



# ELECTION GUIDE 2008

## Editors' note,

The following election guide was produced by the Beta Gamma (UF) chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha political science honor society. Our goal in providing this guide is simple: to help educate and inform potential voters on the upcoming presidential and local elections.

In order to do so, we have provided brief summary profiles of the front-running presidential candidates. We have also profiled eight individuals running for seats in the Gainesville city commission. Aside from candidate profiles, this guide contains cursory synopses of several issues pertinent to our national elections.

This publication is the culmination of efforts from a group of volunteers from the Beta Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha. The Student Advocacy Network (SAN) provided additional input regarding presidential candidate rankings on student issues.

At this time, we from the Beta Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha would like to extend our sincerest thanks to the Pi Sigma Alpha national chapter for their generosity in approving of this project and granting us the funds necessary for its completion.

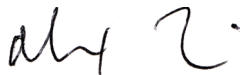
If you would like to learn more about the UF chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha please refer to our website: <http://grove.ufl.edu/~pisigma/>

In brief, our organization is the University of Florida's sole political science honor society. Through our meetings and activities we strive to promote political awareness on campus and in our greater community.

To contact our organization directly please e-mail [pisigma@grove.ufl.edu](mailto:pisigma@grove.ufl.edu)



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### Disclaimer:

This publication is in no way affiliated with the University of Florida. The views and material within this pamphlet are solely those of the Beta Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha

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Dated: January 29th, 2008

## The Issues

The following section addresses some of the main issues up for debate in this year's presidential election. Included in this section are articles covering *Health Care*, *Education*, *the Economy*, *Immigration*, *Energy*, and *the Global War on Terror*. Our goal in writing these short, issue-focused articles was to present up front and unbiased information about particular domestic and international policy areas of the United States. By no means do these articles explain the complexity of our government's policy choices; however, they can hopefully provide some insight for the voter regarding the important matters of the 2008 presidential elections. Pi Sigma Alpha encourages all potential voters to research the issues more thoroughly prior to casting their vote.

### HEALTH CARE

Americans spent more than \$2 trillion on health care for the first time in 2006. Spending on prescription drugs has increased by \$16 billion dollars, or 8.5%. Rising health care costs are a major issue for this year's political candidates.

While the United States is one of the most advanced nations in the area of health care, there are still an estimated 12-16% of Americans who do not have complete medical coverage. Furthermore, the government supplies medical coverage for more than 80 million Americans on Medicare or Medicaid.

The divisiveness of the health care issue has made it one of the most fiercely debated issues in this year's presidential election.

One proposed solution is universal health care. Proponents argue that this will ensure everyone receives proper health care and that medical costs will reduce. Opponents argue that as a consequence taxes will increase and the absence of a market mechanism may lead to fewer incentives for research or innovation in the medical field.

#### 2006: Health care costs top \$2 trillion

Health care in the United States is a very important issue that directly affects us not only economically but physically. Therefore, it is imperative that Americans understand the issue at hand and the risks at stake.

### ENERGY

Energy policy is inherently interrelated with some of the most contentious issues in America to date including environmental policies, economic performance and national security. In 2005, 86.1% of America's energy consumption was derived from fossil fuel sources such as coal, natural gas and petroleum. These energy sources contribute the majority of greenhouse gases in the

atmosphere which are central to the debate on global warming.

Some argue that more needs to be done in terms of strengthening our already existing environmental protection standards as well as increasing our government's support of alternative energy technologies in order to

## ENERGY, FROM PAGE 3

reduce our environmental impact. Others suggest that such measures will increase the cost of energy and that a free market economy can be adequately responsive to environmental degradation.

Many questions have emerged due to the heavy reliance of the U.S. on foreign sources of energy. For example, the United States is credited with consuming 25.1% of all oil consumed during 2004, and 63.4% of this oil was imported.

A significant portion of this energy came from states such as Mexico (12.5%), Saudia Arabia (10.7%), Venezuela (10.3), Nigeria (8.2%), Angola (3.9%) and Russia (2.7%). Many of these foreign oil-producers conduct their governmental affairs in ways that conflict with the U.S. values regarding human rights and democracy.

At home, some believe this as a reason to develop more sources of energy, while others suggest we strengthen our relationships with foreign oil-producers in order to secure future access to energy resources.

## ECONOMY

The U.S. economy grew by an average of 2.9 percent annually from 2002-2006. This expansion occurred while inflation, unemployment, and interest rates remained comparatively low. Economic output in the U.S. remains at the top over any other nation. With U.S. gross domestic product accounting for \$13.13 trillion in 2006, a number that represents roughly 25 percent of world GDP.

Broken down by economic sector, *services* account for roughly 68 percent of U.S. GDP, with *production of goods* amounting to 20 percent, and *federal, state, and local governments* covering the remaining 12 percent of U.S. GDP.

The most rapidly expanding sectors in the U.S. are with financial, scientific, or technical services, in addition to durable goods manufacturing (like computers and electronic products); real estate and health care industries are also growing. The sectors that are receiving a declining share of GDP include agriculture and mining; plus low-skilled manufacturing, primarily in textiles.

