

NEWS CONFERENCE  
GOVERNOR FARRIS BRYANT  
TALLAHASSEE  
MAY 14, 1964



NEWSMEN PARTICIPATING: Bill Bowen, WCTV; Robert W. Delaney, ONEAL, GADSDEN SENTINEL; Jim Gillespy, UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL; John Hayes, WFGA, WTVJ; Lee Lepensohn, ASSOCIATED PRESS; Budd Mellichamp, ABC RADIO; Joe Rice, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES; Hettie Seabrook, JOHN H. FERRY PAPERS; Ray Starr, ABC RADIO; George Thurston, WFLA, WJXT; Martin Waldron, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES-MIAMI HERALD SERVICE; Everett Williard, FLORIDA TIMES UNION; Paul Wills, ASSOCIATED PRESS.

GOVERNOR: Good morning, gentlemen and lady. Do you have any questions this morning?

WALDRON: Governor, have you had any complaints about the irregularities in the May 5 primary?

GOVERNOR: Have I as Governor?

WALDRON: Yes.

GOVERNOR: No, I have read about them and heard rumors about them, but I have not had any complaints about them as such.

WALDRON: Do you know if anybody is investigating the alleged irregularities?

GOVERNOR: Nobody on the part of the Governor's Office. Now, I would assume that if there are complaints they would have been directed to the Secretary of State's office and what he is doing about it I don't have any knowledge.

R. STARR: Governor, if the Legislature did come back here for a special session, you talked about urging constitutional revision; would you now in the light of what has happened, sir, urge them also to go into the election laws of the state?

GOVERNOR: I don't know that there is any emergency there. It seems to me that can be handled in the '65 session without any great problem. There is a general election coming up, but I seriously doubt that problems of the kind that have been indicated would be particularly pressing at that time.

WILLS: What would you think the Legislature should do on the basis of the problems that seem to arise now? Have you given any thought to it?

GOVERNOR: I really haven't, Mr. Wills, studied it from that standpoint so far. I am very keenly concerned in the purity of the ballot. If there are differences of opinion among registrars or others as to exactly what is required, these ought to be cleared up because we can have all the political fighting we want to until people reach the booth

and at that point it ought to stop and all other errors can be corrected if the people's will at the polls can be accurately and properly expressed. And I think that anything necessary to insure the purity of the ballot ought to be done.

WILLIARD: When you said there have been a lot of differences among the supervisors, I believe you said, did you mean in the standard for registering the voters?

GOVERNOR: Well, as I understand it and mind you the only pleading I have seen -- I was made a defendant in this Alachua County suit by the registrar to expunge the grand jury report and a copy of the pleading went across my desk and I thumbed it and she indicated that she was operating according to certain laws and she thought they charged her with having been operating according to other laws. This is really what I had in mind when I made that particular remark. These things ought to be clarified.

WILLIARD: In connection with that, too, Governor, do you think a person who registers and thinks he is registered properly -- do you think if the registrar makes a mistake of not signing it that the voter should be disenfranchised?

GOVERNOR: I think that the principle matter of concern is the purity of the ballot and that that ought to be maintained. Now, whatever the standards are -- you can make the standards what the voter thinks or what the registrar thinks -- whatever you want the standards to be, but when those standards have been determined they ought to be enforced and maintained. Now, you can argue as to whether they are more strict than they ought to be in particular cases, but whatever they are determined to be, those standards ought to be maintained. I think the people are entitled to know that where the casting of a ballot is concerned the law will be enforced.

ROMER: Governor, if the registrar makes the mistake, why should the voter be penalized?

GOVERNOR: I don't say that he should be penalized. I am not suggesting that at all, but there has got to be some standard about which we move. I say those standards ought to be maintained, whether it penalizes or benefits it doesn't make any difference to me. But whatever they are, those are the standards that ought to be maintained. Are there other questions?

HAYES: Governor, earlier this week the Dade County Grand Jury recommended that the next administration replace the Road Board appointees with professional administrators. Do you have any comment on this?

