

NEWS CONFERENCE
GOVERNOR PARRIS BRYANT
TALLAHASSEE
OCTOBER 29, 1964

NEWSMEN PARTICIPATING: Doug Starr, ASSOCIATED PRESS; Bob Sandler, ASSOCIATED PRESS; John Hayes, WPGA, WTWF; George Thurston, WJXT; Martin Waldron, ST, PETERSBURG TIMES SERVICE--MIAMI HERALD; Bob Sherrill, MIAMI HERALD--ST, PETERSBURG TIMES SERVICE; Budd Mellichamp, ABC RADIO; Pete Barton, FLORIDA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION; Everett Williard, FLORIDA TIMES UNION; Robert W. Delaney, ORLANDO SENTINEL-STAR; Don Dughi, WCTV.

GOVERNOR: Good morning.

SEVERAL: Good morning

D. STARR: Governor, before we begin I would like to introduce my new staffer, Bob Sandler.

GOVERNOR: Mr. Sandler, how are you? Nice to meet you. They have put you on the front row of the firing squad, I see. (laughter)

DELANEY: You are late this morning for the first time in nearly four years.

GOVERNOR: I am late this morning. You know, I am really on vacation, but that's no excuse for being late, and I apologise.

DELANEY: Is this your idea of a vacation? (laughter)

GOVERNOR: Gentlemen, we have wrapped up our first year at the New York World's Fair, and I can report that from most standpoints the Florida Pavilion was an outstanding success. There were some areas that we did not achieve all that we had hoped and anticipated doing, but when it is looked at with wisdom of hindsight a success has been recorded. It is estimated that we had an attendance at the site itself of between 5 and 6 million people. In addition to that, of course, millions and millions of people have seen the Florida site coast to coast over television, in magazines, and newspapers. The scrapbooks which I usually look at when I am in New York at the site, which I hope will be available here for you at some time, show a remarkable coverage. Almost 2 million tourism folders were distributed from the information center. That's one indication of the kind of people that went to this exhibit. Over 350,000 people paid about \$450,000 to see the live porpoise show. The porpoise show, except for one month, was below our expectations but by-and-large this was not because of failure on part of the Florida Pavilion or the Florida show, but because overall attendance at the World's Fair was below the figures upon which we had originally projected our estimates. About 175,000 people paid 25 cents each or \$43,000 to see the Everglades show which, as you recall, was started very late in the

the next Governor is going to have, all this is kind of hard for me to make a decision as to which is the right thing for me to do -- which is the right way to vote. I haven't thought about it as much as I should have, I admit that.

WALDRON: How about the Dade Change Amendment?

GOVERNOR: I think it's a good amendment. I think it's going to be the only practical way to get a revision of the Constitution.

WILLIARD: Are you still for the School Fund Amendment?

GOVERNOR: Yes sir. I'm not as strong about it as I was when I proposed it because we have begun.... I don't think it is as critical matter as it was then, but I still think it's a good thing. One thing I have not noticed in press stories, and perhaps you may not be aware of, therefore, each year for many years now as I understand it, when the revenue -- the interest from the trust fund comes before the Cabinet for distribution this money is distributed as provided and then general revenue monies in equivalent amounts are withheld so that the result is that the amount of money that the schools are getting is no greater by reason of the trust fund than it would be under this procedure without a trust fund. Have I made that clear?

WILLIARD: I think so, but how would that effect the state buying bonds -- school construction bonds out of that fund?

GOVERNOR: Your question doesn't ring a bell.

WILLIARD: Some of the school bond funds has been used to buy parts of county bond issues, hasn't it?

GOVERNOR: I think it has. It is only \$17 or \$18 million as I recall, in the whole thing. I am sure we are not going to disrupt any county finances by the unorderly distribution of those funds. There's no requirement that they be spent in any special fashion. I would not think that that itself would be a factor.

D. STARR: What I wanted to know -- this money is not additional money for schools, but to supplement the general fund?

GOVERNOR: No. The Constitution provides that the funds from this must go to the schools -- that is the revenue from it must go to the schools. But the way it works, it doesn't. The law is fine, but after an overall budget for the schools has been determined and this is how much we need, then they say alright, but we've already got a million dollars of it here so we'll cut down the other monies we need to provide by a million dollars. Do you follow me there? So the

net results is no additional funds for the schools. It's the same with the general revenue, but then the general revenue is what we get the proceeds of the money in effect because we would save general revenue capital outlay money. So its a one-pocket or the other sort of situation.

GILLESPY: Governor, have you received a petition from the little town of Altamonte Springs for an audit of books...

