



St. Petersburg Times

Florida's Best Newspaper

tampabay.com

Thursday, March 18, 2010 | 50¢



FOR GATORS, NO MORE WAIT FOR MARCH MADNESS

Florida returns to the NCAA men's basketball tournament after a two-year absence, tipping off today against BYU at 12:20 p.m. (Ch. 10). Meanwhile, the longest of long shots in the tourney has a bay area connection. **Sports, 1C**
Other games: Florida State's first-round game is Friday night; USF plays Florida in the women's NIT tonight.

Senate sends jobs bill to Obama

A bill that gives tax relief to businesses for hiring unemployed workers passes with bipartisan support. President Barack Obama is expected to sign it today. **Nation, 2A**

Just off highway, remains discovered

Not far from a spot where 30,000 motorists pass every day, a pair of men awaiting help for their broken down car spot signs of a person that had been there for a long time. Now to figure out who it is. **Tampa Bay, 1B**

Tremors are just the surface problem

When someone suffers from Parkinson's disease, some of the most difficult symptoms are not the most obvious ones. **Pulse, 6A**

Fairy tale may be over for Bullock

Fresh off the Oscars speech where she talked about how great a husband she had comes word that Sandra Bullock's husband, Jesse James, may have been messing around while she was at work. **The Juice, 2B**

The 38 to watch

These House Democrats may decide the fate of the health care bill. Some voted yes in November, but think the Senate bill is too weak on abortion. Others voted no but party leaders hope to sway them. If 431 members vote, 216 votes are needed to pass.



THE UNDECIDEDS

Full-on assaults have begun by both sides to sway health care overhaul votes of Florida's **Suzanne Kosmas** and 37 like her.

Democrats in play	Vote in November
John Adler, N.J.	NO
Jason Altmire, Pa.	NO
Michael Arcuri, N.Y.	YES
Brian Baird, Wash.*	NO
John Barrow, Ga.	NO
Marion Berry, Ark.*	YES
Timothy H. Bishop, N.Y.	YES
John Boccieri, Ohio	NO
Rick Boucher, Va.	NO
Allen Boyd, North Fla.	NO
Christopher Carney, Pa.	YES
Jerry F. Costello, Ill.	YES
Henry Cuellar, Texas	YES
Kathy Dahlkemper, Pa.	YES
Lincoln Davis, Tenn.	NO
Joe Donnelly, Ind.	YES
Steve Driehaus, Ohio	YES
Brad Ellsworth, Ind.*	YES
Bart Gordon, Tenn.*	NO

*Not running for re-election



Rep. Suzanne Kosmas of New Smyrna Beach was one of just two Florida Democrats who voted no in November.

Democrats in play	Vote in November
Luis V. Gutierrez, Ill.	YES
Baron P. Hill, Ind.	YES
Paul E. Kanjorski, Pa.	YES
Marcy Kaptur, Ohio	YES
Ann Kirkpatrick, Ariz.	YES
« Suzanne Kosmas, Fla.	NO
Daniel Lipinski, Ill.	YES
Betsy Markey, Colo.	NO
Jim Matheson, Utah	NO
Alan B. Mollohan, W.Va.	YES
Scott Murphy, N.Y.	NO
Glenn Nye, Va.	NO
Bill Owens, N.Y.	YES
Earl Pomeroy, N.D.	YES
Nick J. Rahall II, W.Va.	YES
Zack Space, Ohio	YES
Bart Stupak, Mich.	YES
John Tanner, Tenn.*	NO
Harry Teague, N.M.	NO

BY ALEX LEARY
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON
The smell of fresh coffee and the temptations of doughnuts and blueberry muffins greeted Florida Rep. Suzanne Kosmas on Wednesday as she entered a private breakfast with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The speaker regularly meets with freshman lawmakers, but there was urgency and tension in the air. With a monumental decision on health care days away, Pelosi is racing to corral the 216 votes needed for passage.

Despite the personal appeal, Kosmas gave no ground and restated concerns over cost containment, according to people familiar with the meeting attended by a number of Democratic lawmakers. So the guessing game continues:

Will Kosmas vote yes or no?

The intense focus on the New Smyrna Beach Democrat illustrates battles being waged across Capitol Hill and the country over a handful of undecided votes who will make or break the issue.

Kosmas, whose district narrowly favored John McCain over Barack Obama, voted against the House plan in November, one of only 39 Democrats overall to do so and two in Florida.

(The other was Rep. Allen Boyd of Monticello, who is considered to be leaning no this time, too.)

Back then, Pelosi could afford to give some members political cover. But the tumultuous weeks since then have changed things dramatically. So much so that even the president has come calling on Kosmas.

