Election Day" arrives Nov. 6, probably more than half of the electorate will have already voted.

To help make sense of the general election, today's *Hernando Times* includes information about all the races and issues on this year's ballot. **Pages 10-15**

If you want to read more, visit the *Tampa Bay Times'* online searchable database at <http://bit.ly/TBTvote18>.

Vote by mail

Vote-by-mail ballots have already been sent out for those who have requested them. To request a mail ballot contact your Elections Supervisor at the top of this webpage: bit.ly/hermandomailvote. Phone: 352-754-4125.

Early Voting

Wednesday, Oct. 24 to Saturday Nov. 3, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Constitutional amendments

Voters to consider 12 revisions

BY ELIZABETH KOH
Miami Herald

TALLAHASSEE — The 12 constitutional amendments on this year's ballot are the most since 1998, when the state's Constitution Revision Commission — which meets once every 20 years — put nine of 13 amendments on the ballot. The Constitution Revision Commission convened this year and placed eight amendments on the ballot.

In some cases, measures have been grouped together, meaning voters will

have to choose to approve or reject disparate proposals that have been linked in one amendment.

To be approved, any constitutional amendment requires 60 percent of the vote. Here's what this year's amendments do:

AMENDMENT 1: Increased Homestead Property Tax Exemption would raise the portion of a home's value that can be exempted from non-school property taxes. The Legislature voted to refer the exemption to the ballot in 2017, and

the proposed changes would apply to the assessed value of a homestead property between \$100,000 and \$125,000, raising the maximum exemption to \$75,000.

The shift could save homeowners a couple hundred dollars, but a legislative staff analysis estimated local governments — which rely on property taxes for revenue — would lose about \$645 million in the first year if the exemption, effective Jan. 1, is approved. See CHANGES, 17

Trap, neuter, release passes

Ordinance aims to reduce the number of feral cats.

BY JUSTIN TROMBLAY
Times Staff Writer

BROOKSVILLE — Hernando County residents now can trap feral cats, and have them spayed, neutered, vaccinated and returned by the county, thanks to an ordinance passed Tuesday by County Commissioners.

The measure, approved on a 4-1 vote, aims to tamp down the large feral cat population in Hernando. It also means the county will euthanize fewer animals.

"The only option is to put them down or do this," commission Chairman Steve Champion said during the meeting discussion. "This is a good medium."

Here's how it works: Residents buy a live-animal trap or rent one from the county. (Officials said they may waive rental fees for people who partner with local animal groups.) Then they set up the trap and wait for a cat.

Next, people bring the cat to Hernando County Animal Services workers, who check the feline's health and judge its temperament and behavior, in case someone wants to adopt it. The county still See FERAL, 17

Romano appeal begins

Board to review its decision to fire the superintendent.

BY JACK EVANS
Times Staff Writer

Ousted Hernando County schools superintendent Lori Romano returned to the school district office on Oct. 3, this time for an appeal on her firing in June. Her attorney demanded the school board rescind the firing, while the board's outside attorney argued the board had more than enough cause to fire Romano.

In a wrinkle that could happen only with the firing of a superintendent, the school board played dual roles. Its members voted, 3-2, to fire Romano on June 12. Now, they'll judge whether they had cause to do so.

Board attorney Dennis Alfonso called it "a unique circumstance." Tammie Rattray, the lawyer representing the board for the Romano hearing, deemed it "a little bit of an unusual process." See ROMANO, 16



Lori Romano



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Know your candidates

U.S. Senate

It is one of the most expensive races in the country and the outcome could determine which party controls the U.S. Senate. Sen. Bill Nelson, a moderate Democrat, faces the toughest political challenge of his career against two-term Republican Gov. Rick Scott.

By Steve Contorno, National Political Correspondent

	Bill Nelson	Rick Scott
Party	Democrat	Republican
Profession	U.S. Senator	Florida Governor
About the candidate	 Bill Nelson has served three terms in the U.S. Senate. A centrist Democrat, he was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1972 and later served in Congress for 12 years before an unsuccessful run for governor.	 Rick Scott has served two terms as Florida's governor, a job he first won in 2010 on the backs of a tea party wave. Scott previously served as CEO of Hospital Corporation of America and is independently wealthy.
Education	J.D., University of Virginia; Yale University	J.D., Southern Methodist University; University of Missouri, Kansas City
Do you support any measures that address gun violence?	I have cosponsored legislation to ban assault weapons and expand universal background checks to include the transfer of any firearm.	Three weeks after the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, (I) signed significant reforms to make Florida schools safer while keeping firearms out of the hands of mentally ill and dangerous individuals.
Explain your position on the tariffs President Trump has imposed on Canada, Europe and Mexico.	These tariffs imposed by the Trump administration have sparked a trade war with some of our closest allies. It's causing the price of goods to go up and, if it's not resolved soon, some American companies are going to be forced to start laying people off. I have called on the Trump administration to take the steps necessary to end this trade war immediately.	I have heard directly from Florida companies who are worried that the administration's proposal regarding tariffs is not fair and consistent between countries and this is an issue I will continue discussing with the Administration to ensure Florida companies are treated fairly. I support free and open trade with the world because it is good for Florida and our economy.
Should oil drilling off the Florida coast be banned or allowed?	(Former) U.S. Sen. Mel Martinez and I wrote the 2006 law that currently bans oil drilling as far out as 235 miles off of Florida's Gulf Coast until 2022. I have filed new legislation to make that ban permanent.	I have opposed offshore drilling. As soon as (Interior) Secretary (Ryan) Zinke was confirmed, I met with him, I talked to him about that we didn't want it off our coast, and then when they came out with their plan right around Christmas, I immediately called and asked if we could meet, and he was gracious enough to come down, and the right thing happened. There's not going to be offshore drilling.
Do you support Trump's approach to immigration?	We need a comprehensive immigration reform plan and we need to end this administration's policy of ripping families apart at the border with no plan to reunify.	The chaos at our border will continue until we secure the border. Washington's failure to secure our border has been a bipartisan failure for many decades. ... I've long been an outspoken opponent of illegal immigration and I remain so. But I refuse to watch these children be punished for the actions of their parents.
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: \$1,459,041 - \$6,498,000 Liabilities: \$850,000 - \$1,750,000 Income: \$57,074	Assets: Reported net worth of \$232.6 million; \$215 million, is in a qualified blind trust. Liabilities: None listed
Personal	Home: Orlando Marital status: Married to Grace Nelson Children: Two adult children	Home: Naples Marital status: Married to Ann Scott Children: Two adult children
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$18.7 million Expenditures: \$6.3 million	Contributions: \$31 million Expenditures: \$28 million
On the web	Website: www.nelsonforsenate.com Twitter: @NelsonforSenate	Website: rickscottforflorida.com Twitter: @ScottforFlorida

ABOUT THE JOB: A U.S. senator holds a statewide office and serves a six-year term. The salary is \$174,000.


Governor

Andrew Gillum and Ron DeSantis are running to be Florida's chief executive. If Gillum wins, he would be the first Democrat to be elected to the governor's mansion since Lawton Chiles in 1994. If DeSantis wins, he would be the fourth straight Republican to occupy the post, which is currently held by Rick Scott. This is the first run at a statewide office for both Gillum and DeSantis. Editor's note: Because the DeSantis campaign declined to answer the Times' candidate questionnaire, some of the candidate answers below were pulled from public statements to ensure issue parity.

