

opinion

Mark Nusbaum, President
Frank M. Denton, Editor
Michael P. Clark,
Editorial Page Editor

Editorial board: Those at left, Bobby Martin, editorial
writers Roger Brown and Paula Horvath; also Hank
Coxe, Abubakr Hassan, The Rev. Vaughn McLaughlin,
Tala Reynolds, J.R. Ross and Ron Salem.

A VERSE FOR TODAY
"And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive
everyone who is indebted to us."
Luke 11:4

Roundup of Times-Union endorsements

Voters need more information than ever on candidates running for the judiciary.

There is one easy choice and one difficult one in the 4th Circuit covering Duval, Clay and Nassau counties.

Bruce Anderson in Group 9 is one of the most qualified candidates we have ever interviewed for the judiciary.

He has both criminal and civil experience and is at the stage of his life where he felt most qualified for public service. We agree.

In the Group 25 race, however, there is a cloud over incumbent judge Mark Hulsey, an active complaint before the Judicial Qualifications Commission. In normal circumstances, he would be far more qualified than challenger Gerald Wilkerson.

But in this case, the editorial board has declined to endorse.

NELSON: STATE ATTORNEY

The fact that State Attorney Angela Corey has a strong challenger is an indication that her history of controversy has caught up with her.

Corey's demeanor and communications deficit are negatives that outweigh her unquestioned passion in support of crime victims.

In contrast, Melissa Nelson has the experience as a prosecutor and in private practice to capably run the office in a more even-tempered, open manner.

It's time for a change.

The choice is clear.

COFER: PUBLIC DEFENDER

Retired judge Charles Cofer is a strong candidate for public defender. The former attorney in the Public Defender's Office was so respected on the bench that he was asked to mentor new judges.

Cofer is well qualified to return the office to its former prominence.

FUSSELL: CLERK OF COURT

In the Republican primary, Ronnie Fussell has built a list of solid achievements as the clerk of the court for the 4th Circuit in Duval, Clay and Nassau counties.

He led the way with an electronic records system that expanded access.

His positive responses to local and state audits were impressive.

Closing the clerk's wedding chapel is a negative but not enough to deter our support for Fussell.

RAY: U.S. HOUSE, DIST. 4

In the Republican primary, Lake Ray has experience from City Council and the Florida House. It's that seasoning that makes Ray the most qualified candidate to replace U.S. Rep. Ander Crenshaw.

Former Sheriff John Rutherford is a strong candidate as well, but this role is far removed from law enforcement.

The winner will take on Democrat David Bruderly, NPA candidate Gary Koniz and a write-in candidate in the general election.

LAWSON: U.S. HOUSE, DIST. 5

In the Democratic primary, it's time to replace U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown. Current criminal charges are simply the last straw. Unlike in the past, Brown has drawn a

strong primary opponent in former state legislator Al Lawson of Tallahassee.

In his interview, Lawson showed competence, intelligence and a steady demeanor. He's the clear pick over Brown.

BYRD: STATE HOUSE, DIST. 11

In the Republican primary, this was a difficult choice for the editorial board. Cord Byrd and Donnie Horner were both impressive in interviews. Byrd, however, already has solid connections with legislative leaders in Tallahassee — and that gives him the upper hand.

YARBOROUGH: STATE HOUSE, DIST. 12

In the Republican primary, a strong field of candidates is competing for this Florida House seat.

However, former City Councilman Clay Yarbrough has shown real growth as a lawmaker. The Florida Legislature is the next logical step for this hard worker.

GRIFFIN: STATE HOUSE, DIST. 13

In the Republican primary, the Rev. Mark Griffin has built a phenomenal religious, school and civic resume. He is best known for his work to mobilize residents at Eureka Garden.

He would bring his realistic street-level view to the Florida Legislature.

DAVIS: STATE HOUSE, DIST. 13

In the Democratic primary, Rep. Reggie Fullwood has been troubled by various mismanagement issues in recent years.

Tracie Davis, a former leader in the Supervisor of Elections Office, impressed the editorial board during candidate interviews with her common sense and

wisdom.

JEAN-BART: STATE HOUSE, DIST. 14

In the Democratic primary, Leslie Jean-Bart waged a successful campaign to help diversify candidates for the judiciary. It was a bipartisan effort — and it suggests that Jean-Bart could get things done as a legislator.

KRAVITZ: STATE HOUSE, DIST. 16

In the GOP primary, Dick Kravitz built a reputation on City Council and the Florida Legislature as a hardworking, constituent-oriented elected official.

He earned our endorsements based on his strong career in public service.

JORDAN: DUVAL SCHOOL BOARD, DIST. 5

A demanding job with over 40 schools, this inner city district requires strong leadership. Brenda Jordan, a current teacher, showed enthusiasm, intelligence and common sense in her interview with the editorial board.