GUBNER: No, that has been a continuing recommendation. It has an appeal, of course. You get away from the kind of response which has been unique in a democracy. For instance, I haven't read the Dade County Grand Jury report -- I was shown a clipping of it a few moments ago and the thought occurred to me that if we had had that kind of administrator, I could not have taken the action to put almost \$11 million into the East-West Expressway in Dade County which I did recently because that wasn't provided for by any formula, nor could I have taken \$5 million and devoted it to Interama -- \$3 million of that is lying up in cash waiting on Interama to be built in Dade County -- Maybe this ought not to have been done, but it was done and is being done in an effort to meet the needs of the people as they occur. One thing that is so difficult for voters to understand, and I can appreciate it full well -- you take the interstate system, I think in the Eastern part of the State of Florida, that is from Tallahassee east and south, there are only 27 counties that are touched by the interstate system and all the others are cut out. Well, if you are going to divide the money up on a population basis you will never build the interstate system, it can't be done. You simply have to -- in Hamilton County, for instance, is a large segment of the interstate system leading to all the rest of Florida -- if you divided the money on population Hamilton County's segment of interstate would never be built. Now, these are factors that must be taken into consideration. Now this does not mean that the present system is perfect or that improvements cannot be made. Of course, they can, but I would be very reluctant to have ourselves put in any straight jacket so far as the utilization of the State Road funds is concerned. And I would not for myself because it won't effect me in any event, but for the good of Florida in the future.

THURMON: Governor, would replacing the political appointees with professional administrators on the Road Board necessarily result in some practice like allocation of money according to county population?

GOVERNOR: Of course not. Engineers -- professional people -- notoriously and perhaps unfairly are charged, at least, with having two goals -- that is a point of departure and a point of destination and drawing a straight line and going between it regardless of other considerations. Well, of course, engineers don't do that sort of thing. Nevertheless, they would be far less responsive to other than engineering considerations. And there are many times when other than engineering considerations -- economic factors, the beauty of a park, scenic drives and things like this ought to be considered that might not be considered under such a system.

THURSTON: Would you consider it an improvement in road administration if the Road Board were reorganized in such a way as to eliminate the little kingdom that each board member now has?

GOVERNOR: Yes, I would. That's why we started our, what we call, off-the-top program. You see there is about forty to fifty million dollars of primary funds available for construction each year and we took \$10 million off the top each of these years and said this money is going to be spent statewide. It is the way we built the interstate system by and large and the off-the-top program. We are going to build these first because these are of all-state significance. Now, you can expand that to \$20 million or all of the money if you wish to do so. I don't know whether that would be proper or not because there are problems of maintenance; interstate roads cost \$4,000 a mile to maintain, for instance; and there are many other problems that must be considered. But I do believe that the sort of kingdom structure ought to be broken down and we have made a start at doing that.

THURSTON: Could that be done by reorganizing and changing the structure of the Road Board as a matter of appointment or would it have to be done by the Legislature?

GOVERNOR: No. I am not sure to what extent the law would restrict you on that basis. As a matter of fact, when we took the \$10 million off the top I am not sure we checked with the lawyers as to whether we could do that or not. I think we just saw it needed to be done and have done it. So I couldn't answer that question.

DELMAY: Are the Road Board districts set up by the Constitution or by statutes?

GOVERNOR: I don't know whether they are set up -- Are they constitutional or statutory, Mr. Chairman?

PHILLIPS: I think they are statutory.

GOVERNOR: I believe they are. I think they are statutory and follow an old congressional districting program.

Q: By statute then they could be changed to conform with the present congressional districts?

GOVERNOR: They could, correct. And the percentages could be varied. For instance, in the 4th district at the present time a little bit better than 25 per cent -- not 20 per cent which is 1/5th -- but a little bit better than 25 per cent of the monies are allocated to the 4th district.

WALDRON: Governor, in a campaign issue recently Mr. Dickinson endorsed Mr. Burns and there has been an allegation that Mr. Burns agreed to pick up a \$100 thousand deficit that Dickinson had. In 1960 Mr. Dickinson endorsed you. Did you pick up any campaign funds?

GOVERNOR: No, sir, not then and I know nothing about the allegations at this time, one way or the other. I have no knowledge about it.

SEABROOK: You may have answered this question before. But in view of the difference of opinion on the matter of the vote recount, do you think it should be spelled out more clearly in the law?

GOVERNOR: Yes, I do. Yes, this ought to be done. It is a good point. Nobody has asked that. I do feel that the provision for a recount ought to be clearly set forth so that if there is going to be such it can be done rapidly and with as little possible delay in the provision for the second primary. Also, of course, if it is found that there is not time for a recount and the necessary campaigning before the second primary some provision ought to be made perhaps for delay of the second primary.

THURSTON: Governor, isn't it within the power of the court to do that now -- say the Supreme Court?