By Kirby Wilson and Emily L. Mahoney, Times Staff Writers

	Ron DeSantis	Andrew Gillum
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Former U.S. representative	Mayor of Tallahassee
About the candidate	 Desantis, 40, was a U.S. congressman representing northeast Florida until he resigned the post in 2018 to run for governor. The conservative Republican and Freedom Caucus member was endorsed by U.S. President Donald Trump. DeSantis graduated from Yale University and Harvard University before serving as a prosecutor with the U.S. Navy.	 Gillum, 39, has been the mayor of Tallahassee since 2014. Before that, the liberal Democrat, a graduate of FAMU, served on the Tallahassee city commission for over a decade after getting elected in 2003 at the age of 23, the youngest to get elected to the commission in city history. His longshot bid for governor was given a boost when he was endorsed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, becoming an instant favorite with progressives.
Education	B.A. from Yale University, J.D. from Harvard Law School	Florida A&M University, B.A., Political Science
What is your position on Medicaid expansion in Florida?	Currently, Medicaid in Florida covers the most vulnerable in our society, serving as a much-needed safety net. Expanding Medicaid, however, would extend to able-bodied adults. That's not what Medicaid was designed for, that's not what taxpayers pay for, and that's not how health care or government should work. We've got to increase access and drive down costs on health care. The best way we can do that is to make sure we are creating an environment where everyone has a great education that leads to a job where they are covered or they have the ability to buy their own insurance in the market.	I believe that access to quality, affordable health care is a fundamental right, not a privilege. But Rick Scott, Donald Trump, and Republican lawmakers have threatened that access for more than 1 million Floridians with ACA coverage — and blocked it for 1 million more who need Medicaid expansion. While I believe that Medicare For All should be our goal as a nation, I'm also the only candidate to propose a comprehensive set of health care policies that will protect Floridians' care. As Governor, we'll work to pass the nation's strongest protections for those with pre-existing conditions, ensure that women aren't charged more for coverage than men, and protect access to no-cost contraception for women. No Floridian should face the inhumane choice between bankruptcy and health care.
How would you solve the toxic green algae crisis surrounding Lake Okeechobee?	The cornerstone of a comprehensive solution to Lake Okeechobee is restoring the Everglades, with the centerpiece being the completion of a southern reservoir to store water. Beginning day one, I will work with the Trump administration and Congress to ensure the federal government honors its 20-year old funding promise to CERP (Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan) by appropriating its \$200 million in matching federal dollars to build the Southern Reservoir and complete the entire suite of projects. The 120-billion-gallon reservoir will be built primarily on state land and will serve as a dynamic storage system discharging clean water into Everglades National Park and then into the Florida Bay	Our environment belongs to all of us and it's time we put scientists back in charge — not the corporate polluters. I'm ready to fight and protect our precious environment on day one by re-establishing several programs that should never have been cut, like the Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force to combat the effects of red tide and toxic algae. I would also put some environmental protection back into the Department of Environmental Protection and finally hold corporate polluters accountable for the pollution and runoff they dump into our groundwater.
How would you approach funding of public schools?	To maximize Florida taxpayers' investment in our students, I will implement the 80% Classroom Spending Plan, which ensures that 80% of public K-12 education spending goes directly into the classroom. This will cut bureaucratic waste and administrative inefficiency and ensure that money is being spent where it matters most. To determine where wasteful spending occurs, I will direct the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education to oversee a complete operational and financial audit of the Florida Department of Education to identify funding that can be put back into the classroom.	As a product of Florida's public schools, I know how a quality public education can interrupt intergenerational poverty. That's why as Governor, I'm committed to investing \$1 billion into our public schools — and I'm the only candidate with a plan to pay for it. As Governor, I'll adjust our state's corporate income tax rate and recoup \$1 billion from Donald Trump's tax giveaway. I'll use those funds to pay new teachers a \$50,000 starting salary, raise pay for veteran school teachers and staff to the national average, invest in SHOP 2.0 and vocational training, and rebuild our crumbling public schools.
What's a specific example of an economic goal you would have for your	Reduce the Corporate Income Tax. I know that for business to flourish and job growth to continue, we must be as competitive as possible. As Governor, I will work to lower this business tax to encourage businesses to move to Florida and help Florida-based businesses continue to grow. Lowering this tax will help spur the creation of more high wage jobs.	Our state's devastating income inequality forces families to live paycheck to paycheck, because our economy isn't built for everyone to succeed. As Mayor, I've presided over Florida's fastest-growing local economy, President Obama named Tallahassee a TechHire city for our commitment to training workers, and we eliminated our local business tax, saving businesses \$2 million annually. I believe the way forward for Florida's economy starts with ensuring workers get the vocational and technical training they need for good jobs, attracting those good jobs by investing in our state's schools and infrastructure, and embracing technology — from ridesharing and home-sharing to renewable energy production — that will remake Florida into an innovation economy that works for all.
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: \$819,545 Liabilities: \$527,350 Income: \$201,500	Assets: \$878,230 Liabilities: \$535,530 Income: \$176,926
Personal	Home: Palm Coast Marital status: Married Children: 2	Home: Tallahassee Marital status: Married Children: 3
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$30,446,348 Expenditures: \$25,128,988	Contributions: \$23,514,949.29 Expenditures: \$15,021,150.43
On the web	Website: www.rondesantis.com Twitter: @RonDeSantisFL	Website: www.andrewgillum.com Twitter: @AndrewGillum

ABOUT THE JOB: Florida's governor is the state's highest ranking executive. He or she oversees the state's regulatory agencies under the executive branch and has the power to sign or veto laws passed by the Legislature. He or she also fills open judicial vacancies by appointing jurists across the state.



HCA and the PHM Group, Inc. are requesting proposals from qualified **Subcontractors** and **Suppliers** for the Blake Medical Center expansion project. Bradenton, Florida and surrounding area businesses are invited to attend a preconstruction Meet & Greet to learn more about opportunities associated with this upcoming project.

The project consists of a 3,000 sf addition to the Emergency Department, over 6,000 sf of major renovation, and approximately 9,000 sf of minor renovations. The project will be completed in 5 phases with a duration of approximately 20 months.

Bid packages associated with the project include the following:

- Selective Interior and Site Demolition • Paving • Site Utilities • Landscaping • Cast-in-Place Concrete
- Structural Steel • Casework (MRI Only) • Spray Fireproofing • Firestopping • Glass & Glazing Systems
- Dampproofing/Waterproofing • E.I.F.S. • Roofing • Doors/Frames/Hardware Installer
- Doors/Frames/Hardware Supplier • Metal Framing/Gypsum Drywall • Acoustical Ceilings
- Resilient/Hard Tile Flooring • Painting & Wall Covering • Miscellaneous Specialties • Interior Signage
- Fire Sprinklers • Plumbing/HVAC • Test & Balance • Electrical • Structured Cabling

What: Preconstruction Meet & Greet

When: Wednesday, October 17, 2018 @ 10:00 am

Where: Blake Medical Center
MAB 1000 (Medical Arts Building)
2020 59th Street West
Bradenton, FL 34209

The PHM Group, Inc. and HCA/Blake Medical Center are strongly committed to the development and implementation of initiatives that promote the inclusion of all local construction-related businesses, with an emphasis on minority- and women-owned enterprise firms. Please join us at the Preconstruction Meet & Greet to explore more opportunities.

For information regarding plans, bid packages or other documents for this project, please contact:
Robert Krawczyk, Senior Project Manager at (941) 750-9333
or via email at rkrawczyk@phmgroupinc.com

To RSVP for the upcoming Meet & Greet, please contact:
Rhea Kinnard, Diversity Business Consultant at (615) 941-8396
or via email at kinn0167@aol.com

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Know your candidates

Attorney General

The race for attorney general matches state Rep. Sean Shaw, D-Tampa, and former judge Ashley Moody, a Tampa Republican. Moody is a former circuit judge, federal prosecutor and civil lawyer. Current Attorney General Pam Bondi is term-limited.

By William March, Times Correspondent

	Ashley Moody	Sean Shaw
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Lawyer, former judge and federal prosecutor	Lawyer
About the candidate	 <p>Ashley Moody, 43, a Plant City native now living in Tampa, is a former federal prosecutor and civil lawyer who was elected to a Hillsborough circuit judgeship in 2006 and re-elected in 2012. She left the office to run for attorney general, and defeated state Rep. Frank White, R-Pensacola, in a primary. She has been active in civic and legal charitable causes and is a former president of the University of Florida Blue Key honorary society. She contends that her experience in law enforcement makes her best qualified for the office.</p>	 <p>Sean Shaw, 40, of Tampa, grew up in Tallahassee and works with a law firm that represents policyholders in insurance disputes. He previously was appointed by former Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink as state insurance consumer advocate. He was elected to the state House in 2016 and defeated Ryan Torrens of Tampa in the attorney general primary. He promises that as attorney general he will act against corrupt business practices and predatory corporations, will investigate President Donald Trump's business practices in Florida, and withdraw the state from in a lawsuit challenging the Affordable Care Act.</p>
Education	Plant City High School; bachelors and masters degrees in accounting and law degree, University of Florida; Masters in international law, Stetson University	Leon High School; BA, Princeton University, 2000, JD, University of Florida 2003
Do you support Florida's lawsuit against the	"Yes. As a judge and prosecutor, I saw first-hand those that sought to profit from the opioid epidemic and the lives destroyed as a result. Those responsible must be held accountable. ... a doctor wrongfully prescribing drugs or some of the largest companies in the world engaged in the conduct described in the complaint. However, the lawsuit, by itself, is not an end to this crisis. ... We will move forward with a targeted, data-backed approach, focusing on law enforcement, addiction, and education."	"It is highly disappointing that it took (Bondi) until the end of her term to file this lawsuit. The role of the pharmaceutical companies in prolonging and exacerbating this crisis has been well known for years. As ground zero for pill mills, Florida should have been leading on this issue. ... I worry that Floridians will not see the damages they deserve because we were not out in front. I will vigorously pursue this case."
What are your thoughts on the gun legislation that was passed this year (SB 7026) by Florida lawmakers?	"While many aspects of SB 7026 are commendable and will make a difference in preventing another Parkland tragedy. ... I do not support making it illegal for competent law-abiding adults to purchase firearms. ... Those without parents are on their own at 18. The law would leave them defenseless. We will work ... to deal with the mentally ill who have firearms and provide the necessary resources to protect schools. ... We must improve our justice system to effectively address mental illness in society."	"I agree with the three-day waiting period (but) voted against this legislation because arming teachers was a poison pill I could not swallow. ... My approach: challenging the constitutionality of the gun lobby's preemption of local governments' ability to pass firearms safety laws ... enforcing the firearms laws already in statute and advocating for a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines; closing loopholes that allow violent individuals to purchase guns; challenging (laws that give) gun manufacturers immunity in court for their role."
Please explain what your top priority would be as attorney general and how you would address it.	"As a conservative, I will vigorously enforce the law and defend the Constitution. ... Florida's next Attorney General must be a strong supporter of the men and women within law enforcement. I will be a partner that pushes for training and resources that will keep them safe as they protect us. The strength of our judicial system stems from a legal process that is fair and perceived as fair. I will lead on ... how we can foster a trust between law enforcement and all the communities they serve."	"My top priority is cutting down on the senseless gun violence plaguing our state by pushing for common sense gun safety reforms and enacting the principles I laid out above as Attorney General. When a child is shot every seventeen hours in your state, it is clear there is an epidemic. We need to ban assault weapons and high capacity magazines, institute universal background checks, and work with our local communities to find solutions to keep our citizens safer."
Please explain how campaign contributions don't (or do) influence how Florida's top law enforcement official subsequently addresses issues involving donors to their campaign.	"As a conservative, I will vigorously enforce the law and defend the Constitution. ... Florida's next Attorney General must be a strong supporter of the men and women within law enforcement. I will be a partner that pushes for training and resources that will keep them safe as they protect us. The strength of our judicial system stems from a legal process that is fair and perceived as fair. I will lead on ... how we can foster a trust between law enforcement and all the communities they serve."	"The simple answer is they shouldn't. Unfortunately, we do not live in a world in which we don't have to raise money to get our message out. However, those contributions should never influence how you prosecute or pursue a case. ... Under our current Attorney General, it is clear that she was motivated in some cases by the donations she was receiving."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: \$3,488,267 Liabilities: \$469,243 Income: \$183,969	Assets: \$180,702 Liabilities: \$170,000 Income: \$159,697
Personal	Moody comes from a family that has been in Plant City for five generations. She is married to a Drug Enforcement Administration agent, Justin Duralia, and they have two sons.	Shaw is single. He's the son of the late Leander Shaw, Florida's first black Supreme Court chief justice.
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$2,913,400 Expenditures: \$2,837,022	Contributions: \$1,072,906 Expenditures: \$580,539
On the web	Website: electashleymoody.com Twitter: @VoteAshleyMoody	Website: seanshaw.com Twitter: @SShawFL

ABOUT THE JOB: The winner will serve a four-year term as attorney general, the state's lawyer and chief law enforcement officer. The attorney general is also one of four members of the state Cabinet, along with the governor, chief financial officer and agriculture commissioner. The salary is \$128,972.