GOVERNOR: I'm not familiar with it at this moment. Mr. Miller, have we received such a petition?

MILLER: Not that I know of, sir.

WALDRON: How about the Board of Regents Amendment?

GOVERNOR: I'm going to vote for the Board of Regents Amendment.

WILLIARD: Would the appointments to that Board be yours?

GOVERNOR: Yes, they will. I would undertake, and I have discussed this with the Mayor... As a matter of fact, after our discussions I wrote him a letter so that there might be no misunderstanding and so he would know exactly what my position would be in the event he is elected, but really so he could take the position now. My position is that I would make the appointments -- all appointments -- up through noon of January 5 of 1965. In the making of those appointments, I would be delighted to consult with the next Governor -- the only one who has asked me about it so far is the Democratic nominee. But the decisions will be mine. I will have, incidentally, recommendations I am sure from a lot of other people too, but I will certainly give great weight to what the elected Governor has to say about these appointments.

GILLESPY: In the event it's passed and you go ahead with these appointments, do you anticipate appointing... reappointing members of the Board...

GOVERNOR: Well, that's a bridge that I won't have to cross just yet. Certainly, there would be a high probability of that, but I don't want to make any commitment to do that at all. First of all, I haven't had any discussions about which we just spoke a moment ago.

DELANEY: Governor, are these Regents not appointed by the Governor with the concurrence of the members of the Board of Education?

GOVERNOR: The Statute provides, as I recall, that they are appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Board of Education and the confirmation of the Senate. I think that's the way it runs.

DELANEY: Well, could you make appointments to the Board of Regents that didn't meet with the approval of all the members of the Board of Education -- or a majority at least?

GOVERNOR: Well I could make them. They wouldn't have to approve them. If they didn't approve them, that would raise the question of whether or not it was proper to restrict the power of the Governor to appoint. (laughter)

WALDRON: Are you in favor of the Sarasota homestead exemption?

GOVERNOR: Well, that's a local matter. I think a new approach to homestead exemption is worthwhile and I think that experiment will be helpful to all of us as we study problems applicable on taxation.

WALDRON: It's voted on state-wide though.

GOVERNOR: Right. My normal practice where you have local issues of that kind not involving the county in which I am registered, is not to vote on them at all and leave it, therefore, up to the residents of the county.

WILLIARD: Well that covers everything but the School Bond Amendment and the two appointees, I think...continuing the allocation of auto tag funds...

GOVERNOR: Well, I think that certainly ought to be done, and I will vote for that. The school Bond Amendment motivates on the Capital Outlay Amendment and has been one of the fine steps in the advancement of the schools in Florida. I think it's worked out well and ought to be continued.

Are there other questions?

DELANEY: Governor, a few moments ago you said you liked super patriots by your definition. How do you feel about them when they require that you think precisely as they do -- wave the flag at their prescribed tempo and march at their cadence.

GOVERNOR: Well, I write a lot of letters to these people who think, "I voted for you, but now you've done something else and, therefore, I'll never be for you again -- and you're not a good American, etc." You get letters of this kind, and I tell them that one thing that makes America great is the right of people to differ. I respect them in their opinions on political matters and their right to pose opinions, even though I disagree with them from time to time. I don't think they should try to disfranchise me, as it were.

DELANEY: And you don't think that because they do disagree with you that they are Communists?

GOVERNOR: No. That doesn't make a man a Communist. He may be one, but that doesn't make him one.

Are there other questions?

R. STARR: Governor, could we ask you if you would meet with us next Wednesday morning following the election to get a reflection or two from you on what has occurred?

GOVERNOR: I would be glad to. I can't think of anyone whose views would be less significant by that time. (laughter) In fact, I'll probably be flattered if you ask me.

R. STARR: Would 8:30 be convenient?

GOVERNOR: Do you see any reason, Mr. Hunter, why we couldn't do that?

HUNTER: No sir.

GOVERNOR: Then, that will be fine.

DELANEY: Governor, if I could ask you one more question -- former Governor Fuller Warren is going out into West Florida to campaign for President Johnson on Saturday. We've had a lot of talk about firearms here today. Do you think he should go armed? (laughter)

GOVERNOR: I'm sure that he will be welcomed with opened arms.

