

It's 1886 All Over Again
By
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Each election cycle is hectic in Florida. We all quickly reach a point of saturation and attempt to avoid our mailboxes, televisions and dinner-time incoming calls to our home telephones as Election Day quickly approaches. Well, friends, the 2010 presidential mid-term election will be as busy, intense and meaningful. Not far under the current, there is a great deal of activity occurring and it behooves us as an association, and certainly each agent as an important part of the fabric of their community, to be paying close attention.

First, let's look at why 2010 is going to be so active.

There is something extremely significant regarding the November 2010 general election ballot; something that Florida voters have only seen one other time....in 1886.

Those of you who are astute historians will readily recall that 1886 was during a national period of Reconstruction following the Civil War. Similar to most southern states, Florida was in the process of reconstituting an entire state government. The election of 1886 featured an entire slate of candidates for every one of Florida's statewide officeholders and not a single one was running as an incumbent to the office they were seeking. That has never happened since.

Until now.

Except for U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, whose office is not on the ballot in 2010, **EVERY SINGLE ONE OF FLORIDA'S STATEWIDE OFFICES ARE ON THE BALLOT AND THERE IS NOT ONE INCUMBENT RUNNING TO RETURN TO THEIR CURRENT OFFICE.**

When U.S. Senator Mel Martinez announced that he would not seek re-election to the United States Senate (and has in fact recently announced that he will resign his term early) he set off a scramble that has not been seen since the graveyard shift at the Woodstock, NY IHOP on August 15, 1969. Governor Crist is running for the open U.S. Senate seat, (there are no term limits for the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives so those seats do not become open very often...see wikipedia entry for Senator Robert Byrd), instead of re-election as Governor. Attorney General Bill McCollum therefore isn't running for re-election as AG so he can run for Governor. Similarly, CFO Alex Sink is running for Governor and not for re-election as CFO. Our third Cabinet officer, Agriculture Commissioner Charlie Bronson, is term limited out leaving that an open seat as well. Several House and Senate members are running for the open Cabinet seats leaving those legislative seats open. (i.e., Senator Atwater not running for re-election to the Senate to instead run for CFO causing at least three House members, Reps. Bogdanoff, Domino and Skidmore to leave their House seats open to run for the Senate.) To make matters even more exciting, Florida's constitution establishes term limits for Legislators (something that was not the case in 1886) and a significant number of those

seats (over 25 in the House and over 10 in the Senate) are open just from term limit attrition. Plus there has been movement due to retirement (Senator Pruitt) and unfortunately, death (Senator King) requiring special elections.

Second, why is this important to unit owners, board members, and managers?

With all this movement and flux, a unique, historic opportunity is presented to change the dynamic, direction, perceptions and policies of state government. Florida will have a new Governor giving direction from the top. The Governor appoints the DBPR Secretary which regulates condominiums, management professionals, etc. Florida will have a new CFO who will, along with the Governor appoint the State's Insurance Commissioner. Florida will have new Legislators and legislative leaders who will help craft and move the public policy agenda.

We say it every election cycle but it is truly more important this year than in any of our lifetimes'GET INVOLVED! Make certain you are an ACTIVE member of CALL so you have immediate access to helpful information regarding candidates, their positions on issues of importance to us, etc. We will continue to send out Alerts, post important information to the CALL site, etc. asking you to do certain things and letting you know what is happening so you can be an informed advocate for your community. There are so many things you can do which will positively impact the process and therefore you directly. You can volunteer your time on a campaign. It is easy and fun and a small investment of time produces large, positive results. You would be surprised. You can host a meet and greet in your home or your community for a candidate and invite friends, family...we are all in this together. If you have any question about a candidate or how to specifically be engaged in the process, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are eager to point you in the right direction.

See you on the trail!