Unemployment in the U.S. hovers around 5 percent; Florida in particular has a rate of 4.7 percent. In general, U.S. workers do not endure long-term unemployment, with only 12 percent of unemployed not being able to

find work within a year.

Despite having the largest GDP in the world, the U.S. also accounts for the highest amount of imports. In fact, our aggregate total of imports succeeds our export levels enough to result in a \$758.5 billion trade deficit. To sustain this inflow level requires continual foreign investment.

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The United States produces roughly ¼ of the world's GDP

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According to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2007 World Factbook, the U.S. economy faces "Long-term problems including inadequate investment in economic infrastructure, rapidly rising medical and pension costs of an aging population, sizable trade and budget deficits, and stagnation of family income in the lower economic groups."

Income inequality in the U.S. is rising. The Congressional Budget Office reported in 2004 that the top fifth of U.S. households earned 53.5 percent of all U.S. income, while the bottom fifth earned only 4.1 percent.

In 2001, under President George W. Bush

SEE ECONOMY, PAGE 5

## ECONOMY, FROM PAGE 4

the Congress passed the Economic Growth and Tax Relief and Reconciliation Act. This piece of tax reform legislation included a gradual reduction in the top-tier tax rate; a fall which would go from 39.6 percent tax on wage earnings to a 33 percent tax.

Despite President Bush's recent tax cuts, the U.S. income tax is still considered progressive. Although the social security tax (with its taxable income ceiling), flattening of other taxable revenues (such as capital gains), and sales tax (which draws

from consumption) help lessen the overall progressiveness of the U.S. tax system, making the percentage taxed across income levels more equal.

Many economists foresee a recession in the U.S. due to the large trade deficit and sub-prime mortgaging crisis. Recent reports suggest the Federal Reserve will reduce borrowing cost in order to help stimulate the economy. The general weakening of the U.S. dollar points towards improving American trade balances, however, it is undetermined how reduced American demand might damage the world economy.

## IMMIGRATION

Immigration to the United States has always existed. In fact, historically immigration has played such a major role in the demographics of this nation that America is often called a "Melting Pot." Though not a new phenomenon, immigration has become increasingly polarizing as an issue.

In 2006, 1.27 million immigrants were granted legal residence. Mexico is the leading source of new immigrants to the U.S. over the past two decades.

Perspectives on immigration encompass economics, personal politics, nationalism, environmentalism, and ethics. Adversaries in the immigration debate are divided between

providing equal rights for immigrants in the labor force and denying immigrants access to the American job market. In general, businesses favor immigration while low-skilled labor does not.

Some believe immigrants are depressing wages because they are paid less than non-immigrant workers and pay little taxes in proportion to government services received. Still, others maintain that we are dependent on immigration and that it should be allowed.

Immigration is a serious issue in American politics that should be an important factor when analyzing political candidates.

## THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

The War on Terror, also known as the Global War on Terror (GWOT), is a campaign initiated by the United States following the events of September 11th, 2001. Terrorist organizations or states that sponsor them are the primary targets of the GWOT.

The first stage of the GWOT began in Afghanistan with an American and British

aerial bombardment supported by Afghan Northern Alliance ground troops. The U.S. invasion of Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein and the Baathist government was the second stage of the GWOT. Altogether, a number of different nations support the GWOT, of which the United Kingdom, Germany,

SEE WAR ON TERROR, PAGE 6



## WAR ON TERROR, FROM PAGE 5

Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Korea, Georgia and Poland lend the largest troop support. In total, there are roughly 18,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan supported by (approximately) 35,000 coalition and NATO forces.

The War in Iraq is supported by a coalition of approximately 154,000 U.S. troops and 10,000 non-U.S. troops, in addition to approximately 20,000 mercenaries. The total cost in monetary terms of both wars is estimated at close to \$500 billion.

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The War in Afghanistan is supported by roughly 18,000 U.S. troops.

Nearly 154,000 U.S. troops serve in the War in Iraq.

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The War in Afghanistan can be characterized by the Afghan National Army's control of the capital city, Kabul, and a strong foreign military presence in parts of other provinces. Regional warlords control many of the provinces and institute their own form of justice.

A significant drug trade has resurfaced in Afghanistan over the past few years, and in 2005 the country regained its title as the world's leading opium producer, which it still holds today. Recent years have also witnessed a return of the Taliban insurgency. In 2006, nearly 800 deaths were blamed on

the Taliban; profits from the drug trade are believed to fund Taliban operations.

An unknown number of civilian deaths ranging from 7,300 to 14,000 have occurred since the war began in October 2001. Approximately 800 coalition deaths have occurred since the start of the war, with nearly 6,000 more in Afghan National Army deaths.

Casualties from the Iraq War are far more extensive, with approximately 4,000 U.S. killed, 300 coalition forces killed, and 10,000 Iraqi Security Forces also killed. An estimated 1,000 contractors have also lost their lives, of which 235 came from the United States.