(laughter)

season and was put together on a site that had originally been planned for another housing display. The cost ran too high for the exhibit in that instance. I'm sure that with the experience we have and getting started early and doing it in the fashion that, with experience, we know how to do, this can be tripled in income by next year, and it showed a very large profit ratio. The Florida Pavilion and fashion shops there selling all Florida made merchandise grossed about \$50,000 of merchandise sold on consignment and this was sold at a profit above the cost of doing it, so we not only exposed these Florida goods to the market, we made a profit in doing so. The construction project was accomplished by a construction company at \$118,000 under the approved estimate including a reserve of \$120,000 for demolition. When you reflect all the stories you have read about projects going way way over estimates, you can understand what pride we take in that accomplishment. The employees, the people who work for the Development Commission, for the Florida World's Fair Authority, for the various exhibitors, and who in numbers of ways assisted us from day to day to present a pleasant and worthwhile exhibit did, in my judgment, a tremendous job. I made a special trip for just a few hours, really, to New York on one occasion at the closing of the Fair to tell those people when they were assembled for their closing dinner, how very much I appreciate what I thought was an outstanding job and how much the people of Florida appreciated it. The mail that I received about the Fair and the treatment the people are given there has been 99.9 percent favorable. Florida has continued to receive all during the year a rating as the number two state exhibit, defeated only by the home state exhibit of New York. When you consider the relative cost -- the New York State Exhibit cost \$14 million, and it's in its own home state, you can understand that number two in top quality for rating. Some of the other exhibits that were real good had very bad experiences financially. One of them that I heard about which I think, and people have told me was one of the finest natural exhibits, had about a \$7 million deficit. And yet the country that has put up that money thinks it has made an excellent investment. It is estimated to have cost General Electric, so Mr. Stenagard tells me, about \$5 per person for each of the millions that have seen that exhibit. Other industrial exhibitors estimated their cost per person anywhere from \$2 to \$5 each. Of

course, ours has been so much less than that. There are additional benefits yet to come from the Florida World's Fair. The Florida Citrus Tower, of course, will be seen all winter long. It has been viewed, or it has had 100 million exposures already to the immediate traveling public in that area. And now during the winter on the Florida Pavilion there is going to be carried a huge sign, that will flash out to the hundreds of millions that will pass by on the expressway while they are fighting the snow and sleet, "HASN'T YOU RATHER BE IN FLORIDA." We think that this has been an unqualified success -- that next year it will be even better, and that we are fortunate to have been participating. Are there any questions about that, or any other subject?

R. STARR: Governor, how do you get this rating of number two. What is involved in the rating?

GOVERNOR: The World's Fair Authority that runs the whole Fair carried on a continuing market research. They have a team -- I don't know how you do a market research -- I assume you go out and ask the people that have been there various questions about the products that they are sampling -- and the continued rating of Florida published by the market research and distributed among the exhibitors at the Fair, is number two among the state exhibits. And those, of course, are the ones with which it is compared.

Are there other questions?

HAYES: Governor, I understand that the producers of the Democratic film, "The Florida Story" requested from the Development Commission free footage for this political movie. The Development Commission gave them free film. Do you think this should have been done?

GOVERNOR: Well, first of all, I don't know that it has been done, but secondly I think that anytime you can use the footage that we have on the growing and prosperous elements of Florida to get widespread coverage at no cost to the state it is a good thing to do. Now the Development Commission should not, and I hope it did not -- and I believe it did not, go out and incur the expense particularly to produce the film for this political exposure. But if they had film and it is going to be used in this fashion, I think it was a wise use, because the political film will get wide coverage and, I hope, do a good sales job for Florida.

R. STARR: Governor, how do you feel about Cabinet Officers who

would say to their employees, use coercion, or anything else, in getting them to support the major political candidates?

GOVERNOR: Your question was "say to employees or use coercion." First of all let me answer the specific question. As to using coercion they should not, and so far as I know they have not. Second, none has been exerted from this office and when this question came up I had Mr. Miller investigate the law. He advised me that under the Merit System, not only could we not get them to use automobile tags (political bumper stickers), but I think it is against the law for Merit System employees to use tags (political bumper stickers). Personally, all my employees except those right here in the office, are under the Merit System. As far as I am concerned that was a complete answer.

R. STARR: What about those not under the Merit System, Governor, strictly state employees, who are being told that they must do this.

GOVERNOR: I don't know that that's true.

R. STARR: Do you feel that the practice is going on?

GOVERNOR: Coercion is not proper, but you are making a statement as a statement of fact which I do not know to be true.

WALDRON: Governor do you have any thoughts about a Florida law which would require all firearms of any description to be registered?

GOVERNOR: Yes, I have always -- in my legislative experience -- opposed a firearms registration law for the reason that by-and-large it kept the honest people from having firearms to protect themselves. The crooks don't mind not registering it anyway. If they are going to use it to shoot somebody they don't mind violating a little registration law.

WALDRON: Well, why does it keep the honest people from having a gun?

