



### SPOTLIGHT

## *The Revolving Door in Tallahassee*

In the Free State of Florida, representatives elected to the Florida State House are permitted to serve up to four consecutive two-year terms. Conversely, members of the Florida State Senate can serve up to two consecutive four-year terms.

Often, when someone is term-limited in the House, they will run for a seat in the Senate... and when they do, they are almost always elected because of their high name recognition. When that happens, the elected official will have served a total of 16 years in Tallahassee - eight in the House and eight in the Senate.

Ideally, they are then supposed to return home, resume their career in the private sector, and pass the baton to someone else. After all, there's nothing better than fresh blood and new ideas to keep liberty alive and the government functioning properly. Likewise, there is nothing worse than self-serving career politicians creating a monopoly on the state legislature.

Sadly, that is what has happened in Florida in recent years. All too frequently, term-limited House members become term-limited Senate members only to run for their

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## *The Pendulum Has Swung*

In case you haven't noticed, a pendulum has swung in American society over the past six months... and I couldn't be happier.

No, I am not just talking about Donald Trump's election that will significantly shape and reshape our country over the next four years, but a societal swing that could influence our culture for the next generation or more.

One of the clues that we were on the cusp of a societal revolution came during the summer when polls started showing that a growing majority of Americans favored the mass deportation of illegal immigrants. In June, a CBS News/YouGov poll showed that 62% of registered voters favored starting a new national deportation program. Likewise, a poll conducted in early October by Marquette Law School asked the following question: "Do you favor or oppose deporting immigrants who are living in the United States illegally back to their home countries?"

By a whopping 58%-42% majority, registered voters answered with a resounding "FAVOR!"

Meanwhile, a poll conducted by ABC News/Ipsos between October 4-8, 2024, asked respondents, "There are

at least 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States. Would you support or oppose an effort by the federal government to deport all these undocumented immigrants and send them back to their home countries?" The results were 56% in support and 43% opposed.

I am not a paid political analyst (at least not yet), but my take on these polls is that Americans are finally waking up from their slumber and saying loudly and clearly, "Enough is enough!"



A second sign that the societal tide was turning was the ongoing culture wars that pitted Progressives and their radical LGBTQ+ agenda against common sense citizens. Mainstream Americans grew tired of being told that there are more than 100 different genders, that biological men can have babies, and that male athletes identifying as women should have free and full access to ladies' bathrooms and locker rooms... as well as to their athletic records, scholarships, and awards ceremonies.

Led by Riley Gaines and others, the silent majority finally found its voice and started pushing back... hard! Meanwhile, companies such as John Deere, Tractor Supply, and even Target began to realize that their customers wanted to shop in their

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## ***The Pendulum Has Swung***

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stores and purchase their products without being exposed to liberal indoctrination.

Then came the Daniel Penny manslaughter trial. Penny, a former Marine, was charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide in the subway death of Jordan Neely. A schizophrenic with a criminal record, Neely was high on a synthetic marijuana known as K2 when he boarded a train and started shouting death threats towards the other passengers.

Penny responded by using his military and martial arts training to

place Neely in a chokehold, restraining him until the police arrived. Prosecutors blamed Penny for Neely's death, whereas a medical expert called by the defense refuted that claim... and so the case went to a jury.

I trust that the jury judged the case on its merits, taking all the arguments and all the evidence into consideration. However, I think that may have also been an underlying factor in their reaching a not guilty verdict and it is simply this: Americans are fed up.

They are fed up with mobs looting businesses, overturning cars, and setting fire to buildings while supposedly protesting racial injustice.

They are fed up with shoplifters stealing up to \$999 in goods,

knowing that they won't be stopped let alone prosecuted, while law-abiding citizens wait in checkout lines to pay full price (and a hidden surcharge to cover loss from theft). They are fed up with the double standard so ingrained in our justice system, where the rich and powerful get off Scot-free while ordinary Americans feel the full brunt of the law, often unfairly. They are also fed up with victims seemingly having fewer rights than the perpetrators.

Yes, my friends, the pendulum has begun to swing and the tide in America has turned. And if you know anything about tides, once they start to come in, it takes a while for them to go back out.

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## ***The Revolving Door in Tallahassee***

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old House seat once again. If they win, they are rewarded with up to eight more years in the State House after which they can run for their former Senate seat again... and serve eight more years there.

If you follow this legal but unethical merry-go-round to its logical conclusion, an elected official can continue to go back and forth between the two legislative bodies until they die or are defeated. But is that what the framers of the Florida State Constitution envisioned?

If so, shame on them. If not, shame on the career politicians who con-

tinue to use and abuse the revolving door in Tallahassee in a pathetic attempt to maintain power.