The Iraq War began on March 20, 2003. Sectarian violence continues to plague the country as tribal affiliations in many areas dominate political allegiances and contribute to large amounts of retribution type killings.

The current face of the Iraq war is characterized by U.S. reconstruction efforts and the recent surge in military forces. Reconstruction efforts have included such projects as promoting local businesses, building schools, providing public services, and general city clean-up.

In early 2007, the U.S. initiated its surge strategy which brought more than 25,000 more troops to Iraq, bringing the total number of U.S. troops in-country to 175,000. The effects of the troop surge have been highly contested, with certain reports claiming that the surge has helped reduce violence, while other reports claim the surge in combination with different American tactics are the reason for reduced violence.

*"War is a continuation of policy by other means" – Carl von Clausewitz*

*"There never was a good war or a bad peace" – Benjamin Franklin*

## EDUCATION

To learn is a privilege, to receive a free education is an American right. Education has always been one of the most important issues to be addressed in the Capitol's agenda. Today, education is still a social and economic imperative of policy-makers.

Although one of the best at providing public education, the U.S. faces a budgetary issue in regards to financing education while spending on national defense is at an all-time high.

Many feel that losing the War on Iraq would be a disgrace to America; others believe that money spent on national security and wars abroad can be spent on education.

According to the National Priorities Project, an organization that reports how American citizens' tax dollars are being spent, the cost of the War on Iraq is

exceeding \$275 million per day. This is money which could potentially provide payments for teachers' salaries and scholarships to college students.

Meanwhile, the concern of providing vouchers for private and religious schools has stirred strong opposition due to the belief that funding should be devoted to public schools. However, advocates of the school voucher program deem that any student should have their own "school choice," and do not object to using tax dollars to fund for this program.

As a taxpayer, it is unmistakably vital to consider where one's money is being dispersed, principally in this essential subject matter of education that not only affects us today, but will certainly affect the young generation of the future.

## Student Advocacy Network



### CANDIDATE REPORT CARD

Republicans		Democrats	
Giuliani	D-	Clinton	A-
Huckabee	C	Edwards	B
McCain	C-	Gravel	C
Paul	D	Kucinich	C-
Romney	C+	Obama	B-

[StudentAdvocacyNetwork.org](http://StudentAdvocacyNetwork.org)

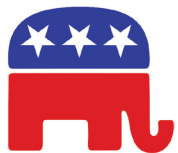
The following "Candidate Report Card" grades the presidential candidates based on statements from their campaigns, related literature and their responses to a number of surveys. These grades do not reflect any specific political allegiance. Those who received higher grades did so because their campaign is responsive to the requests of students in putting forth plans which address the fundamental needs of students in higher education. Those with poor grades require improvement in addressing and proposing solutions to the fundamental needs of students.

Student Advocacy Network (SAN) works to help students in higher learning get the most from their education. Be it by educating decision makers about fundamental needs

of students, facilitating discussion between students and residential communities, or bridging gaps between students and the job/internship market. SAN assists student organizations by helping them understand the fundamental needs of their student-members. For a more detailed overview of the candidates stance regarding higher education as well as more on SAN and the fundamental needs, visit our website at [www.StudentAdvocacyNetwork.org](http://www.StudentAdvocacyNetwork.org)

## Florida Primaries

Florida institutes a “closed” primary. This simply means that only registered members of either of the two major parties can vote for the candidates within that party. In other words, registered Democrats in Florida can vote only for the Democratic presidential candidates. This is also the same for registered Republicans and their presidential candidates.



### Republican Presidential Candidates

#### RUDY GIULIANI

Rudy Giuliani is the Mayor of New York City from 1994 until the end of 2001. Giuliani received a bachelor degree in Political Science with a Minor in Philosophy from Manhattan College, and then received his Juris Doctor (law degree) from New York University Law School in 1968.

Shortly after that he began working in the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, and was named Chief of the Narcotics Unit in 1973. In 1981 he was named Associate Attorney General in the Reagan administration, the third-highest position in the Department of Justice.

During this time he is noted for his support of the Reagan administrations understanding that Haitian immigrants were migrating due to economic conditions rather than political oppression and thus not qualified for political asylum.

In 1983, Giuliani became United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and is known for his crackdowns on organized crime, white collar criminals (many involving Wall Street), and drug dealers. In 1993, he was elected the Mayor of the city of New York. While Mayor of

New York City the city adopted an aggressive enforcement-deterrent strategy and crime rates decreased steadily. He is also known for his avocation of the privatization of failing public schools and increasing school choice through a voucher-based system.

Currently, Giuliani asserts that keeping taxes low is a measure consistent with positive economic growth, and that this can be achieved by simplifying the tax code and reducing the corporate tax rate. In regards to health care, Giuliani is proposing a tax deduction for families and individuals who purchase private individual health insurance policies. He suggests that this will increase competition in the private industry and will lead to lower costs.

Giuliani is a supporter of the war in Iraq, and has suggested that the President has the authority to direct federal funding for the war if none is already in place. He also defends the use of interrogation techniques such as waterboarding and sleep deprivation. Giuliani is pro-choice and supports federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.



