

Dr. Alton C. Smith

1413 Hammock Shade Drive
Lakeland, FL 33809-2315
Phone: (863) 815-9783

POSITIONS ON ISSUES

CANDIDATE: Alton C. Smith, Ph.D.
OFFICE SOUGHT Representative, Florida House District 64
PARTY: Democrat as a write-in candidate
ELECTIONS: Primary: Tuesday, 26 August 2008
General: Tuesday, 4 November 2008

In line with normal, traditional, “bread and butter” Democrat philosophy, I will work for family values representative of the majority of our population, adequate national defense, affordable health care, better education, a strong economy that works for everyone, and real security.¹ While many of these issues go beyond the scope of the Florida Legislature, my positions on these issues would influence my vote as the issue effects the State of Florida. To provide the voter who wants to know my positions on specific issues, I present the following declarations on:

MORALS

All legislation embodies moral components in one way or another. If one held to the tenant that “You can’t legislate morality,” all legislation would cease. I will support legislation that is consonant with traditional, American, family values including the sanctity of life and marriage of one man to one woman. All of the following positions on specific issues contain moral components that reflect my views.

THE WAR AGAINST MUSLIM EXTREMISM

The United States of America is in a worldwide, life and death struggle against Muslim extremism and, more broadly, Terrorism. Muslim extremism has unabashedly declared the annihilation of Christian America (their term) as their goal. All possible efforts to resist any such destructive threat should be done as long as threats exist and preferably on territory outside the USA.

¹ This document is a modification of the Polk County Democratic Caucus position paper on important issues. This footnote is to acknowledge that fact and hereby to give them credit for whatever I have borrowed. I modified that document so that, as presented herein, it reflects my positions. Clearly, the Polk County Democratic Caucus is not responsible for any position cited herein.

THE ECONOMY

I support small business owners. Our state's economic policies should address the needs of small businesses and not just the special interests of industrial and financial corporate giants. Our state's economy is built on the backs of small business owners. I support investments that help small businesses grow and provide assistance to start-up companies.

I strongly support that all money collected for social security go to social security. The national government should reimburse the social security fund for all monies it has borrowed (stolen?) from social security revenues and used for general operations. No taxes should be levied on social security income.

I support a higher minimum wage. No one should have to work two jobs just to make ends meet. Persons 19 and under should be free from wage minimums to give them increased opportunity to enter the job market.

I support sunshine laws, government integrity & efficiency. Government should be open and honest with the people. All state contracts should be open to the public. All government business should be conducted efficiently and with integrity. As with any law, sunshine laws should not be carried to ridiculous extremes such as preventing a few legislators from discussing their work over coffee or matters like land purchases which, if discussed publically, could cost the taxpayer millions of dollars.

I support affordable housing initiatives. Every American should have the opportunity to live the American Dream of home ownership. Florida's housing assistance fund should be funded and maintained and should not be syphoned off to other projects. All efforts should be made to facilitate home ownership for Florida's teachers, police officers, seniors and first-time home-buyers who wish to purchase their own home. If the government provides money to help in the loan crisis, that money should not go to giant financial houses exercising foreclosures, but to the desperate home-owner. Tighter laws on shyster mortgage contracts are needed.

I strongly support affordable hurricane insurance. Insurance companies should be the servants of our people, not blood suckers. In fact, our whole insurance system needs reform with a keen focus on availability of affordable insurance for homeowners. For further details on the problem, visit <http://www.stormingmad.org/>.

I support strong laws to eradicate fraud and corruption in any government program. No branch or program of government should be exempt from ardent efforts in this regard.

I support a balanced budget at all levels of government. The national debt should be reduced systematically. The amount of interest we taxpayers are paying on our national debt is sickening. We should be sickened even more when we consider to whom that interest is being paid.

I support the preservation of our environment and our history. Our environment should be valued highly when it comes into conflict with human expansion. Irreplaceable historical sites should, likewise, be valued when threatened by development.