GOVERNOR: Well, that's a nice point. It wouldn't do that, but it would be an additional inhibition on the use of a firearm. It would effect the honest people, I would say, rather than those with other intent. You are correct, it wouldn't keep them from doing it unless it were hedged around certain qualifications for ownership.

WALDRON: My question was prompted by the actions of a rather powerful right wing group in our area which has begun to mail out literature to all its members to arm themselves with ammunition, that the time is coming when patriotic Americans will be shot by firing

squads and they will need to protect themselves.

GOVERNOR: Well, if anybody is going to be shot by a firing squad they do need a gun -- that's right. I don't believe it myself.

WALDRON: Do you believe that situation is serious enough to warrant consideration on the part of upper authorities?

GOVERNOR: I think the Legislature should review the questions of firearms control in the light of the changing urban situation in which we find ourselves. Now the decisions that I used to make in the Legislature when this matter came up had to do with the state that was relative to the tomorrow of rural or suburban or small town state. It ought to be reviewed and quite conceivably as we become more metropolitan in nature this should change. At the present time my own mind about it has not changed.

THURSTON: Governor, do you see any disadvantage to any law that would simply require that the ownership of guns be registered just as the ownership of automobiles is registered?

GOVERNOR: No. I approve of an organized state. I instinctively resist a regimented state. If I were arguing the case, I would argue that this is a beginning step. First you find who has them all and then you begin putting on minimum restrictions and then you expand the restrictions until it does become an almost burden. This would be the feature of it that would call itself to my attention.

D. STARR: What is your reason for your thinking that it should be reviewed in the light that we are changing to an urban or metropolitan society? Do you feel that people in cities should be allowed to have weapons?

GOVERNOR: I think that in an area where there are a few people per square mile if I may use that as a basis of reference, there are more normal usages of guns for sports, for protection from snakes, to get the rabbits out of the garden, and things of this kind. As you get into an apartment complex this is not so. The normal use of guns is a less frequent thing and it becomes more an anti-personnel weapon than it does an anti-rodent or sports weapon. I am not suggesting that we have arrived at a point where there should be a change, but it seems to me that this is a factor which ought to be considered in a review.

R. STARR: Governor, have you had any comment come to you since Tuesday's Cabinet Meeting of the no action that the Cabinet took

on the request of Mr. Brown for the poll watchers on election day?

GOVERNOR: I'm not aware of any. I know of no comment. Let me point out here that there has been no provision for the state to the Secretary of State to do anything that each party or candidate is not authorized to do with greater powers and more effectively for himself. The Secretary of State's function is instructional, really, in this area and he has been busy during these last several years giving the instructions to these supervising officers. I think it needs to be made clear that our action on Tuesday was not a denial, it was simply a decision that state government has no reason for its increased intrusion into these elections.

WILLIARD: Why did the state government see the necessity in the Second Primary?

GOVERNOR: Because there were a number of requests based upon a situation then which the Secretary tells me has been largely improved by now.

WALDRON: Governor, what are your thoughts on the necessity for what the people called "armed minute men" groups?

GOVERNOR: I haven't, strangely, received one of these appeals myself, although I do have a couple of guns, but I got them many years ago and haven't used them.

D. STARR: They're still anti-rodent? (laughter)

GOVERNOR: They're still anti-squirrel, really. (laughter)

R. STARR: Since Mr. Waldron opened the door on that particular subject, Governor, I don't think you have ever given us your opinion on what you personally think of the super patriots in this country.

GOVERNOR: I like super patriots -- by my definition. I don't think a man can be too patriotic. I fully subscribe that "Breaths there the man, with soul so dead, who never to himself has said, this is my own, my native land." I think a man who is not moved by passion for his native land is a strange creature.

WILLIARD: Governor, Mayor Burns said yesterday he thinks that Senator Goldwater now is ahead in Florida. What is your view of the situation?

GOVERNOR: Well, of course, this is an area where anybody can be right. My own opinion is that President Johnson is ahead at this time.

D. STARR: By about how much, Governor?

GOVERNOR: I would think, Mr. Starr, that (this is a mere speculation) it might be as much as 100,000 votes.

DELANEY: That figure you used Governor, of 100,000. Is that the most optimistic figure that anyone has used so far?

GOVERNOR: No. I heard Congressman Pepper the other day say that in his judgment it was more than that, but he didn't tell me what his figure was. But he did indicate it was more than that.

DELANEY: Well the last time you said anything about it, I think you said you were not quite to the point of predicting a victory for the next President in Florida.