Chief Financial Officer

Jimmy Patronis seeks to win the job he was appointed to by Gov. Rick Scott after Jeff Atwater left to become CFO at Florida Atlantic University in 2017. To do, he'll have to beat a well-financed Democrat in Jeremy Ring, who served eight years in the Florida Senate as a fiscal conservative. The race has become a particularly nasty one, with both accusing the other of being financed by criminals.

By Samantha Gross, Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

	Jimmy Patronis	Jeremy Ring
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Chief Financial Officer	Investor
About the candidate	 <p>It's been a while, but Jimmy Patronis, 46, has thrust himself into campaign heat once again. After three years of working in plum positions Gov. Rick Scott appointed him to, he's fighting to hold onto his current cabinet-level job as the state's chief financial officer. The incumbent candidate for CFO was born to the well-known Panama City family behind Captain Anderson's restaurant and has remained involved with the restaurant — and politics — for most of his adult life. er has to remain blank. interned in the Senate while attending Florida State University and was appointed to the Florida Elections Commission upon graduating. In 1998, he was re-appointed by then-Gov. Jeb Bush. In the years that followed, Patronis represented Northwest Florida in the statehouse.</p>	 <p>Ring, 48, was born in Canton, Mass. — an affluent suburb southwest of Boston — to a garment salesman father and homemaker mother. In 1994, Ring started work at a boutique ad agency. Ring befriended an ad scheduler (Yahoo! co-founder, Jerry Yang) and was hired soon after. While an employee of Yahoo, Ring enjoyed a life in the circle of tech socialites, taking work trips to places like Monterey, Calif., and throwing lavish hotel parties that prompted "not-so-subtle requests" for the guests to leave. In 2001, Ring left Yahoo! for an opportunity in Florida. He won a seat in the Florida Senate in 2006, where he served for eight years. While in the Senate, he was chair of the Oversight Committee. He often had his hands on pension reform bills, and said if the CFO had a hand in a bill, it was run through his committee.</p>
Education	Associate's degree in restaurant management from Gulf Coast Community College and his bachelor's degree in political science from Florida State University..	Bachelor's degree in advertising from Syracuse University.
Insurance consumer service is managed by the CFO. How would you rate Florida's insurance market and what are ways you would work to improve it?	I believe we must root out insurance fraud and waste. Insurance fraud is not a victimless crime and is the main cause that drives up insurance rates. I am proud of the work that's been done since I've taken office. So far, we've arrested 885 people for insurance fraud since I took office, resulting in 767 successful prosecutions. We have to look for new ways to stay ahead of the criminals that commit insurance fraud. After Hurricane Irma, I created the Disaster Fraud Action Strike Team to put boots on the ground to help attack insurance fraud head on. We go after fraud, but we also alert Floridians of how to spot and prevent fraud.	Florida's insurance market is a "house of cards". Rates are artificially low, which results in potential destabilized market and massive risk to the residents of the state. The legislature suppresses insurance rates for political expediency without regard to the back-end risk post a catastrophic event. I'd shift the focus from rates first to risk first. I believe that allowing the Florida Catastrophic Fund to sell catastrophic financial securities (Cat Bonds, Insurance Linked Securities) in an open market will move risk away from Floridians. Citizens Insurance needs significant reform. While weight needs to be given to families who have lived in smaller dwellings for lengthy periods of time, new expensive homebuilding should have to pay a more fair rate so others outside of flood zones or away from the coast are not bearing all the risk. Other insurers must be allowed an incentive to write policies
More than two-thirds of Florida's budget is spent on contracts with vendors. What is the role of Florida's CFO to properly audit these contracts — such as SunPass and prisons — to make sure vendors are held accountable?	As CFO, I'm the state's business manager and I know that strong asset management at a state level is critical. My office performs state contract reviews, audits payments over \$35,000, and audits vendor contracts that are more than \$750,000. We're charged with being the watchdogs over the state's finances and ensuring there are checks and balances in place. I am proud of the incredible team we have in the Division of Accounting and Auditing. This capable and talented staff look at elements that make a good contract and review agreements that provide goods and services to the state. My office protects taxpayers by making sure that we are getting the highest impact for Floridians' tax dollars. We also are quick to look at contracts that are executed. For instance, audits for all contracts over \$750,000 are completed within 30 days after being signed and placed into the Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System.	Currently the CFO is somewhat handcuffed because they do not have the ability to review contracts with vendors prior to execution. I intend to work with the legislature to change this, thus allowing for pre-auditing of agreements. It is impossible without massive appropriations and hiring dozens if not hundreds of auditors for the Department of Financial Affairs to audit every agreement in the state as the system is set up currently. The FLAIR system has no auditing capabilities. The new PALM system must include auditing functionality, perhaps even using blockchain technology which creates a technological solution allowing the state to more thoroughly audit all of its agreements. Clearly payment should be withheld until the agreements have provided the services contracted for.
What are pressing issues facing the state that you could address with being one of four votes in Florida's Cabinet as CFO?	The role of Florida's Chief Financial Officer is incredibly important. On the Cabinet, we oversee the Office of Insurance Regulation and the Office of Financial Regulation, working to ensure they are looking out for Florida consumers. My role also includes making sure Citizens Property Insurance is operating at their most efficient and with the highest ethical standards. We are constantly looking for new ways to guarantee insurance rates are low. I believe Floridians deserve to keep more of their hard-earned money. One of the most important roles I have as a member of our Cabinet is to look after the fiscal health of the state, including our pension. We must ensure our pension plan is as strong as possible for both current and future retirees. After a lifetime of service, workers deserve to have peace of mind regarding their retirement. Approximately \$2 out of every \$3 paid to a retiree today comes from investment gains, not from taxpayers. As a result, we are one of the lowest "all-in" cost providers among our peers. I'm proud that last year Florida's pension fund showed a positive gain for the ninth straight year in a row.	Reforming the state Clemency program, allowing for non-violent ex-offenders to receive their rights back through a very seamless process. Purchasing land (through existing agreements such as the contract negotiated in the Crist administration with US Sugar or voting on land leases south of the Lake Okeechobee) that would provide the state much needed land to build a reservoir to hold and treat water. Having a much more serious role than current administration with regards to being a Trustee to the State Board of Administration (Florida Retirement System). The legislature is constantly trying to attack the Retirement system and its beneficiaries with entirely unfounded claims of the weakness of the system, when in fact by all financial rating accounts is one of the strongest retirement systems in America..
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: \$6.8 million (real estate, investments, partnerships) Liabilities: \$398,882 (mortgage, loan) Income: \$504,954 (CFO salary, restaurant, investments)	Assets: \$5.1 million (investments) Liabilities: \$2.2 million (mortgage, line of credit, auto) Income: \$329,470 (investments, consulting)
Personal	Patronis lives in Panama City with his wife, Katie, and sons Theo and Johnny.	Divorced; engaged to Rachel Friedland; four children.
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$2.1 million Expenditures: \$793,548	Contributions: \$413,151 Expenditures: \$387,157
On the web	Website: joinjimmy.com Twitter: @JimmyPatronis	Website: jeremyring.com Twitter: @JeremyRingFL

ABOUT THE JOB: The CFO, considered the business manager for the state, oversees a variety of offices, mainly handling the state's finances, retirement fund and both the state's financial regulation and insurance commissioners. The cabinet officers, including the CFO, work with the governor on matters such as the purchase of land, clemency and law enforcement. The CFO makes about \$128,972 annually.

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Know your candidates

School Board | District 3

This school board race is a runoff after none of the three primary candidates took a majority of the vote in August. Diane Rowden, who served three terms as county commissioner, took the highest percentage of the vote in that election — 40.54 percent. Jimmy Lodato, who has thrice run unsuccessfully for county commission, trailed her with 39.35 percent.