#### MIKE HUCKABEE



Mike Huckabee is the former governor of Arkansas and an ordained Southern Baptist Minister. He says that “his religion defines him” and it seemingly defines his politics. He believes that marriage can only be a union between a man and women. He also plans on reforming the health care system by advocating policies that will encourage the private sector to seek innovative ways to bring down costs and improve the free market health care services.

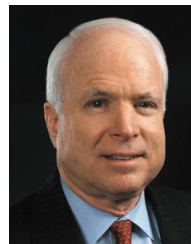
Huckabee believes that education is a paramount issue and would like to reform the No Child Left Behind Act by paying special attention to increasing education in the Arts.

Huckabee views immigration as a national security issue, consequently, it is one of the top issues in his campaign. He supports the Senate's 3 billion dollar allocation for border security. This money

will turn the current “catch and release” of persons entering illegally into “catch and detain” and will help crack down on those who overstay their visas.

Huckabee does not support the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and instead supports a regional summit so that Iraq's neighbors can become financially and militarily committed to stabilizing the country. He believes that Israel is an important ally in the Middle East and plans to maintain a strong U.S. relationship with the state.

Huckabee aims for better relations with Cuba by reinforcing and implementing such government policies as the Libertad Act. Huckabee stresses that, as president, he would be capable leader in crisis management; he plans to remove FEMA from the Department of Homeland Security and restore it to Cabinet status so that its director would report directly to the President. He would also renew focus on Homeland Security to resolve the security issues left unresolved since 9/11.



#### JOHN MCCAIN

John McCain is a U.S. Senator from the state of Arizona. After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1958, he served as a naval officer in the U.S. Navy.

During this time, he piloted attack aircraft operations in the Vietnam War. In one such operation, his aircraft was shot down and he suffered fractures to a leg and both of his arms upon ejection from the aircraft. McCain was captured by the North Vietnamese and spent five and a half years as a prisoner of war (POW) and was routinely

subjected to torture.

In 1977, McCain became the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate, and in 1981 he retired from the Navy as a Captain. In 1982, he successfully ran for Arizona's first congressional district in the House of Representatives. Four years later, he became a senator of Arizona. As a senator, McCain cosponsored the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, also known as the McCain-Feingold Act, which restricted the amount of funds available for contribution to national political parties and prohibited

## McCain, FROM PAGE 9

the use of corporate money for “issue ads” before certain elections.

McCain introduced the McCain Detainee Amendment to the Defense appropriations bill of 2005, prohibiting inhumane treatment of prisoners and requires military interrogations to be performed according to the Code of Military Justice.

Senator McCain advocates lowering taxes by increasing the transparency of government spending and limiting “pork barrel” spending. In order to raise wages

in many economic sectors and increase U.S. competitiveness in the global market, McCain suggests decreasing the Corporate Tax Rate from 35 percent to 25 percent.

Senator McCain defends America’s efforts in the “Global War on Terror,” and believes new strategies should be enacted in order to secure Iraq’s development.

Senator McCain opposes the legality of abortion and promotes adoption. He also supports the preservation of heterosexual marriage but believes it is a matter of states’ rights and therefore opposes a constitutional amendment to its affect.

## RON PAUL

Standing for limited constitutional government, low taxes, civil liberties, free markets, a peaceful foreign policy and a return to sound monetary policies, Ron Paul is a 10-term Texas congressman and practicing obstetrician. Paul believes he stands apart from his fellow Republicans, who he claims have “lost their way” by giving in to Washington’s climate of big government and deficit spending. Paul voted against the PATRIOT Act and the Iraq War and has never voted for a tax increase or any government program not specifically authorized by the constitution.

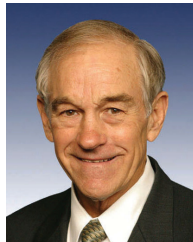
Paul opposes America’s fiat monetary system, hefty spending and its decades of “military adventurism.” Paul vows to bring the troops back home not only from Iraq, but from Asia and Europe as well. He believes that by placing American military forces in a peacetime posture, our nation can once again be viewed as a friend to the people of the world rather than an occupying power.

By combining cuts in government spending with a return to sound monetary policy, Paul wishes to restore solvency to the American economy and apply free-market

principles to tackle America’s pressing domestic problems. Paul maintains that he would honor all commitments to those dependent on Social Security, while also allowing young people just entering the workforce a path to opt out of system.

Paul supports making all medical expenses tax deductible, eliminating regulations that discourage small businesses from providing coverage, giving doctors the freedom to negotiate with insurance companies and eliminating the FDA bureaucracy that inflates the prices of pharmaceuticals.

Paul is an outspoken advocate of states’ rights. While personally against abortion, he argues that the decision should be left up to the states. He also stands firmly behind the notion that marriage should not be a federal matter, but rather the business of the individual, no matter their sexual affiliation. Congressman Ron Paul seeks to find constitutional solutions to the pressing problems of today.