One of the main factors that contributed to the American Revolution was a strong distaste for the idea of a semi-permanent ruling class. Simply put, the colonists didn't want to be ruled by a king, a queen, or a bunch of lords, dukes, barons, and earls. On the contrary, they wanted ordinary people to represent them in the various state capitals and ultimately, in Washington D.C.

And yet, we see the exact opposite happening in Congress, where despite having an approval rating in single digits, the re-election rate for incumbents is in the 90th percentile.

Congress desperately needs term limits, and I would suggest a maximum of 12 years total. That could be six House terms, two Senate terms, or any combination thereof. After that, thank you for your service... and there's the door.

In my opinion, Florida should follow the same formula. A person should be allowed to serve up to 12 years in the State Legislature - divided between the two chambers - after which they must return to being a private citizen.

Officeholders need to remember that just because something is allowed, doesn't mean that it is advisable... or in the best interests of the people you are sworn to serve.

## Who's Minding the Store?

Having spent almost 40 years ministering to prisoners and at-risk youth, I sometimes wonder what I might have done for a living had the Lord not steered me in that direction. Maybe I would have been a high-powered attorney or perhaps a history professor somewhere. I could also see myself working for a professional sports franchise, which was my original intention when I majored in athletic administration in college.

But then there is the part of me that would have loved running an old-fashioned general store (seriously). You know, the kind with rough-hewn wooden floors, bins of dry goods, and shelves stocked with daily necessities and a few novelty items. Of course, it would have to have a pot belly stove in the middle to warm my customers on a cold wintry day as well as an assortment of penny candy for the kids... and don't forget the soda fountain with all kinds of different syrups and hand-dipped ice cream.

And yes, I would be the kind of guy who would allow my loyal customers to "run a tab".

All of this harmless speculation brings me to the topic of today's blog post, which is simply this: with just days left until Inauguration Day - and the entire world seemingly going up in flames - who is minding the store in Washington D.C.?

Watching President Biden wander aimlessly (and falling asleep) during his recent trip to Angola is all the proof you need to know that he isn't the one calling the shots at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. And listening to his incoherent speech

touting the supposed "economic recovery" during his tenure reinforced that conclusion... even before his teleprompter malfunctioned.

So, one might ask, who really authorized the use of American-made long-range missiles in Ukraine? And whose idea was it to send another \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to African countries while Americans in North Carolina are still living in tents two months after Hurricane Helene?

It sure wasn't President Biden and it sure wasn't Vice President Kamala Harris, who has virtually disappeared from public view since November 5th. Yes, she did record that insipid video message to her supporters and yes, she and Joe did make an awkward joint appearance at the Kennedy Center last week. But other than that, Harris may as well have joined the FBI's witness protection program.

And that, my friends, is one of the biggest problems with our bloated federal government. No one really knows who is in charge. Like Old Man River, it just keeps rolling along, being steered by a bunch of unelected officials and lifetime political appointees whose main concerns are promoting their own personal ideologies while safeguarding their lucrative government pensions.

Let this sink in for a minute. In 1940, there were a little more than 800,000 federal employees in the United States. That number spiked to over 3 million during World War II but settled back down to about 2 million after Hitler committed suicide and Hirohito surrendered.

Isn't that just like the federal government? We allow it to quadruple in size during wartime and then the

bureaucrats and bean-counters think they are doing us all a favor when they reduce it by one-third once the hostilities are over.

Today, 80 years after VE and VJ Day, the number of people drawing a paycheck from Uncle Sam - who draws his paycheck from American taxpayers - is back over 3 million. Few people would begrudge the Department of Defense its 772,000 employees, but I do question why the Department of Veterans Affairs needs 412,000 workers. The same goes for the Department of Agriculture (85,000 employees); the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (23,000); the Tennessee Valley Authority (10,400); and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (5,900).

Maybe if the Social Security Administration reduced its 58,200-person workforce, they could afford to give seniors a bigger cost of living increase. And does anyone else find it ironic - and more than a little ridiculous - that the "Small" Business Administration employs 8,000 people?

Then there is the Office of Personnel Management, which (according to its website) "serves as the chief human resources agency and personnel policy manager for the Federal Government." I may be a little naïve but if we trimmed every other department by 10-20%, would OPM really need 2,600 pencil pushers?

Inquiring minds - and fed-up taxpayers - want to know!

Even more importantly, which of these 3 million swamp creatures is actually pulling the strings and running the show at the White House?

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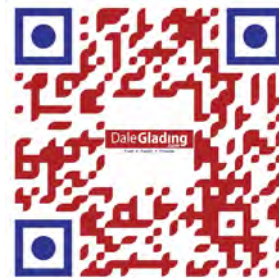
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