GOVERNOR: I would hesitate to say it is not. I don't know exactly from what statute or provision they would derive it, but I would think that in the provision of complete justice this might be required.

BOWEN: If they see there has been fraud or something on that order, they can throw the entire election out can't they?

GOVERNOR: Oh, yes. He was talking about deferring the second assembly, I believe. I understood that. Of course they can.

THURSTON: What changes do you think would be desirable in the election laws for smoothing out situations such as developed this week?

GOVERNOR: I haven't really given this the study that I ought to do before trying to answer that kind of a question. I really just am not that familiar with the election laws. When I studied them, I studied them from one viewpoint and I didn't go beyond that viewpoint at the time.

THURSTON: Has it occurred to you from the incidents of this week -- the noise and shouting -- that perhaps some changes in election procedures might be desirable?

GOVERNOR: Yes, I would think so. I certainly would.

SEABROOK: Who is going to replace Mr. Jarrard?

GOVERNOR: No, ma'am, no decision has been made on that yet. As a matter of fact, I have only had a chance to talk with him by telephone I think since receiving his attempted resignation, which I have not yet accepted.

DELANEY: Governor, there is a man down in West Palm Beach out of work right now. (laughter)

GOVERNOR: He hasn't applied.

DOWEN: Governor, I know this is a little late because the votes are in and everything, but in the investigation your office was going to do of the allegations of Mr. Faircloth on Mr. Kynes use of the airplane what was the result of that investigation by your office?

GOVERNOR: I found that as to the airplanes over which I have any surveillance - as I recall the charge was "the Governor's air force was up to this business," this was not true as to them. As to others, I requested of Mr. Kynes to advise me if he had been utilizing any of the other planes for such purposes and was advised that he had not and I responded to Mr. Faircloth at that time to that effect. That was about the size of it. Mr. Kynes is a constitutional officer at this time in any event, and of course he is not responsible to me in that particular area.

DELANEY: You haven't had any planes shot down lately have you?

GOVERNOR: No, nor pilots shot.

DELANEY: In Polk County it was rumored they were going to shoot down the Bryant air force.

GOVERNOR: Well, it wouldn't be hard to do. (laughter)

GILLESPIE: Along this same line, there is a report going around in Ocala that the facility there maintaining state airplanes down there was going to be closed. Do you know of any plans to do this?

GOVERNOR: No. That arises out of, and I will give it to the extent it does have some substance -- out of a request by the City of Ocala for the release of the property to them on some mutually agreeable terms. The facility in Ocala has not been as successful as I had hope that it would be and I did instruct the persons in charge to negotiate to see if favorable terms could be worked out. They have not reported to me that it could and so it is just in that nebulous state.

GILLESPIE: Well, do I understand from your statement then that if terms could be worked out to turn it over to Ocala then it would be abolished or disbanded?

GOVERNOR: If terms favorable to the state could be worked out, then we would do it. The real problem with the facility in Ocala that I did not contemplate has been pilot resistance. I guess I should have anticipated it, but they prefer going to some private shop. They are probably treated more courteously, they probably get a courtesy car to run into town, they are probably coaxed there -- all those things a free enterprise provides aren't provided at Ocala. And I found the pilot resistance to the use of the facility that I had not anticipated.

GILLESPIE: Well, now, as I recall this was the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission facility anyway wasn't it? Would they just get rid of their facility, too?

GOVERNOR: Correct. Well, of course, the people that I am having do the negotiating is Mr. Madill of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and he has complete freedom in working out the terms. Of course, they had three men and a facility in the first place. I think there are four people down there now so so far as the state is concerned there is not a great deal involved. But on the broad basis that we tried to establish it it hasn't saved the money I hoped it it would do. No reason why it shouldn't, except these intangible

factors that we haven't been able to cope with.

GILLESBY: You did say it was running the black now though?

GOVERNOR: I believe it is. The last report that I have, which was about two months ago now it was running in the black.

SEAROCK: Would you say that that was one of the few disappointments of your administration?

GOVERNOR: I think it is one of the few real failures, I really do. And I am sorry for this one. Well, I say a failure, it is not running in the red. It could be made to work, but I don't have time and I am not sure the next governor will work on it anyway. (laughter)

WILLIARD: What is the matter, did you have too many generals in your air force?

GOVERNOR: Well, we have a very high class air force. (laughter)  
Are there other questions.

Thank you gentlemen and lady.

SEVERAL: Thank you.