By Jack Evans, Times Staff Writer



	Jimmy Lodato	Diane Rowden
Profession	Retired from career in marketing and sales	Retired flight attendant
About the candidate	 <p>Jimmy Lodato is a lifelong Floridian who has lived in Hernando for 19 years. He ran three unsuccessful campaigns for a seat on the County Commission, but remains a voice in local politics. In 2015, Lodato, 76, led the successful effort to revive the county's half-cent sales tax to fund school capital improvements. His campaign slogan is "I listen – I care."</p>	 <p>Diane Rowden is a former three-term Hernando County commissioner and served a partial term as a School Board member in 1990. Throughout her 35 years in the county, Rowden, 68, has participated in various organizations and community groups. Currently, she said, her efforts are focused on mental health services through the National Alliance on Mental Illness.</p>
Education	Diploma, Jefferson High School	Diploma, St. Petersburg High School; some credits at St. Petersburg College
What makes you the most qualified candidate?	"For the past five years, I have worked with the school district to help solve its monetary problems. I championed a successful effort to restore the half-cent sales tax, which provides millions of dollars in funding to pay for repairs and capital improvements at schools. I helped secure raises for teachers and staff, and helped negotiate with the County Commission to share the cost of Hernando's school resource officers after the Parkland tragedy. I am a board member of the Hernando County Education Foundation and attend most School Board meetings and school functions."	"1. Leadership experience in government "2. Community involvement (founding member of People Helping People, founding organizer of Crescent Clinic, instrumental in establishing financial support and organizational stability of NAMI Hernando) "3. My communication skills and years of experience have made it possible to work closely with state and federal lawmakers, where funding for our schools will be critical "4. My reputation is one of compassion and openness, and I will reach out to constituents throughout the county."
What should the district's top three budget priorities be?	"1. Expand student services (vocational programs, special needs, mental health, busing) "2. Elevate teacher salaries "3. Implement security and safety measures in schools"	"1. Security "2. Classrooms "3. Upgraded technology"
Are the county's schools headed in the right direction or wrong direction? Why?	"Yes and no. The district is in better financial condition than it has been for years. Schools are being repaired on a scheduled basis, thanks to the half-cent funding. Student scores and school ratings have improved. We have talented teachers, but they are not being rewarded accordingly. Students are being taught to test and not retain information. We need to find a balance between mandates and properly educating. We need to expand vocational programs and address issues facing students with special needs. Bullying is also a problem."	"Yes. The school district has made great strides over the years by improving individual school grades, but the goal is to have all schools with an A rating. The district must always be focused on improving working conditions and morale of school employees."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Household goods, motor home, car, retirement, savings and investments Liabilities: Bank loan Income: Retirement, Social Security and investments	Assets: Home, cars, household goods Liabilities: Car loan, mortgage Income: Retirement, Social Security
Personal	Home: Weeki Wachee Marital status: Married Children: Four grown children, three grandchildren	Home: Weeki Wachee Marital status: Married Children: Jay, 43, and Dayna, 40
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$7,705 Expenditures: \$5,681	Contributions: \$9,500 Expenditures: \$6,695
On the web	Website: jimmylodato.com	NA

ABOUT THE JOB: School Board races are nonpartisan. Members set policy and approve budgets for the school district. They must live in the community where their seat is based, but are elected countywide. They serve four-year terms and are paid \$36,276 per year. Schools in District 3 include Pine Grove Elementary, Winding Waters K-8, West Hernando Middle, Parrott Middle, Endeavor Academy, Central High and Weeki Wachee High.

Clerk of Circuit Court

Douglas Chorvat, an 18-year employee for the Clerk of the Circuit Court, bested an opponent in the Republican primary to take on a no-party candidate, Michael Lamberti, in the November General Election. The winner will replace Don Barbee who won a circuit judge seat in the August primary.

By Barbara Behrendt, Times Staff Writer

	Douglas Chorvat, 41	Michael Lamberti, 58
Party	Republican	NPA
Profession	Director of strategy and communication, and senior application support administrator for Clerk of the Circuit Court	Public defender for the 5th Judicial Circuit
About the candidate	 <p>A Brooksville native, Chorvat, 41, is a lifelong resident of Hernando County. He has worked in a variety of information technology jobs for Hernando County, including information technology director, and the clerk since 2000. He is a member of the Brooksville Ridge Kiwanis Club and a 2008 graduate of Leadership Hernando.</p>	 <p>A New York City native, Lamberti, 58, came to Florida 20 years ago and settled in Hernando County 10 years ago. He has been a private attorney, an assistant state attorney and a child welfare attorney.</p>
Education	A 1995 graduate of Hernando High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in management information systems from the University of South Florida, and government chief information officer and public manager certifications from Florida State University.	He received a bachelor's degree in economics from Stony Brook University and graduate credits toward human resources administration. He earned his law degree from Touro Law School.
Why are you the best candidate in this race?	Chorvat states he has been a problem-solver for the county and the clerk throughout his career, is dedicated to public service and has extensive experience in all aspects of the clerk's job.	Lamberti said he wants to provide excellent and accountable public service to the citizens and that his background includes employee supervision, managing government budgets, identification of fraud and waste, and the legal expertise to apply the law to the clerk's duties.

State Senate | District 10

This race pits incumbent Republican businessman Wilton Simpson, who never has faced a challenger in the heavily conservative district spanning Pasco, Hernando and Citrus counties, against Democrat Michael Cottrell, a teacher who never has run for office. Simpson, the Senate's majority leader, is in line to become Senate president in 2020. Cottrell filed his candidacy on the last day of qualifying, saying no one should have a free pass into public office.

By Jeffrey S. Solochek, Times Staff Writer

	Michael Cottrell	Wilton Simpson
Party	Democrat	Republican
Profession	Teacher	Business owner
About the candidate	 <p>Michael Cottrell, 51, is a teacher who has worked in Hernando County schools as well as Department of Defense schools. He was working in Japan until April, when he returned to Hernando County for cancer treatment. His wife, Dana, is running as a Democrat against U.S. Rep. Daniel Webster.</p>	 <p>Wilton Simpson, 52 was first elected to the Florida Senate in 2012. One of the Senate's wealthiest members, he owns a large egg farm and an environmental cleanup firm, among other ventures. He has served on the Pasco-Hernando State College board of trustees, led the Pasco County Fair Association and chaired the Pasco Economic Development Council.</p>
Education	Bachelor's degree in education, University of South Florida	Associate's degree, Pasco-Hernando Community College
What should, if anything, state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?	"The government and its employees should be held to the same, if not higher standard, that all other organizations are held to. If, once investigated, a teacher, police officer, business employee, etc. ... were found to have sexually harassed someone in any way, they would be fired immediately; our elected officials deserve NO SPECIAL treatment!!!"	Simpson said he will work with Senate leadership to ensure it has new rules implementing the highest standards against sexual misconduct. "I have a zero policy on that stuff. There is zero room for harassment."
Please describe your top three legislative priorities.	"Affordable Health Care for all citizens, Education, Our Environment, including investing in renewable energies."	Improving the state's foster care and adoption process, focusing on water policy and springs restoration, improving the state's education system with choice and competition.
What gun legislation is needed in Florida?	Cottrell said he supports gun ownership, but called for "responsible" conversation about guns and the Second Amendment. "Every poll I can find shows that roughly 90 percent of Americans support tougher background checks, so as a public servant/representative, with these numbers it should be irrelevant as to what I want; the people want tougher background checks, and I do support that."	Simpson said he supports making it easier to get a concealed-carry permit. "Having more concealed carry in the state of Florida will make us safer." He backed the new program requiring armed guards in schools, and said the state has taken positive steps to remove weapons from people with mental health problems. "We have to do more in this area."
Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?	"Yes, schools should receive more funding, however, we should also look at ways to more effectively utilize the monies that the schools already get."	Simpson stressed that the state's funding for education has increased, with improved academic outcomes as a result. If accounting for the cost of living across the nation, he said, Florida's education funding is "in very good shape." "It is very important the Legislature be sure we are being very frugal with tax dollars," he added. Simpson called for a more stable funding source for education construction projects.
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Home, savings Liabilities: Car loan, equity line of credit Income: Teacher salary Net worth: \$519,290	Assets: Businesses, savings, property Liabilities: Mortgage, business loans Income: Business income, salaries, investment income Net worth: \$25.3 million
Personal	Home: Spring Hill Marital status: Married Children: One son	Home: Tribby Marital status: Married Children: One son, one daughter
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$2,290 Expenditures: \$2,019	Contributions: \$459,725 Expenditures: \$144,570
On the web	NA	Twitter: @WiltonSimpson

ABOUT THE JOB: Each of Florida's 40 senators is responsible for helping to pass legislation for the state, including annual appropriations. Senators are paid \$29,697 annually.

	Douglas Chorvat	Michael Lamberti
How would you make the clerk's office more user friendly?	An advocate of open government, Chorvat said that he would work with all parties involved to look at issues with a "big picture" perspective to resolve any issues that might arise.	He would adopt new technology, expand on-line and call-center services, implement 24/7 document filing for attorneys, and train staff to handle their duties professionally, legally, accurately and with respect to customers
How would you streamline operations of the clerk's office?	By working in collaboration with other officials, agencies and partners, Chorvat said he would seek efficiencies such as reducing redundancies in data entry, among other areas.	Lamberti calls the many roles of the clerk "vitaly important" and said he would "provide responsive and excellent customer service to all for every responsibility, while accurately maintaining our county's official records and vigorously safeguarding our county's finances."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Home, vehicles, household goods, savings and retirement Liabilities: Mortgage Income: Salary from the Clerk of the Circuit Court	Assets: Home, savings, retirement fund Liabilities: Car loans Income: Public defender's office
Personal	Married to Malinda; two children, Makenna, 9, and Conner, 5	Married with no children
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$20,217 Expenditures: \$18,071	Contributions: \$12,166 Expenditures: \$9,841
On the web	dougchorvat4clerk.com:	NA

ABOUT THE JOB: The Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller is the administrator of the court system, keeps records for the County Commission and maintains the county's finances. The term is four years, but the winner of this election will serve the remaining two years of Don Barbee's term. The position pays \$131,716 a year.

Know your candidates

U.S. House | District 11

Longtime Congressman Daniel Webster is heavily favored in this Republican-heavy district against Democrat and former school teacher Dana Cottrell. Webster's campaign has focused on protecting the Second Amendment and rebuilding the military, while Cottrell supports universal healthcare. Both favor protecting Florida's coastline from offshore drilling.