## MITT ROMNEY

Mitt Romney is the former governor of Massachusetts and a businessman. As a result, he has a great interest in the economy and hopes

to improve America’s global competitiveness by rolling back tax rates across the board, eliminating taxes on middle class savings, making the “Bush tax cuts” permanent, lowering the corporate tax rate and making health care expenses tax deductible.

He supports limiting government spending by establishing a strict spending limit. In regards to foreign policy, Romney calls for an increase in the size of our military by 100,000 troops. Romney also plans to create a Special Partnership Force to integrate all elements of national power under a new force with its leadership drawn from our Army Special Forces trained to work with civilian governments and intelligence personnel.

Romney believes that Iran is a possible

threat. Subsequently, he plans to tighten economic sanctions against Iran, isolate Iran diplomatically and make it clear to the state that their nuclear capabilities are a source of peril.

On the domestic front, Romney plans to secure our border against illegal immigration, by implementing an enforceable employer verification system, punishing sanctuary cities and rejecting amnesty.

Romney’s health care plan includes using the free market and a federalist approach to make quality, affordable health insurance available for every American. Romney’s plan of action is to deregulate state markets, fix the tax code, stop free health care, reform the medical liability system and to promote flexibility in Medicaid.

Romney’s position on education includes improvements to the No Child Left Behind Act by increasing its flexibility. He also believes that allowing parents to choose their children’s schools is a key to successful education.



## Democratic Presidential Candidates



## HILLARY CLINTON

Most noted as former first lady of the United States, Hillary Clinton has served on the Senate since 2000 and has been involved in a number of committees and caucuses, serving as chair of the Subcommittee on Superfund and Environmental Health and the Steering and Coordination Committee.

Clinton’s stance on such issues as immigration, the war in Iraq, and health care has been made solidly clear throughout the campaign trail.

Clinton proposes an immigration plan that respects immigrant heritage and honors the rule of law, calling for reform that involves strengthening borders with strict but fair



## CLINTON, FROM PAGE 11

enforcement of laws, federal assistance to state and local governments, strict penalties for those who exploit undocumented workers, and a path to earned legal status.

Regarding the war in Iraq, Clinton proposes a more immediate plan to withdraw troops and has announced, "It is time to begin ending this war—not next year, not next month—but today."

Her strategy in Iraq consists of a three-stage plan: Phased redeployment within her first days in office, securing stability in Iraq and returning troops, and a new intensive diplomatic initiative.

In regards to health care, Clinton has

sought to define and develop her plan called the American Health Choices Plan. She intends to cover all Americans and improve health care by lowering costs and improving quality.

Clinton has also formulated detailed plans for domestic issues, boasting an innovative agenda in regards to education and environmental challenges.

As a former staff attorney for the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), Clinton advocates early development programs and the creation of a \$3,500 college tax credit.

In the environmental arena, Clinton strives to promote energy independence and fight global warming by focusing on clean and renewable energy sources.

## JOHN EDWARDS

After having run alongside former presidential candidate, John Kerry, John Edwards has returned to the presidential arena in 2008 with a solid interest in populist goals and a strong stance against corporate abuse of power.

Edwards' health care plan involves requiring employers to either cover or help finance employees' health insurance, an expansion of Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP).

Edwards also advocates the creation of regional 'Health Care Markets,' an approach that promises every American the opportunity to combine their bargaining power in order to purchase affordable, high-quality health plans. Edwards places great importance on working families by promoting their well-being through programs that strengthen labor laws and enact more labor-friendly trade policies.

Edwards' international policy calls for the return of troops from Iraq in nine to ten months. He adamantly declares that the start of the Iraq War was not backed by any legal

foundation. According to Edwards' campaign, the most crucial obligation of the future president in regards to foreign policy is a "reengagement" with the world. Edwards plans to "reengage" the world through a series of multilateral strategies, with special attention to nuclear challenges and stabilization and humanitarian missions, each with the aim of returning the United States' foreign policy to its original moral high ground.

Additionally, Edwards maintains a very progressive green campaign. Edwards maintains a plan to decrease America's footprint on the Earth. Edwards' immediate plan includes a strategy to cap greenhouse gases starting in 2010, with a cap-and-trade system, eventually reducing greenhouse gases by nearly 15 percent in 2020 and 80 percent in 2050. Edwards incorporates his working class agenda into environmental concerns by promising one million new jobs in "clean" energy technologies.



## MIKE GRAVEL

Mike Gravel is a former Representative in the Alaska House of Representatives (1963-1966), and U.S. Senator for Alaska (1969-1981).

During his time as a Senator, he was noted for his involvement in the leaking of the "Pentagon Papers," in which he entered 4,100 pages of the top-secret 7,000 page Department of Defense document into the record of the Senate Buildings and Grounds subcommittee. This made the submitted portion public record and resulted in its publication.

Senator Gravel is recognized for his cosponsorship of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971), the largest land claims settlement in United States history. Currently, he advocates the implementation of the National Initiative for Democracy (NI4D).

The NI4D would establish an initiative process at all levels of government through a constitutional amendment and a federal law establishing the right of citizens to propose, alter, or nullify legislation.