GOVERNOR: Right. About the time of the San Antonio Conference, just before leaving out there, I became convinced -- one doesn't have the assurance to convince him in a thing of this kind -- but I became of the opinion that the President would probably carry Florida. Now I think the situation has improved.

DELANEY: What made you reach this conclusion?

GOVERNOR: Just general feelings. I have continued to see polls which do show an increasing lead for the President, but more than that it has just been the reflections that I have received -- not scientific, just a feeling from talking with a lot of people about the outcome of the election.

DELANEY: Reflected in your mail to any degree?

GOVERNOR: No. I haven't had too many letters about the election per se.

R. STARR: I note in the LBJ campaign literature many of the Cabinet Officers have come forward with statements for the President.

I have seen none from you or any releases made by you. Have you been asked for this or do you intend to turn out something along this line?

GOVERNOR: Well, listen to your radio sometime today. I put one on the air sometime last night, I believe.

R. STARR: I mean printed statements, Governor.

GOVERNOR: I don't recall whether I have issued a printed statement or not, but I don't think there is any question about my position. I'll be glad to print one.

WALDRON: Do you put out one in braille? (laughter)

WALDRON: Are you going to Congressman Pepper's breakfast in the morning?

GOVERNOR: I'm sorry, I 'm not. I was being facetious a moment ago, but really and truly, this is my vacation period.

WALDRON: Is this your last one?

GOVERNOR: My last vacation? Probably.

SHERRILL: Governor, you went on a moonshine raid recently, so you are interested in liquor. (laughter) Liquor law enforcement. It came to my attention yesterday that there's a whole stack of cases sitting over there, some of them a couple of years old. That is from the time the charge was made until the time they get around to doing something about them. It was a case in relation to a very notorious bar in Miami. They say that lack of personnel, lack of attorney, etc., is putting them way behind. Have you heard of any effort on their part to take the step necessary to catch up with these flagrant cases?

GOVERNOR: In the Miami area?

SHERRILL: Anywhere in the state. Their desks are piled up over there with cases -- most behind.

GOVERNOR: I was not aware of this, Mr. Sherrill. I will find out before the day is over.

SHERRILL: At least this is what they told me when I asked why it took them two years to close this case.

GOVERNOR: I am not familiar with that. I was not familiar with the situation, and I appreciate your calling it to my attention. I will find out about it right away. I'll be glad to give you a later report on it if I can.

WALDRON: I might sound like I'm harping on this minute man thing, but awhile ago I asked if you had any opinion on it and you said you had not had any request yourself. I'm under obligation to write a story in the morning about this thing, and I don't want to leave your position in doubt.

GOVERNOR: Mr. Waldron, I believe in maximum freedom for people whether they are for or against. I would not, myself, do many things or prove for myself many things that I would not object to other people doing. I might think they were extreme or perhaps that's a bad word to use in the context of the current situation. I might

think they've gone too far in one direction or another and still not want to inhibit them from doing so. It's sort of the philosophy of: I don't agree with what you say, but I'll defend with my life your right to say it. That's really about the approach that I would take to the matters of which you speak. You know I have been and am tremendously interested in cold war efforts and in fight against Communism per se, but I don't think that personally we have arrived or are anywhere near a point which is an indication for people to be arming themselves against firing squads. Although I believe that, nevertheless, if you feel that your life is in danger, I am not going to try to inhibit you from taking any lawful means to protect yourself.

HAYES: Governor, you say you believe in people being for and against things. Are you against any of the Constitutional Amendments coming up for a vote on Tuesday?

GOVERNOR: Well, let me see. (laughter) If you will take them up one at a time, I will be glad to.... (laughter)

HAYES: Resportionment.

GOVERNOR: I think that I will vote for that. I have a strong feeling because obviously, in all probability, it is preparatory but I think that I will nevertheless vote for it.

HAYES: How about the gas tax?

GOVERNOR: I am of a divided opinion on that. I do recognize the practical necessity for counties to continue to raise monies for their secondary road programs on the one hand. On the other hand, I do think that formula is way out moded and ought to be changed. Of course, it can be changed by another Constitutional Amendment, and I'm not sure. I think probably I will vote against that one, but I'm not sure.

WILLIARD: Governor, do you know enough about it to know what would happen if that amendment is rescinded? I mean if the amendment does not pass.

GOVERNOR: I think that we will continue to operate as we have except that these maturity dates of future bond issues would have to be earlier and, therefore, the funds available to the counties would be less. Now the counties are crying and the cities too, as you know, for the state to assume additional responsibilities in the area of rights-of-way. If this were done perhaps the needs for county funds would be lessened. So without knowing exactly what program