By Cathrine Gloria, Times Correspondent

	Dana Cottrell	Daniel Webster
Party	Democrat	Republican
Profession	Former teacher	President of Webster Air Conditioning
About the candidate	 <p>Cottrell, 49, is a mother, retired school teacher and a first-time candidate. The native New Yorker currently resides in Spring Hill and has taught at several schools in Hernando County. She has also worked for the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, teaching the children of military personnel stationed overseas in Germany and South Korea. She says her role as a mother and a teacher has shaped her campaign. She is focused on preserving and protecting the environment and supports universal healthcare.</p>	 <p>Webster, 69, has spent three decades in government. In 1996 he became the first Republican Speaker of the Florida House in 122 years when the GOP took over the majority, and he later served as Majority Leader in the Florida Senate. In 2010 he ran for Congress and won the 11th District. When that district was redrawn he filed to run in Florida's 11th Congressional District and won in 2016. The Clermont resident emphasizes cutting government costs, rebuilding the America military and protecting Social Security and the Second Amendment.</p>
Education	University of South Florida, B.A., secondary social science education; USF, M.A., library and information science	Georgia Tech, B.S., electrical engineering
Do you support or oppose changing the ban on offshore drilling near Florida? Please explain.	"I support the ban on offshore drilling near Florida. Florida's beaches and coastlines are integral to our travel and tourism industries ... We need to protect our waters, beaches, and coastline. In addition, we should begin to shift away from oil dependency, reduce carbon emissions and decrease ocean acidification."	"I am committed to extending the eastern Gulf moratorium before it expires in 2022 ... Offshore drilling in the eastern Gulf would interfere with ongoing and future military training and critical weapons testing ... Earlier this year, I and several of my Florida colleagues wrote to the administration expressing our strong opposition to drilling in the Eastern Gulf. I will continue to oppose efforts to drill off Florida's Gulf Coast."
Would you support or oppose changes to immigration policy that would include a path to permanent legal status or citizenship for undocumented immigrants? Please explain how you would change U.S. immigration policy, including any proposals for strengthening the border and whether you would support or oppose legislation to protect Dreamers as they are protected now by executive order.	"Congress should look to the comprehensive and bipartisan immigration reform bill that passed the Senate in 2013 with 68 votes. It committed billions of dollars to enhanced border security, adopted a merit-based points system for new immigrants and provided law-abiding undocumented immigrants, including Dreamers, a path to citizenship ... Increasing the number of immigration processing centers at our borders would expedite the process, create jobs, and reduce the need to enter the United States illegally ..."	"The first step to immigration reform must be to secure our borders. Our porous borders pose a grave national security threat ... This summer, I voted in favor of H.R. 4760, Securing America's Future Act ... This bill sought to authorize border wall construction and proposed additional technology, roads, and tactical infrastructure needed to secure our borders ... It also provided a solution for Dreamers allowing them to apply to study and work in the United States and made them eligible to apply for permanent resident-status through existing paths ... This bill was the best attempt I've seen to resolve this difficult issue and I was disappointed that it garnered zero Democrat support."
Would you support or oppose President Trump's proposed tariffs, and would you support or oppose renegotiating NAFTA and rejoining the Trans Pacific Partnership? Please explain.	"I support a plan for tariffs that is well-planned, thoughtful and takes into account the many intricacies and subtleties of trade and tariffs. The current administration is in reactionary mode changing tariff policy day-by-day as they become aware of ramifications of statements rolled out without knowledge of impact. This is not the way our country should administer policy ..."	"I support free trade, but in 2015, I voted against authorizing President Obama to pursue the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). His TPP proposal not only benefited countries known for abusing human rights, it was passed using procedural shenanigans that violated the process outlined by the Constitution ... Tariffs are bad and trade wars are destructive, but I applaud President Trump for pursuing his current strategy to bring Chinese trade malfesance to heel ..."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Roth IRA Liabilities: Equity line of credit, credit card Income: Not disclosed	Assets: Property, savings, business . Liabilities: None disclosed Income: \$27,221
Personal	Home: Spring Hill Marital status: married to Michael Cottrell Children: one child	Home: Clermont Marital status: married to Sandra Webster Children: six children, 17 grandchildren.
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$42,210 Expenditures: \$36,618	Contributions: \$494,837 Expenditures: \$382,210
On the web	Website: Danacottrellforcongress.com Twitter: @DanaforCongress	Website: www.electwebster.com Twitter: @RepWebster

ABOUT THE JOB: District 11 includes Citrus, Hernando and Sumter counties, a part of Lake County and central Marion County. U.S. Representatives are elected to two-year terms and are paid \$174,000 annually.

Commissioner of Agriculture

XyDemocrats don't typically compete for this Florida Cabinet position, but the minority party hopes they can surprise with Nikki Fried, a Broward County attorney who is an ardent support of expanding access to medical marijuana. She faces the conservative Caldwell, who became a champion of Big Sugar interests while pushing legislation in the Florida House that delayed improving water quality in the Everglades for another decade.

By Emily L. Mahoney, Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

	Matt Caldwell	Nikki Fried
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	State lawmaker, real estate appraiser	Lawyer
About the candidate	 <p>A seventh-generation Floridian, Caldwell, 37, has served in the Florida House since 2010, representing the North Fort Myers area. While in the Legislature, he sponsored bills to further support and permanently fund restoration of the Everglades, and worked to steer the state toward acquiring more land for conservation. Caldwell was the first statewide candidate to be endorsed by the National Rifle Association. .</p>	 <p>Fried, 40, is a prominent advocate for increasing access to medical marijuana and lobbied extensively for the passage of a 2016 bill that expanded marijuana use for the terminally ill. She has also worked to ensure passage of a bill in 2014 that granted millions for disabled dependent children to have access to lawyers. As an attorney, she defended homeowners facing foreclosure during the Great Recession.</p>
Education	Florida Gulf Coast University, B.A., history; Edison Community College, A.A University of Florida, bachelors, masters, law degree	University of Florida, bachelors, masters, law degree
What are your top three priorities?	1. Ensure concealed weapon permits are overseen by a professional who fully understands and upholds our 2nd Amendment rights. 2. Continue to advocate for the removal of barriers to economic growth, most particularly in nonsensical regulation and burdensome tax policy. The Commissioner should advocate for well-rounded economic opportunities in our rural areas, not just for farming land but (also) for packaging, processing, and manufacturing. 3. Water is our most important resource. Balance the demands of growing cities with the needs of our farmers and our environment.	1. Perform an audit of the entire department. Recent revelations of failures to properly oversee permitting of concealed carry potentially indicate broader mismanagement. Reorient the Department to focus more on consumer advocacy and services. 2. Advocate for access to medical marijuana. Ensure there is oversight of pesticides used in growing medical marijuana. 3. Ensure that the Department considers the environmental and community impacts of its decision-making, rather than acting as a rubber stamp for big corporate actors.
Are you satisfied with how the Department of Agriculture currently handles the state's concealed weapons program? Could it be improved, and if so, how? Should the Dept. of Agriculture oversee the program? Why?	The Dept. of Agriculture should continue to manage and oversee the concealed weapons program. As with all programs in the public or private sector, program management requires ongoing performance measures, performance reviews, and implementation of best practices. . . . It is critical that we screen & process CWL applicants efficiently and thoroughly.	Of course I am not satisfied with the Department's handling of concealed carry. As a single woman who lives alone, I became a gun owner and concealed carry permit-holder. Uncovering the full nature of the failures would be one of my first priorities. It's probably wiser to house concealed carry permits at FDLE, but that seems unlikely. I will lobby for more communication with law enforcement. I'd also add a continuing education requirement to concealed carry renewals.
How do you see the role of the office in overseeing the state's agribusinesses?	I will lead the Department by maintaining the level of responsive services to the industries overseen, seeking solutions in partnership with UF-IFAS and our growers; enforcing our laws against consumer fraud; as well as leading energy policy toward a common-sense future. This includes speaking out and leading solutions in critical areas such as immigration, labor, and trade.	Tourism and agriculture are the two biggest economic drivers in our state. There has to be a clearer balance between the concerns of Big Ag, and how their actions potentially affect our land, water, beaches and coasts. But the Commissioner must be an advocate for the industry as well. That means fighting Trump on this unprovoked trade war, combatting citrus greening and other crop threats and doing more to help struggling small farmers and nurserymen.
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Two homes, savings Liabilities: Mortgages, car loans Income: \$81,034	Assets: Savings, investments Liabilities: Student loan Income: \$84,000
Personal	Home: Fort Myers Marital status: Married. Children: one child	Home: Fort Lauderdale Marital status: Single
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$1.2 million Expenditures: \$866,182	Contributions: \$272,739 Expenditures: \$184,421
On the web	Website: Votecaldwell.org Twitter: @mattcaldwell_fl	Website: nikkifried.com Twitter: @nikkifried

ABOUT THE JOB: Commissioner of Agriculture is a statewide position with four-year terms and a current salary of \$128,972. The Commissioner is a member of the governor's cabinet and oversees the state's farming industry practices in addition to food safety, pesticides, state land and water

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Know your candidates

State House | District 34

First-time candidate Paul Reinhardt, a Democrat, is challenging incumbent Republican Rep. Ralph Massullo Jr. The winner of the race will represent nearly 160,000 people in a district spanning five counties. Both candidates ran unopposed in the primaries; Massullo faced no challenger in 2016, when he was first elected.