Senator Gravel is a proponent of Fair

Tax, a progressive tax rate which increases as the amount purchased increases. This national sales tax on all new products and services would replace the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the income tax. A portion of this Progressive Fair Tax would be used to fully fund a universal healthcare system that could provide equal healthcare services to all citizens.

Senator Gravel has been a long standing supporter of an "immediate and orderly" withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. According to the Senator, once this occurs the U.S. can begin aggressive regional diplomacy in order to bring Iraq to peace.

He suggest handing over reconstruction contracts to Iraqi businesses in order to "empower Iraqi nationals" in the reconstruction of "their own country." Senator Gravel supports capping and taxing carbon emissions in order to limit America's role in global climate change.

The Senator is also a proponent of the establishment of a guest-worker program and naturalization procedures for immigrants seeking legal status.



## DENNIS KUCINICH

Former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio (1977-1979), Dennis Kucinich was elected as representative to the U.S. House of Representatives for the 10th district of Ohio in 1996 and retains this position today.

Representative Kucinich is known for his consistent opposition of military action in Iraq, Iran, and Syria. He has voted against the "Iraq War Resolution," the USA PATRIOT

Act and every funding bill in support of the Iraq war.

As a representative, Kucinich cosponsored and helped introduce the United States National Health Insurance Act which outlines a universal single-payer public health-insurance plan; he describes this as a "not-for-profit" plan.

Representative Kucinich was the first person to introduce the Space Preservation Act which calls for "prohibiting the basing of

## KUCINICH, FROM PAGE 13

weapons in space” as well as the pursuit of a global treaty to the same effect. Kucinich supports developing U.S. diplomacy efforts with the rest of the world and “abandoning the arrogant ‘my way or the highway’ attitude.”

Representative Kucinich wants the U.S. to adopt the Kyoto Protocols with the objective of reducing greenhouse gases linked to global climate change. To this affect, he was an original cosponsor of the Safe Climate Act of 2007. He has proposed the creation of the Works Green Administration, which would be attached to the EPA and NASA, in order

to promote sustainable energy production, create American jobs, reduce domestic energy consumption, and provide inexpensive, local renewable-energy technologies to developing countries.

Representative Kucinich consistently opposes our participation in NAFTA and the WTO on the grounds that such free trade agreements do not provide adequate protections for worker rights and safety and environmental safeguards.

He wants to reform campaign finance laws, institute traceable paper trails for electronic voting machines and enhance the openness of government.

## BARACK OBAMA

Still in his first term as the senator of Illinois, Barack Obama has placed much emphasis on the importance of judgment, rather than experience, as a key instrument in his presidential campaign.

Obama is a member of a broad array of committees, including Foreign Relations, Health, Education, Labor & Pensions, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Obama counts healthcare, Iraq, poverty and the environment among the most important issues.

Obama’s healthcare strategy involves modernizing the U.S. Health Care System by lowering costs through investment in electronic health information technology systems, increasing competition in the insurance and drug market, and reducing costs of catastrophic illnesses for employers and their employees.

Although Obama has confirmed that he does not intend to make healthcare mandatory, he asserts that his plan will make healthcare affordable to all Americans.

Obama’s strategy for Iraq involves a monthly removal of one to two combat

brigades, resulting in the complete removal of brigades by 16 months. Obama emphasizes that he did not vote in favor of the war in Iraq and has resolved to maintain regional diplomacy within the area.

Obama’s fight to end poverty aims to expand access to jobs, strengthen families, and increase the supply of affordable housing. Obama proposes a number of policies intended to reduce the United States’ negative effect on the environment.

An important pillar of Barack Obama’s platform regarding the environment is a plan entitled, Investment “in a Clean Energy Future.”

This plan involves a number of specific measures to curb the United States’ enormous impact on the environment.

He has also promised to invest \$150 billion over the following ten years in clean energy and the acceleration of the commercialization of plug-in hybrid vehicles, plus a transition to new digital electricity power grids.



## City Commission

Three seats in the Gainesville City Commission are up for election on January 29<sup>th</sup>. You will notice that the following candidates are sectioned off into categories such as At-Large, District 2, and District 3. These sections represent those seats within the composition of the Gainesville City Commission. Of these, one is “At-Large”. This simply means that every registered voter within the Gainesville city limits is able to vote for this candidate.

The two other seats, however, are particular to specific districts within the City of Gainesville. There are four City Commission districts in Gainesville, and each of these districts conveniently encompasses several voting precincts.