» See UNDECIDEDS, 7A

Vote could be cliff-hanger

Democrats will reveal details of the health legislation today, including costs, setting up a Sunday vote. **7A**

Support, in black and white

By sending a letter to Congress supporting the health care bill, American nuns take sides against their church hierarchy, demonstrating what schoolchildren already knew: They are a force to be reckoned with. **7A**

Vote no, Crist urges Meek

Gov. Charlie Crist challenges his potential Democratic rival, Rep. Kendrick Meek, to vote no on reform. Meek dismisses Crist's bid. **7A**

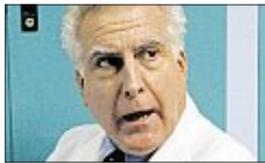
Here's what non-politicians think

We asked doctors, insurers, policy experts, advocates and consumers for their thoughts on how the proposed health care reforms might be felt in Florida. Here's a sample of what they said. **Complete package, 5A**



LORI PARHAM, state director of AARP Florida

"We're encouraged by what we're seeing, but we're waiting to see what will be in the final package."



DR. JAMES ORŁOWSKI, chief of pediatrics, UCH in Tampa

"The likelihood is doctors are going to be making a lot less money and doing a lot more work."



ROBERT CLARK, Christian Science practitioner

"If everyone has to participate, then everyone should be able to choose the kind of care they get."



DR. CECIL WILSON, AMA president-elect

"To have meaningful reform, you cannot do that without a stable Medicare program. We're putting seniors at risk."

How did she get the house?

Workforce's chief bought a home from a builder who had a deal with her agency.

BY KEVIN SMETANA AND JOHN MARTIN
Times Staff Writers

TAMPA — As chief executive of the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, Renee Benton Gilmore approved a lucrative contract for a local construction company whose owner later sold her a \$367,540 golf course home.

Workforce Alliance policies require competitive bidding for contracts exceeding \$100,000. But officials at the embattled agency say they have no documents showing other proposals were sought in 2003 when the agency awarded ATA Construction Co. a contract that started at \$250,000 for office renovations.



Gilmore quit her job with Workforce Alliance last month.

By the time it expired in 2005, the contract had been modified five times, with every change signed by Gilmore.

The final payout: \$1.1 million. A few months later, Anthony Sierra, owner of ATA, sold the newly built home to Gilmore.

Sierra told the *St. Petersburg Times* he did nothing wrong. But he acknowledged that "authorities" have questioned him about his business ties to Workforce Alliance officials. The contractor also said he has received a subpoena.

He would not say what agency contacted him or discuss specifics about what was asked. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has confirmed it is investigating the Workforce Alliance, a publicly funded nonprofit, and vendors with which it has done business.

FDLE officials won't say whether Sierra or ATA are part of the investigation.

Gilmore, who earned \$170,000 a year as the head of an agency that provides job skills to the working poor and unemployed, quit her job last month amid accusations of lavish spending.

An audit revealed that the Workforce Alliance spent \$133,000 on food and refreshments during a one-year period. Many of the purchases were meals for staff, from restaurants that included The Cheesecake Factory, Wright's Gourmet House and Stonewood Grill & Tavern.

The audit, conducted by the Office of Inspector General at

» See **WORKFORCE, 12A**

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Vol. 126 No. 237
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Epilogue | Gene Davis

Liquor man's life of vigor

Martinis, silk suits and Friday night dancing with his wife.

BY MICHAEL KRUSE
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — Back up in Brooklyn, during the Depression, his Russian immigrant parents rented rooms to tenants in their building. When the tenants couldn't pay, his parents left bags of eggs and bread by their doors, saying nothing. The son saw that.

Down here in Tampa, many years later, he and his wife and their three grown children were out to dinner at Bern's on

Thanksgiving night, and he noticed a man eating alone a few tables away and approached him.

"Come sit with us," Gene Davis said. "Come join my family."

Mr. Davis, 90, was a gentleman and a salesman, a big-tipping workaholic with a deep, booming voice. For more than half a century, he was a fixture in the South Tampa social scene and the local Jewish community, the husband of for-

» See **EPILOGUE, 10A**



"Spirits," Gene Davis said, are a "part of gracious living."

Taxes, fees may be lowered

Despite a \$3.2 billion deficit, legislators are reassessing last year's hikes.

BY LEE LOGAN AND MARY ELLEN KLAS
Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

TALLAHASSEE — After raising \$2.2 billion in new taxes and fees last year, Florida legislators want to erase that memory this election year with proposals to roll back auto registration fees and steer up to \$100 million to businesses in tax incentives.

The problem: how to pay for it. The House plans to budget about

\$88 million in tax incentives, the Senate plan includes \$135 million in tax cuts, and both chambers plan to push a \$44 million sales tax holiday for back-to-school supplies. All of it must come out of a budget that already has a shortfall of \$3.2 billion.

Critics of the tax and fee cuts say competition already is fierce among programs that have been slashed in recent years. Republican legislators argue that tax

breaks will spur economic development, and that many of the tax incentives would not take effect until future budget years.

"I would argue that we should be putting in as much as we can because, at a time of economic downturn, we need to be investing in more economic development than even in good times when you have the money," said Rep. Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel.

» See **TAXES, 12A**