By Justin Trombly, Times Staff Writer



	Ralph Massullo	Paul Reinhardt
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Legislator, dermatologist	Missionary doctor, caregiver
About the candidate	 Massullo, 57, was born in West Virginia and has lived in Florida for the past 28 years, currently in Lecanto. He founded the Suncoast Dermatology and Skin Surgery Center in 1989 and practices there today, along with serving as a legislator.	 Reinhardt, 57, was born in New York and has lived in Florida for 39 years, currently in Beverly Hills. He has taught at the College of Central Florida and has lobbied for health care. He recently cared full-time for his terminally ill parents before doing missionary work.
Education	Bachelor's and doctorate degrees from West Virginia University	Associate's degree from New York City College of Technology; bachelor's degree from SUNY Albany; medical degree from Universidad del Noreste
What should, if anything, state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?	"Current rules prohibiting sexual misconduct should be enforced and victims should be able to lodge complaints without fear of reprisals."	"Both houses should pass rules to address sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct has no place in the capitol nor anywhere else."
Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?	"Our schools are being funded currently at the highest level in our history. I'm hopeful that trend of increasing funding to schools annually will continue."	"I would want public school funding ... providing substitute teachers, long-term substitute teachers, substitute support staff, long-term substitute support staff, with participation in the U.S. Social Security system instead of privatizing their pension deductions, as is done currently. I would provide them access to some form of health care benefits, as well. Most of Florida's school districts heavily rely on such substitutes."
Please describe your top three legislative priorities.	"Establishing alternative pathways for high school graduation to increase skills training [and] workforce readiness. "Reigning in the rising cost of pharmaceuticals and the control pharmacy benefit managers have over drug formularies, as well as working to improve access to care in under-served parts of our state. "Improving water quality and maintaining the character of our springs. I'd also like to see Florida Forever funded, as it was this session."	"Greater citizen input on state issues. "Encouraging, not hindering, small business (encouraging business incubators in the district). "Better paying high-tech jobs. Better health care."
Would you back accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? How would you improve health care for low-income Floridians?	"The system is cost ineffective and doesn't reimburse true cost of care in many instances. The system doesn't provide the care it promises due to limited providers willing to accept [it]. I would improve current insurance system and encourage interstate competition [between] companies and lower cost, reduced services policies. I would also encourage ... healthier lifestyles and [altering] systems that produce unhealthy behavior [like the] SNAP program paying for ... soda."	He prefers Medicare for all starting at age 50. "We are in an emergency triage situation, however," he said. To properly support federally qualified health centers, he said, we must change how we train doctors, because too many medical graduates leave the state and too few serve in primary care. "I propose a mandatory supervised year [in] primary care at our state's health departments and federally qualified health centers."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Multiple bank accounts, retirement plan, 401(k), trusts, home, commercial properties, five businesses Net worth: \$36,404,488 Liabilities: Two credit lines Income: \$2,888,320	Assets: Multiple bank accounts, stocks, home, lot properties Net worth: \$357,219 Liabilities: None Income: None
Personal	Home: Lecanto Marital status: Married to Patty Children: Four, all adults	Home: Beverly Hills Marital status: Single Children: None
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$57,550 Expenditures: \$15,865	Contributions: \$3,335 Expenditures: \$2,360
On the web	Website: ralphmassullo.com Twitter: @RalphMassullo	Facebook: Paul John Reinhardt M.D. for Florida House District 34 Twitter: @PaulDistrict

ABOUT THE JOB: House members serve two-year terms and are paid \$29,697 annually.

State House | District 35

Incumbent Blaise Ingoglia, having served two terms, faces his third Democratic opponent in as many elections. Formerly the head of Hernando County's Republican Party, Ingoglia handily defeated Democrat Ramon Gutierrez in 2016. His opponent this year, attorney Colleen Kasperek, is seeking political office for the first time.

By Jack Evans, Times Staff Writer

	Blaise Ingoglia	Colleen Kasperek
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Home builder	Attorney
About the candidate	 A Hernando County resident of more than two decades, Ingoglia, 47, is the incumbent in 35th district and chairman of the state Republican Party. Before entering politics, he built a prosperous home building business, and he played on the World Poker Tour from 2005 to 2007.	 Kasperek, 57, is running for office for the first time. She was born in Philadelphia and moved to Florida 19 years ago. Kasperek is a criminal defense and civil mediation attorney and was a public defender in Florida's Fifth Circuit from 2001 to 2006.
Education	Queens College, no degree; Brooklyn College, no degree	Temple University Beasley School of Law, Juris Doctor, 1994; Temple University Fox School of Business, bachelor's degree in business administration
What should, if anything, state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?	Did not respond.	"Prohibiting retaliation against accusers or whistle blowers must be assured. ... Outside persons such as vendors and lobbyists should be given access to a legislative ethics panel or a Governor's Office resource for reporting violations. An independent team of elected officials of both parties and a contingent of lower level staff should conduct the investigation. Great consideration should also be given to reporting such misconduct to law enforcement."
Would you support criminal justice reforms such as raising amounts that qualify as felony thefts and giving judges more sentencing discretion for nonviolent drug convictions?	Did not respond.	"I support criminal justice reforms. The threshold amount for felony thefts should be raised to \$1000. Further, I support the legalization of personal possession of marijuana and establishment of a network of retail facilities for the sale of marijuana. In the interim, misdemeanor possession of marijuana should be decriminalized ... Judges should be given more discretion in sentencing for nonviolent drug trafficking convictions, but only ... for marijuana."
Would you support accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? How would you make health care more affordable and accessible?	Did not respond.	"I fully support accepting federal Medicaid expansion money. ... I would increase funding to county health centers and require all hospitals receiving state funding ... to set up a lower-cost ER alternative within its existing ER for non-emergency, uninsured or underinsured patients. ... I will introduce legislation to exempt the facility from malpractice suits, except for egregious failures ... (and) negotiate with major pharmaceutical companies for preferred pricing ... for low-income residents."
Would you support closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers? Banning assault weapons? Limiting the size of magazines?	Did not respond.	"Close the gun show loophole! Ban the private sale of firearms. ... Fully integrate background checks with federal databases. Ban the sale of large magazines to non-military personnel. Ban the sale of assault weapons that are capable of being converted to automatic weapons. Impose an additional tax on ammunition sales to finance enhanced school safety and implementation of more comprehensive background checks. Transfer responsibility for Concealed Weapon Permits to FDLE."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Hartland Homes, Inc., and related businesses; home; truck; various bank accounts Liabilities: Line of credit, auto loan Income: Republican Party of Florida salary, state Representative salary, income from Hartland Homes and other businesses Net worth: \$5,241,200	Assets: Home, car, checking account Liabilities: Loans Income: Legal fees, 401(k) dividends Net worth: \$263,000
Personal	Home: Spring Hill Marital status: Married Children: Jade, 21; Madison, 19; Ayden, 17	Home: Spring Hill Marital status: Married Children: None
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$179,799 Expenditures: \$57,939	Contributions: \$6,503 Expenditures: \$2,548
On the web	Website: blaiseforflorida.com Twitter: @GovGoneWild	Website: colleenkasperek.com Twitter: @ColleenKasperek

ABOUT THE JOB: The Representative for House District 35 represents most of Hernando County. Representatives are elected every two years and may serve no more than four consecutive terms (Ingoglia has served two). State legislators receive an annual salary of \$29,697.

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Know your candidates

County Commission | District 2

Wayne Dukes is seeking his third term as the District 2 county commissioner and is facing a political newcomer, Democrat Deborah Salvesen, a 20-year employee of the Better Business Bureau.

By Barbara Behrendt, Times Staff Writer

	Wayne Dukes	Deborah Salvesen
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Retired from military civil engineering and fire service	A business relations executive for the Better Business Bureau
About the candidate	 <p>A Brooksville native, Dukes, 72, has always considered Hernando County home even during his time working for the Air Force. He is a past president of the Hernando Beach Property Owners Association and has been active with the Hernando County Port Authority.</p>	 <p>A native of New Jersey, Salvesen, 59, came to Hernando County in 2013, attracted by the affordable housing. A five-year resident of Hernando County, she has not previously run for a political office and is president of the Hernando County Democratic Club.</p>
Education	Dukes graduated from Hernando High School, earned two applied science degrees from City College of Chicago and a bachelor's degree from Thomas Edison State College.	Salvesen attended a technical school for certified shorthand reporters and registered professional reporters.
Why are you the best candidate in this race?	"I have the experience, educational and professional background for this position and a proven record of accomplishments providing creative solutions to county problems without increasing the tax burden on the citizens."	Salvesen said she has had a well-rounded personal and professional life, including work as a court stenographer, restaurant owner, secretary of an ethics commission, a blood-donor recruiter and a community relations specialist, in addition to her current job.
How would you balance the needs of residents versus business when there is a conflict?	"Each case is different and has to be decided on its merits."	"As a one-time business owner, there is no conflict of the two. Business wants to support their community and realize that by putting community services first, you build a company base."
Where would you reduce funding to help with the county's budget shortfall?	"The commission has already started working on this issue and have set cost reductions across the board."	"Let's not focus on reducing. Let's focus on creating, improving Hernando County. When Hernando County focuses on economic development, public transportation, public education, that will be the glue that lifts our residents. Until this happens, we are on a spiral decline."
What are the county's top three issues and which is most important to you?	"Continuation of economic development and job creation. Keeping property taxes low. Maintaining and improving quality of life for all Hernando County citizens."	Salvesen lists her top three issues as public education, environmental protection and public transportation. "Education creates intelligent contributors to our society, which then attracts corporations who hire professionals and tradesmen and women, who then earn a livable wage to invest in Hernando County," she said.
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Real estate, bank accounts and retirement fund Liabilities: None Income: Commission salary, pension and rental income	Assets: None Liabilities: None Income: Better Business Bureau
Personal	Married with two grown daughters	Married with one child
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$49,455 Expenditures: \$39,417	Contributions: \$6,120 Expenditures: \$3,722
On the web	Website: votewayne2018.com	Website: debbieforhernando.com

ABOUT THE JOB: Hernando county commissioners are elected countywide but must live in the district for the seat they are seeking. Commissioners, who serve four-year terms, set policy and budget for the county. They earn an annual salary of \$69,232. District 2 encompasses southwestern Hernando County.