For the purposes of this guide voters should know if you are a voter in precincts 12, 17, 21, 37, 38, 45, 57, 58, 61, or 64 you can vote in the District 2 election, and if you are a voter in precincts 4, 24, 26, 32, 40, 44, or 54 you can vote in the District 3 election. Again, every registered voter living within the city limits can vote in the At-Large elections, regardless of your precinct or district. For more information about which precinct you reside in or the polling place information for that precinct please go to:

[http://elections.alachua.fl.us/voter-registration/Precincts/precinct\\_finder.html](http://elections.alachua.fl.us/voter-registration/Precincts/precinct_finder.html)

## At-Large (Seat 2)

### ROBERT AGRUSA



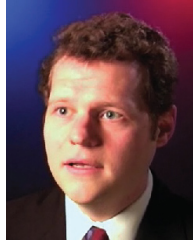
Robert Agrusa is a native of Tampa and a graduate of the University of Florida. He received a B.A. in Political Science and minors in History and Leadership. While at UF, Agrusa worked within Student Government and helped to bring back the Sunday Bus Service for students in the Fall of 2005. Then as UF’s Senate President, Agrusa wrote a bill requiring student senators to attend

all city commission meetings to “better connect them to the city of Gainesville and its needs.” Agrusa supports an outline for increased yet ‘responsible’ economic growth by working with developers, environmentalists, the city and the community. He supports incentives for businesses that wish to expand into the Gainesville area. Agrusa also wishes to improve the city’s transportation infrastructure by improving the RTS bus system, the synchronization of traffic signals, and maintaining our roads. He also wishes to work with the Gainesville community to lower utility bills.



## THOMAS HAWKINS, JR.

Thomas Hawkins is a fifth generation Gainesvillian. He attended the University of Florida and received a degree in law from Emory University. Hawkins is a member of the Florida Bar and is an attorney for a law firm. His practice specifically deals with land-use in local government planning. The law firm represents local governments, neighborhood residents, property owners, and developers on growth management and local government issues. Hawkins wishes to strengthen Gainesville's image as a "vibrant urban town" through several growth management programs. He supports the development and re-development of our already established activity centers such as the downtown and East Gainesville areas. He believes this can be done without infringing on any of Gainesville's environmentally sensitive areas. Hawkins thinks the city should invest in active recreation programs for children.



## District 2

### BRYAN HARMAN

Bryan Harman received Bachelor degrees in History and Political Science from the University of Virginia. Harman has served on the Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network board of directors, has worked for the Environmental Protection Advisory Committee, and is a member of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee. Harman thinks growth in Gainesville should be centered on the downtown area, and that current incentives for developers to build condos are too high. He believes these incentives should instead be used to promote affordable housing. Harman suggests that increasing the City of Gainesville police force and enforcing city ordinances more will help protect the concerns of our city's residents and neighborhoods. He supports an increase in the amount of higher paying jobs in the area and partnering with Santa Fe Community College to provide the diverse training needed. Harman also proposes increasing RTS routes, especially those in the northwest area.



### BONNIE MOTT

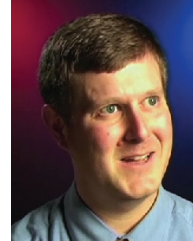
Bonnie Mott moved to Gainesville when she was 16 years old. Since then she, has seen her children and grandchildren grow up in the Gainesville area. Bonnie Mott started her own realty company, Prudential Preferred Properties, in 1993. She served on the Board of Directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of Realtors and became its President in 2005. During this time, Mott provided solutions



SEE MOTT, PAGE 17

## MOTT, FROM PAGE 16

for small businesses as well as families aspiring home ownership. In order to curb the violation of city ordinances, Mott supports increasing the funding for the Code Enforcement Officers. Furthermore, she believes that neighborhood organizations should have a say in determining the penalties for their area. Mott supports incentives for business development in the area, but thinks that recent incentives may have gone too far. Mott also thinks that the city should create a partnership with additional energy producers in order to ensure our future energy needs are met.



### LAUREN POE

Lauren Poe grew up in Gainesville. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Master of Education degree in Social Sciences from the University of Florida. He was an American History teacher at Fort Clarke Middle School and currently an Associate Professor of economics and American government at Santa Fe Community College. He has served as the Vice-Chair of the Gainesville Citizens Advisory Committee for Community Development since 2005. Poe believes that city ordinances have not been enforced to their potential and thinks that better service in this area is needed. He feels the city must diversify its local economy in order to provide valuable economic opportunities necessary for future development. Poe supports the use of incentives to secure development, saying that the increased economic activity yields returns in terms of jobs and housing well into the future. He is a proponent of increasing transitional housing to meet our homeless population's needs.

## District 3

### JACK DONOVAN



Jack Donovan is the current holder of District 3's seat in the City Commission and is running for re-election. Donovan received his B.A. in English Literature from Dartmouth College and received a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard University. He also received a Master of Divinity from the Graduate Theological Union. Donovan served as a pastor in the Gainesville and McIntosh areas from 1986 to 2005. He was also a Peace Corps volunteer. Donovan states that while on the City Commission, he helped to alleviate many concerns of the community including road congestion, neighborhood security and more. He supports incentives to create a future growth of tax revenues. He believes that the City Commission should work with both the Alachua County government and with developers to reduce urban sprawl. Donovan believes the city should emphasize downtown development in a way that will attract high-tech jobs.