EDUCATION

I support smaller class sizes. Smaller classes mean a better educational environment, increased discipline, and more individual attention for students.

I propose positive uses of FCAT. Standardized testing provides for higher academic standards and increased accountability. FCAT should be an important tool to help parents and teachers work with each individual student to identify areas that need improvement. FCAT should not be used as a hammer to punish students, parents and teachers.

I support improving low-performing schools. Every child in Florida should have the opportunity to succeed in a public school in their neighborhood. If parents choose to send their children to private schools or home school them, being tax payers, they should receive money from the taxes they have paid to help defray the costs of their choice. Provision should be made that the quality of education in private schools and home schooling be on a par with public school levels.

I support better pay for teachers. Every child deserves an education provided by world-class teachers. Today, Florida's teachers earn \$6,000 less than the national average and less than our neighbors to the north, Georgia and Alabama. Teacher pay should be on a level with other professionals with the same level of education.

HEALTH CARE

I support funding and expanding health care for children. Every child in Florida deserves quality health care. Right now, more than 600,000 children in Florida lack basic health insurance.

I strongly support affordable universal health care. In a nation such as ours, health care should be more than a privilege, it should be a right. Roughly 3.5 million Floridians live without health insurance. Small businesses should be provided with tax incentives and other options to help provide health insurance at lower cost.

I support a complete Medicare prescription drug plan. People should come before drug companies. Pharmaceutical companies sell Americans drugs for outrageous prices while providing them to people outside our country at a fraction of what they charge us. I have lived overseas and I know first hand! Our drug companies should sell us drugs at the same price they sell them overseas. Our Medicare drug plan should completely cover all prescribed drugs to Floridians. For too long, seniors have been waiting for relief from the rising cost of prescription drugs. No more donut holes.

I strongly support our Medicare and Medicaid programs. I would oppose any efforts to reduce their benefits or tax those benefits. I deplore use of the term "entitlement programs" in a pejorative manner. These programs help millions of common people to avoid bankruptcy while receiving adequate medical care. Persons or organizations that abuse these programs should be prosecuted very severely.

I support the right to die with dignity. Our laws should provide that if a person has a living will, that will be followed exactly. If a person does not have a living will or any other instructions

as to what to do in the event they are reduced to a permanent, vegetative state as determined by two competent medical persons, the nearest of kin should decide whether life support should be withdrawn. The law should also provide definition of the order of kinship.

SECURITY

I support adequate funding for the Florida National Guard. They should be honored for their service and treated with the utmost respect that they deserve. They put their lives on the line every day. I support the Citizen-Soldier Grant program, offering businesses tax credits to help make up the difference between their employee-soldiers' civilian and military pay. I support increasing educational benefits for all soldiers who return to Florida after their service.

I support improving port and border security. We have no greater role than protecting the homeland. We need protection that is tough and smart.

I support passage and enforcement of responsible, comprehensive immigration laws. America's immigration system is tragically and irresponsibly unenforced. Our national and economic security is damaged by the government's refusal to act legally. We need a wall from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean to stop the wave of illegal persons and terrorists just walking into our country. We need to support our border patrol people and not imprison them for doing their job. We must punish employers who hire illegal persons. Jobs drew the illegal persons here. The lack of jobs will help send many of them back home voluntarily. No person who entered the USA illegally should be allowed legal entry until all persons who have tried to enter legally have been considered.

I support all efforts to eliminate our dependancy on foreign oil. I support the Democratic proposal to tax the obscene profits of oil companies. The income from that tax should be used to encourage companies *other than oil companies* to research alternative sources of oil. That tax revenue should also be channeled to the building of new oil refineries (after 40 years, it's about time). All oil deposits in and around the USA should be exploited with emphasis on the vast reserves in Alaska. Our very existence as a nation is hanging in the balance on this item. Partisan and lobbyists' interests must be brushed aside.