County Commission | District 4

Republican Jeff Holcomb is seeking his second term in the District 4 seat on the Hernando County Commission. His challenger is Democrat Nancy Makar.

By Barbara Behrendt, Times Staff Writer

	Jeff Holcomb	Nancy Makar
Party	Republican	Democrat
Profession	Information technology consultant, Naval Reserve	Counselor
About the candidate	 <p>Born in Baltimore, Holcomb, 47, came to the area 16 years ago. He has been in the Naval Reserve for 11 years and is a member of the Brooksville VFW 8713.</p>	 <p>A Louisiana native, Makar, 67, came to the area in the late 1970s, helping to run several businesses and teaching for several years. She has worked as a school social worker, and founded the Pathways Counseling Center, which she still owns.</p>
Education	Holcomb has a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Maryland and a master's in intelligence studies from the American Public University System.	She has a bachelor's in science from Florida State University and a master's in social work from the University of South Florida
Why are you the best candidate in this race?	"I am the best candidate in this race because I have the experience of dealing with the tough issues facing our community. I have been tough on corruption and any possible tax increases."	"My profession has given me 30+ years of professional listening, communicating, compromising and the ability to empower people, which is exactly what our Hernando County Board of County Commissioners needs. I put the residents of Hernando County before politics."
How would you strike the balance between business and resident interests when there is conflict?	"This is always a difficult balance. Property rights are imperative to me, but when the property rights of one infringe on others, difficult decisions have to be made."	"I have owned a business in this county for 28+ years, so I understand what the challenges are better than anyone currently on the BOCC. I would hold town halls and workshops so people who work during the day can attend and voice their concerns. It's crucial that the board facilitate communication between business development and residents by being more vocal and open about plans for the county's business development.
Where would you reduce funding to help with the county's budget shortfall?	"Reduce the board's expenses to outside organizations, freeze hiring and postpone as many expenses to future years as possible. Hire budget managers that know the job."	"I believe that a lack of understanding of the different aspects of the budget is a big part of what is causing our current problems. We should be work-shopping our budget in the same way the City of Brooksville (and most other cities and counties) does. When commissioners make decisions about the budget without fully understanding its implications to residents and business, big mistakes happen. We're living the results of that right now."
What are the county's top three issues and which is the most important to you?	"Budget/property taxes, having great public safety for our citizens and improving our parks."	"As a veteran licensed clinical social worker, everything begins with a healthy mind. We can't start to attack all of the other issues our county is facing until we first make sure that families, students and individuals have the access they need for education and rehabilitation for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Then, and only then, can we become a happier healthier Hernando. Our Weeki Wachee and underwater aquifer must be protected and kept nitrate free because we have a very valuable resource here, one of the top five underground water systems in the world."
Assets/liabilities/income	Assets: Home, vehicles, savings and retirement accounts Liabilities: Mortgage Income: County commission salary, consulting job salary and pay from the Department of Defense	Assets: Home, business, household goods Liabilities: Mortgage Income: Business and social security
Personal	He has been married to Stacey for 18 years and has two daughters.	Divorced with two adult children.
Campaign fundraising	Contributions: \$51,877 Expenditures: \$38,307	Contributions: \$23,936 Expenditures: \$9,700
On the web	Website: jeffholcomb.org	Website: NancyMakar.com; Twitter: @MakarCampaign

ABOUT THE JOB: Hernando county commissioners are elected countywide but must live in the district for the seat they are seeking. Commissioners, who serve four-year terms, set policy and budget for the county. They earn an annual salary of \$69,232. District 4 encompasses south central Hernando County.



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tampabay.com/things-to-do for area concerts, family fun, theater and more

12 Friday

Academia Hernando Fall 2018 Lecture Series: Open to series subscribers or \$9 at the door. For information, visit academiahernando.org. This week's lecture is 3D Printing: the Future of Everything, by Guy McCann. 10 a.m. to noon. \$65 for the entire series including field trip. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Spring Hill, 2301 Deltona Blvd., Spring Hill. (352) 559-2335.

Fertilizer Use in the Home Lawn: Learn best management practices to minimize the amount of fertilizer lost due to runoff, keeping our local waterways safe from nitrates and other pollutants. 10 a.m. to noon. Free, registration required. Hernando County Utilities Administration Building, 15365 Cortez Blvd., Brooksville. (352) 754-4705.

Live Jazz at the Library: Live concert performed by members of the Hernando Jazz Society, sponsored by the Friends of the Library of Hernando County. 3 p.m. Free. Spring Hill Branch/Harold G. Zopp Memorial Library, 9220 Spring Hill Drive, Spring Hill. (352) 754-4043.

13 Saturday

United Methodist Women's Flea Market: There will also be a bake sale and food available, including doughnuts, hot dogs, chili dogs, pulled-pork sandwiches, ice cream and beverages. All funds raised go to charities. Vendor spaces available. Call Herb at (239) 271-9073. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. First United Methodist Church of Spring Hill, 9344 Spring Hill Drive, Spring Hill. (352) 683-9505.

Master Gardener Nursery: Spruce up a landscape or garden space - find a large selection of Florida native and Florida-friendly plants, all from healthy stock, at budget prices, at the nursery open from 9 a.m. to noon, each Wednesday and Saturday, weather permitting. 9 a.m. to noon. Free admission. Master Gardener

FAST FACTS

Submit your events

Information for the Events column should be submitted to Jean Hamilton, Hernando Times, 3131 13th Ave. North, FL 33713. Information can be faxed to (352) 754-6133 or emailed to jhamilton@tampabay.com. The deadline for news is two weeks before your event or reservation deadline. Events must be open to the public. Information cannot be published if the time, date, place, ticket price (if applicable) or contact person and phone number are missing. Call (352) 848-1438.

Nursery, 19490 Oliver St., Brooksville. (352) 754-4433.

First-Time Home-buyers Class: The class, provided by the Hernando County Housing Authority in partnership with Solita's House, is open to the public. Registration required. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. Arc Nature Coast Education Center and Regional Evacuation Shelter, 6495 Mariner Blvd., Spring Hill. (352) 754-4160, ext. 3.

Archery 3-D Shoot: Chinsegut volunteers from local archery group will host monthly 3-D target shooting opportunities for the public. Bring your own equipment. Fees cover equipment maintenance. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$10, \$5 ages 13-16, 12 and younger free, \$25 for family. Chinsegut Conservation Center, 23212 Lake Lindsey Road, Brooksville. (352) 754-6722.

Backpacking 101: Three-day course (split over two weekends) for those who want to explore overnighting. Learn what is essential and what to leave out to keep your backpack manageable. Classroom day Oct. 13; hike and overnight stay Oct. 20-21. Visit site to register. 9 a.m. \$60 per person, includes all classes. Chinsegut

Conservation Center, 23212 Lake Lindsey Road, Brooksville. (352) 754-6722. NotAclueAdventures.com.

Wreaths Across America Fundraiser: The event will include vendors, a fashion show and trunk sale and a silent auction. Breakfast will be available for \$5 from 9 to 11 a.m., lunch (burgers and brats) will be available for \$10 from noon to 5 p.m. Fashions will be provided by Bon Worth, and 10 percent of trunk sales benefit Wreaths Across America. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free admission. Brooksville Elks Lodge 2582, 13383 County Line Road, Spring Hill. (352) 799-7148.

TriCounty Community Center's Little Market: The market will offer fresh produce, handmade crafts, baked goods, collectibles and quilts. For vendor information, call Toni at (352) 397-6652 or Dorrie at (352) 587-4014. Proceeds from the event benefit the building fund. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free admission. TriCounty Community Center, 28444 Forbes Ave., Nobleton.

Childbirth Preparation Program: The class will be followed by a personalized tour. Designed to help new parents be better prepared for their own birth experience. Call to RSVP. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. Oak Hill Hospital Maternity Suites Education Room, North Tower, 11307 Cortez Blvd., Spring Hill. (844) 769-2229.

Rock Talk: Join geologist Mike Kelley for a look at fossils and information on Florida's incredible karst landscape. No registration required. Recommended for ages 12 and older. Includes 1.5-mile hike. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Chinsegut Conservation Center, 23212 Lake Lindsey Road, Brooksville. (352) 754-6722.

Brooksville Woman's Club annual Victorian Tea: In honor of Brooksville Founders' Week, the club will host an old-fashioned tea with all the accompaniments.

Reservations are recommended for groups of six or more. Proceeds benefit the woman's club's renovation fund and the Crescent Community Clinic. 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Advance tickets are \$15, \$18 at the door, includes tea, finger sandwiches, desserts and scones. GFWC Historic Brooksville Woman's Club, 131 S Main St., Brooksville. (352) 397-6158.

Breastfeeding Beginnings Class: Class equips new and expectant families with the information they need to have a successful breastfeeding journey. 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Oak Hill Hospital Maternity Suites Education Room, North Tower, 11307 Cortez Blvd., Spring Hill. (844) 769-2229.

14 Sunday

Brooksville Good Neighbor Trail Bike Ride: The inaugural event celebrates the completion of the Brooksville section of the Florida Coast to Coast Trail, a 10-mile stretch of paved trail that connects to the Withlacoochee State Trail. Determine your own ride or choose a 10-mile 'Out and Back' family ride; a 20-mile ride; a 35-mile ride, and a 65-mile ride. A continental breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 9 a.m. A free catered lunch will be provided between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Coney Island Drive-Inn. The event benefits the Brooksville Main Street program. Registration and check-in from 7:30 to 9 a.m. Visit <https://www.gntbikeride.com/> to register. 9 a.m. \$35, \$15 ages 12 and younger. 1885 Train Depot Museum, 70 Russell St, Brooksville.