## ARMANDO GRUNDY

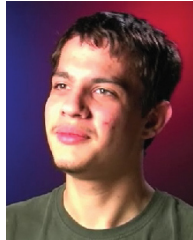
Armando Grundy is originally from Jacksonville and a veteran of the U.S. Army. He is working on earning degrees in both History and Political Science from Santa Fe Community College. Through his local church congregation, Grundy is involved in several community outreach programs such as the Saint Francis House. Grundy believes Gainesville can develop a favorable business climate if our local government exhibited fiscal responsibility by lowering taxes and regulations.



He wants a voter initiative to cap taxes. He suggests that elected officials be forbidden from increasing their wages without an approval from taxpayers. Grundy believes that public tax revenue should not be used by the City Commission to encourage private development; instead this money could be put to better use in the local government's budget. Grundy relies on mass transit systems within the community and encourages public transit along with a more equitable and efficient enforcement of building codes.

## CHRISTOPHER A. SALAZAR

Christopher Salazar is a current student at Santa Fe Community College. He believes local development should be done in a way that the environment is protected and road congestion is not increased. He supports lower taxes, and limiting what he calls "frivolous spending" by the city government. Salazar supports improving the area's roads and increasing the efficiency and availability of RTS.



He is a proponent of the formation of an umbrella group of civic organizations, such as churches, in order to coordinate community outreach programs. Salazar thinks the city should develop public mental health and substance abuse rehabilitation services. In order to decrease the city's energy consumption, Salazar plans to increase the rebate qualification rate for solar panel efficiency by a minimum of fifty percent and double the maximum size of solar power systems that homeowners and businesses can install and still qualify for rebate. In addition, he proposes installing solar panels on all city-owned buildings. He also wishes to implement fertilizer restrictions in order to conserve water resources.

*"All Politics is local" — Tip O'Neill*

## Proposed Florida Constitutional Amendment

This revision proposes changes to the State Constitution relating to property taxation. With respect to homestead property, this revision: **(1)** increases the homestead exemption except for school district taxes and **(2)** allows homestead property owners to transfer up to \$500,000 of their Save-Our-Homes benefits to their next homestead. With respect to nonhomestead property, this revision **(3)** provides a \$25,000 exemption for tangible personal property and **(4)** limits assessment increases for specified nonhomestead real property except for school district taxes.

In more detail, this revision:

**(1)** Increases the homestead exemption by exempting the assessed value between \$50,000 and \$75,000. This exemption does not apply to school district taxes.

**(2)** Provides for the transfer of accumulated Save-Our-Homes benefits. Homestead property owners will be able to transfer their Save-Our-Homes benefit to a new homestead within 1 year and not more than 2 years after relinquishing their previous homestead; except, if this revision is approved by the electors in January of 2008 and if the new homestead is established on January 1, 2008, the previous homestead must have been relinquished in 2007. If the new homestead has a higher just value than the previous one, the accumulated benefit can be transferred; if the new homestead has a lower just value, the amount of benefit transferred will be reduced. The transferred benefit may not exceed \$500,000. This provision applies to all taxes.

**(3)** Authorizes an exemption from property taxes of \$25,000 of assessed value of tangible personal property. This provision applies to all taxes.

**(4)** Limits the assessment increases for specified nonhomestead real property to 10 percent each year. Property will be assessed at just value following an improvement, as defined by general law, and may be assessed at just value following a change of ownership or control if provided by general law. This limitation does not apply to school district taxes. This limitation is repealed effective January 1, 2019, unless renewed by a vote of the electors in the general election held in 2018.

Further, this revision:

**a.** Repeals obsolete language on the homestead exemption when it was less than \$25,000 and did not apply uniformly to property taxes levied by all local governments.

**b.** Provides for homestead exemptions to be repealed if a future constitutional amendment provides for assessment of homesteads "at less than just value" rather than as currently provided "at a specified percentage" of just value.

**c.** Schedules the changes to take effect upon approval by the electors and operate retroactively to January 1, 2008, if approved in a special election held on January 29, 2008, or to take effect January 1, 2009, if approved in the general election held in November of 2008. The limitation on annual assessment increases for specified real property shall first apply to the 2009 tax roll if this revision is approved in a special election held on January 29, 2008, or shall first apply to the 2010 tax roll if this revision is approved in the general election held in November of 2008.

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**UF Chapter, Pi Sigma Alpha**  
<http://grove.ufl.edu/~pisigma/>

**National Chapter, Pi Sigma Alpha**  
<http://www.apsanet.org/~psa/>

**Pi Sigma Alpha schedule**

Meeting: January 30th (Anderson Hall room 134 @ 7:30pm)  
Meeting: February 13th (Anderson Hall room 034 @ 7:30pm)  
Meeting: February 27th (Anderson Hall room 034 @ 7:30pm)  
Meeting: March 5th (Anderson Hall room 034 @ 7:30pm)

\* Washington D.C. trip: March 10th – March 16th

Meeting: March 26th (Anderson Hall room 034 @ 7:30pm)  
Meeting: April 9th (Anderson Hall room 034 @ 7:30pm)

\* Executive Board elections: April 23rd

**ΠΣΑ**  
**Beta Gamma**