

# First Coast Tiger Bay Tracks



October 2018 The First Coast Tiger Bay Club, Inc. P.O. Box 2608, Jacksonville, FL 32203

## Questions On Florida Constitutional Amendments? October 19, 2018



Democracy is always messy but seldom more so than our once every 20 year citizen involvement with the **Florida Constitution Revision Commission**. Every 20 years Floridians are able to add amendments to the state Constitution, the basic document of Florida government. Engaging citizens in democracy has always been a tough balancing act as we fervently

believe in citizen participation but most voters have only a superficial interest in government and politics. The **October 19th First Coast Tiger Bay Club** program features **Dr. Matthew Corrigan**, University of North Florida Professor of Political Science and long-time analyst of Florida government, to help us understand this democratic exercise just in time for the next election.

Proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution can be placed on the ballot by the legislature, citizen petitions or the Constitution Review Commission, citizens appointed by various government officials. Some of the previous Revision Commissions have worked well as bipartisan endeavors. Of the 37 members this time, one is the Secretary of State, three were appointed by the Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice, nine each by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House while the remaining 15 were named by the Governor. This resulted in a very lopsided Commission with Republicans having 34 of the 37 seats. Given the hyper-partisanship both in Florida and the rest of the country, it is not surprising the Commission recommendations were controversial.

Due to the large number of suggested amendments some were “bundled” so that several proposals on the same general subject were lumped together for a single up or down vote. This can invite a high level of political chicanery as the Florida Supreme Court seemed to think in removing the Amendment 8 proposal from the ballot. Amendment 8 was three separate proposals: a very controversial one sandwiched between two that were popular and likely to pass. Florida voters virtually always support term limits and the first proposal was to have school board members term-limited. The third proposal in the “bundle” expanded civics education in public school but the middle one to strip local school boards of control of charter schools was the really contro-

versial one. Voters would have had to cast a single up or down vote on whole the “bundle.”

For an excellent description of the remaining 12 proposed Constitutional Amendments see: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article213043344.html>

The entire process is a complicated exercise in civic education and we are happy to have an expert guide as we explore your voting options. Matthew Corrigan, Ph.D. is a Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of North Florida. He is a graduate of University of Notre Dame and received his Masters and Doctorate from the University of Florida in 1995. His research interests include Southern politics, Florida politics and the American Presidency. He was Department Chair for nine years where he led a program review and accreditation for the graduate program. The Department has over 300 undergraduate majors and 90 graduate students. He is a member of the American Association of Public Opinion Research and has extensive experience in program evaluation. His first book, *Race, Religion and Economic Change* was published by University Press of Florida in 2007. His second book, *American Royalty* (2008) focuses on the Clinton and Bush families; his third book, *Conservative Hurricane: How Jeb Bush Remade Florida*, examined Jeb Bush’s governorship. He and eight other political scientists are working on a book on the 2016 presidential elections in Florida.

Dr. Corrigan was a consultant to Duval County during the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election and assisted leaders in reforming the county’s voting system. He also served as a Florida consultant to the Associated Press during the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2016 elections and is a two-time past-President of the Florida Political Science Association. He has been quoted in numerous media outlets including the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, CNN and the *Washington Post*. He lives in Jacksonville Florida with his wife Mary, son John and daughter Jane.

We invite you to join in our democratic dialogue about the proposed Florida Constitutional Amendments led by Dr. Corrigan on Friday, Oct. 19th.

**2018  
Tiger Bay  
Officers**

Henry Cordes, President  
Dr. Stephen Baker, 1st Vice President  
Hazel Gillis, Secretary  
Marcia Turner, Treasurer

**FIRST COAST TIGER BAY CLUB** meets for lunch every month, except December, on the 3rd Friday at 11:30 at The River Club, 1 Independent Drive, 35th Floor. Cost for the event, which includes the wonderful buffet and parking, is \$25.

**Reservations are required:** Call (904) 571-5337 or E-Mail: [fctigerbay@gmail.com](mailto:fctigerbay@gmail.com)

## September 2018 Straw Poll (n=36)

Do you agree or disagree with the statement "The quality of public dialogue has DECREASED over the past decade"?

Strongly agree	75%		
Agree	19	→	94% (Agree or strongly agree)
Disagree	3	→	6 (Disagree or strongly disagree)
Strongly disagree	3		

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

Strongly approve	11%		
Approve	22	→	33% (Approve or strongly approve)
Disapprove	6	→	67 (Disapprove or strongly disapprove)
Strongly disapprove	61		

Which of the following do you prefer as the next Florida GOVERNOR?

Ron DeSantis	33%
Andrew Gillum	67

Which of the following do you prefer as the next Florida SENATOR?

Bill Nelson	69%
Rick Scott	31

Major party candidates for Governor and Senator were listed without reference to political party. To reduce the effect of placement on the ballot, the Republican was listed first in the Governor's race and the Democrat first in the race for Senate. Of the 36 respondents, 24 selected both Democratic candidates and 11 both Republican candidates; one respondent cast a split party vote. The table below summarizes the answers to the first two questions for the 35 party-line respondents:

Do you agree or disagree with the statement "The quality of public dialogue has DECREASED over the past decade"?

	<u>Democrat</u>			<u>Republican</u>		
Strongly agree	75%			73%		
Agree	17	→	92%	27	→	100%
Disagree	4	→	8	-	→	0
Strongly disagree	4			-		

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

	<u>Democrat</u>			<u>Republican</u>		
Strongly approve	0%			27%		
Approve	4	→	4%	64	→	91%
Disapprove	4	→	96	9	→	9
Strongly disapprove	92			-		

NATIONAL Approve/Disapprove ratings for President Trump in the period closest to the Tiger Bay survey:

Polling Data					
Poll	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove	Spread
Gallup	9/10 - 9/16	1500 A	38	56	-18
CNN	9/6 - 9/9	923 RV	37	57	-20
Quinnipiac	9/6 - 9/9	1038 RV	38	54	-16

--RealClearPolitics.com

Tiger Bay had **33% approval** (strongly approve plus approve) and **67% disapproval** (disapprove plus strongly disapprove)  
The NATIONAL polls for the same period had basically **38% approval** and **56% disapproval**

*The First Coast Tiger Bay Club is a multi-partisan political forum that promotes free and open debate but does not support any candidates or issues.*

*Dr. Stephen Baker, Newsletter Editor  
Henry Cordes, Publisher*

**Reservations are REQUIRED. Please RSVP by  
Tuesday October 16, 2018  
E-mail: [fctigerbay@gmail.com](mailto:fctigerbay@gmail.com) or 904-404-5471**

The First Coast Tiger Bay Club is a multi-partisan political and civic forum designed to explore crucial issues of the day by interacting with outstanding speakers in an open format. The club is non-partisan, never supports particular candidates, nor take sides on issues.