Brooksville Farmers' Market: Presented by the Hernando County Growers Association, local farmers and agricultural producers offer fresh produce, meats, poultry and cottage foods as well as prepared foods, desserts, arts and crafts. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. Brooksville Farmers' Market, 615 Old Hospital Drive, Brooksville.

(727) 422-3360.

Brookridge Good Times Line Dance Social: Bring your own snacks and beverages (and ice, if needed). No lessons provided, but instructors are on hand to give assistance if needed. Singles and couples welcome, and are encouraged to wear "slidey" shoes (No open back sandals, foot tubes will be available to put over shoes if needed). Doors open at 6 p.m. Call Norma to RSVP. 6:30 to 9 p.m. \$5. Brookridge Clubhouse, 8150 Hampton St., Brooksville. (352) 397-6088.

17 Wednesday

Health Assessments for Homeless: In honor of International Eradication of Poverty Day, the event is designed to offer health assessments to homeless adults. The clinic offers chronic health, palliative dental and mental health services. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. Crescent Community Clinic, 5244 Commercial Way, Spring Hill. (352) 263-1218.

Health Care Event: Hernando County adults ages 18 to 64 are eligible to participate. Includes triage and health assessments, applications for mental health, dental, and chronic health services, assistance with benefits applications, and free STD testing. Participants receive care packages (blankets, socks, toothbrush and toothpaste, and other toiletries). 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. Crescent Community Clinic, 5244 Commercial Way, Spring Hill. (352) 610-9916.

Narcan Training: Learn how to protect your family and friends from an opioid overdose and receive free training on using the life-saving antidote, Narcan. Hosted by the Hernando Community Anti-Drug Coalition. Two sessions will be available. Email luisgarciafla2@gmail.com to register and receive free Narcan. 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. and from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Free. Joni Industries, 16230

Aviation Loop Drive, Brooksville. (352) 596-8000.

Surgical Weight Loss Seminar: The seminar is for individuals who are severely obese. Dr. Naga Thatimatla, bariatric surgeon with Florida Hospital Dade City will discuss surgical weight loss and who is a candidate. Call to RSVP. For program information, visit PascoSurgicalWeightLoss.com. 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Free, registration required. Silverthorn Country Club, 4550 Golf Club Lane, Spring Hill. (833) 300-2371.

Childbirth Preparation Program: The class will be followed by a personalized tour. Designed to help new parents be better prepared for their own birth experience. Call to RSVP. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Oak Hill Hospital Maternity Suites Education Room, North Tower, 11307 Cortez Blvd., Spring Hill. (844) 769-2229.

18 Thursday

Map and Compass Program: Learn to navigate using a compass and how that and a good map can get you anywhere. For ages 10-13. Call to RSVP. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Chinsegut Conservation Center, 23212 Lake Lindsey Road, Brooksville. (352) 754-6722. myfwc.com/calendar.

Breastfeeding Beginnings Class: Class equips new and expectant families with the information they need to have a successful breastfeeding journey. 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Oak Hill Hospital Maternity Suites Education Room, North Tower, 11307 Cortez Blvd., Spring Hill. (844) 769-2229.

Childbirth Preparation Program: The class will be followed by a personalized tour. Designed to help new parents be better prepared for their own birth experience. Call to RSVP. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Oak Hill Hospital Maternity Suites Education Room, North Tower, 11307 Cortez Blvd., Spring Hill. (844) 769-2229.

» CHANGES continued from 1

AMENDMENT 2: Limitations on Property Tax Assessments, another property tax proposal referred by the Legislature, would cement an existing cap on non-homestead property assessments. Such property tax assessment increases have been limited to 10 percent of the previous year's assessed value since 2008, when another constitutional amendment that capped the increases passed.

AMENDMENT 3: Voter Control of Gambling in Florida, a citizen-initiated amendment, would give voters the exclusive right to decide to authorize expansions of casino gambling in Florida. That authority currently rests with both the Legislature and voters, through constitutional amendment.

Card games, casino games and slot machines are limited to tribal facilities in most of Florida, though some slot machines are allowed at certain parimutuel facilities in Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

AMENDMENT 4: Voting Res-

toration Amendment, another petition-drive amendment, would restore voting rights to former felons if they have served their time, with the exception of those who have committed crimes like murder or sex offenses.

For the past seven years, the state has required that felons wait at least five years after their sentences are complete to apply to regain voting rights. The current process can take a decade or more under the Scott administration's requirement that a state clemency board consider each request during its four meetings a year.

If passed, about 1.5 million people in Florida could be affected.

AMENDMENT 5: Super-majority Vote Required to Impose, Authorize, or Raise State Taxes or Fees, another proposal from lawmakers this year, would require a two-thirds supermajority vote in the Legislature to impose, approve or raise state taxes and fees. The higher threshold means it would take only a third of members in either the state House or Senate to block any future tax increases or

repeal existing exemptions. The idea, floated by Gov. Rick Scott last year, would also stop any provisions to raise taxes or fees from being tacked onto other state bills, and does not apply to any fees or taxes that would be levied by local governments or agencies, such as school districts.

AMENDMENT 6: Rights of Crime Victims; Judges, links three proposals that would create a bill of rights for crime victims and set new requirements for judges. The bill of rights, modeled after Marsy's Law in California, has the support of major Republican and Democratic lawmakers but has drawn criticism that the way victims' rights are drawn might flood the justice system with additional responsibilities.

The latter two proposals increase the mandatory retirement age for judges to 75 from 70, effective July 1, 2019, and would bar judges from deferring to administrative agencies' interpretations of a rule or statute when ruling in cases involving those laws.

AMENDMENT 7: First Responder and Military Member Survivor Benefits; Public Col-

leges and Universities, would pull together three proposals, providing college tuition for the survivors of first responders and military members killed on duty, requiring university trustees to agree by a two-thirds supermajority to raise college fees (not including tuition) and establishing the state college system in the Florida Constitution. Universities are in the state Constitution, but state colleges (also known as community colleges) are not.

(A Leon County circuit court judge ruled in early September that this amendment and 9 and 11 be struck from the ballot because of its bundled status — that decision is currently being appealed by the state.)

Amendment 9: Prohibits Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling; Prohibits Vaping in Enclosed Indoor Workplaces, would tether a ban on oil and gas drilling in state-owned waters with a proposal to add vaping to the ban on smoking indoors.

AMENDMENT 10: State and Local Government Structure and Operation, would link four proposals: one to have the state's legislative session start in Janu-

ary rather than March in even-numbered years (the Legislature currently changes its dates by statute), two that would create a counter-terrorism office and make the state veterans affairs department constitutionally required, and a proposal that would require five county-level offices to be elected.

All of the county positions — including tax collectors, property appraisers, supervisors of elections and clerks of circuit court — are already elected in many counties. (A case seeking to remove this amendment — including affected counties like Miami-Dade, Broward and Volusia — was taken up by the state Supreme Court, which ruled Sept. 7 that the amendment remain on the ballot.)

AMENDMENT 11: Property Rights; Removal of Obsolete Provision; Criminal Statutes, would revise the Constitution to remove some language, including a provision that stops "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning property and wording approving a high-speed rail system.

It would also remove the state's Savings Clause, which

prohibits retroactively applying the amendment of a criminal statute to sentencing for a crime committed before the change, and clarify that repealing a criminal statute would not necessarily affect the prosecution of that crime committed previously.

AMENDMENT 12: Lobbying and Abuse of Office by Public Officers, a stand-alone proposal, would bar public officials from lobbying both during their terms and for six years following, and restrict current public officers from using their office for personal gain.

AMENDMENT 13: Ends Dog Racing, is also a single proposal. It would end commercial dog racing involving wagering by 2020.

There are about a dozen tracks in Florida, and the practice has drawn criticism from animal rights advocates who assert that the practice is inhumane.

The Florida Greyhound Association has sued seeking to remove the amendment from the ballot.

For more information, visit the state Division of Elections website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/>

» FERAL continued from 1

may kill cats that are diseased, wounded or dangerous. But if they are healthy, they go into the new program.

Staffers spay or neuter cats in the program, so they can't breed, and vaccinate them against rabies. Before volunteers take them back to where they were found, they "eartip" the cats

— make a small straight cut on the tips of their left ears to mark them.

Upon release, these cats earn a new designation from the county: They become "Community Cats."

Animal Services manager James Terry told commissioners that the program shouldn't cost more than the county already spends on the feral population.

The county will allow residents to care for the cats if they

sign up to become "Community Cat Caregivers" and work with Animal Services and affiliates like the Humane Society and PetLuv, both based in Brooksville. Otherwise, feeding and keeping stray animals is against the law in Hernando County.

The caregiver program allows participants to feed and provide for the animals. That's so long as their food and water sources are at least 250 feet from a school, public playground or public park,

and 750 feet from lands managed by state and federal governments. People who are interested should contact PetLuv, said Terry, at (352) 799-9990.

As long as the cats don't become a nuisance, they're free to live.

Terry and Humane Society of the Nature Coast director Christina Sepulveda told the board that programs like this have worked elsewhere in the state. Sepulveda cited efforts in Orange County,

where she is from.

Terry said data for previous ideas, like mass euthanasia, showed that those policies haven't been successful and that the county should try another route.

Commission vice-chairman John Allocco, who cast the lone dissenting vote on the ordinance, said he worries the program won't reduce feral populations and fears that released feral cats could harm local wildlife.

Debating the topic with Allocco, Champion questioned whether his colleague had ever tried to control a cat and argued that nature will take its course.

"Neuter them and let them go. Who cares," Champion said. "Let's see what happens."

The law has a built-in sunset; it expires in 2023.

Contact Justin Trombly at jtrombly@tampabay.com. Follow @JustinTrombly.



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