TOSCANO: DUVAL SCHOOL BOARD, DIST. 7

This fortunate district includes just 10 schools and a quality group of candidates running to represent it.

However, Barbara Toscano illustrated the passion and brainpower in her interview that set her apart from the other qualified candidates.

YES: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 4

A Constitutional Amendment would basically give businesses the same tax exemptions on solar equipment that residences receive.

It deserves support.

JAX Chamber's view

Yes vote for sales tax helps city's future

Whether it's running a business, leading a team of employees or working to put food on the table for your family, we all make tough decisions that can put us in position to be successful in the long term.

We could take the easy way out. But we don't.

In this election, we are facing one of those tough decisions as a community. Mayor Lenny Curry is leading on the pension issue, offering a practical solution to solve the unfunded liability that is crippling our city's finances.

I strongly urge a yes vote on County Referendum 1 and encourage friends and family to support it.

If we want to be a city that continues to grow and attract investment, we must vote yes to solve our unfunded pension liability.

There is no painless solution to this problem. But County Referendum 1 is by far the best option. Putting this issue in the rear view mirror is the single most important thing we can do to move our city forward.

Some people are throwing rocks at this proposal as the vote draws closer.

It's easy to take shots — especially without offering a solution. Let's put personal agendas aside and do what's best for our community. The JAX Chamber board of directors unanimously supported Curry's plan earlier this year. Our business community knows our pension crisis must be solved, and it must be solved now.

This is not a Democratic issue.

This is not a Republican issue.

This is a Jacksonville issue.

We need your vote to solve it.

Please take the time to learn more at yes4jax.com. A list of early voting sites and polling locations can be found at duvalelections.com.

Great cities, just like successful businesses, don't become great by taking the easy road. I applaud the mayor for his leadership and am proud to stand with him.

My family and I are voting yes for Jacksonville. I ask you to do the same.

Daniel Davis, president and CEO,
JAX Chamber

Another view: Daryl Cagle Cagle Cartoons



Letters from Readers

ANGELA COREY A vote in support

North Florida seems to have acquired the reputation of having the most death penalties in the nation along with some place in Arizona. Is that a bad thing?

Perhaps our current state attorney, Angela Corey, is doing a jam up job of convincing judges and juries that these criminals are deserving that fate.

Good for her!

I don't understand the big push to vote out a winner who's willing to go the distance in court on behalf of all the rest of us law-abiding citizens. I thought that's what her job was all about anyway.

The sheriff and the Fraternal Order of Police are supporting Corey.

She's got my vote!

David Nusbaum Jr., Jacksonville

HILLARY CLINTON You just can't trust her

This is in response to the letter from a reader who believes that partisan Republicans have dragged Hillary Clinton through a bunch of witch hunts.

Congressional inquiries found that Clinton has lied repeatedly, has violated White House and State Department policies, has broken the Freedom of Information Act by erasing 30,000 emails, has broken policy by using a private server to handle her emails and sent classified information over her server.

She has endangered the security of the U.S. with her actions regarding her emails and with her foundation.

The real question is this:

Have partisan Republicans actually dragged Clinton through a bunch of witch hunts to derail her bid for the White House?

Or have partisan Democrats, a partisan White House and attorney general, along with the Justice Department, shielded Clinton from criminal charges, unethical behavior and personal responsibility?

Calvin Johnson, Jacksonville

CANDIDATE INFO

Tomorrow is last day of early voting. For news stories, endorsements, bios and questionnaires, go to the Times-Union's website: jacksonville.com/election2016.

HAZOURI'S SUPPORT FOR TAX PLAN Hypocritical and selfish

It is hypocritical for Councilman Tommy Hazouri to state that the opposition to Mayor Lenny Curry's new pension sales tax plan by the Duval County Democratic Party and local Democratic leaders — including party chair Neil Henrichsen, state Sen. Audrey Gibson and former state Sen. Tony Hill — is "selfish."

Hazouri is a septuagenarian politician. And he is supporting a pension sales tax plan that will not start until after 2030 and will add \$1.5 billion to the city's pension debt.

So the sales tax will be paid by our children long after Hazouri is out of office.

It is clear that Hazouri's support of the new pension sales tax is the "selfish" act. And it is the height of hypocrisy.

Terry Bork, Jacksonville

WHY TRUMP?

He will put America first

Donald Trump wants the best for the U.S. He is focused on keeping the country safe. This involves vetting people coming into the country and deporting those who present a problem.

He will appoint Supreme Court justices who will follow the Constitution. And he has named credible candidates to serve on the Supreme Court.

He will hire people for Cabinet jobs who love this country and are the best in their respective fields. He consulted with Rudy Giuliani who was New York City's most successful mayor at reducing crime.

He picked Indiana Gov. Mike Pence as his running mate. Pence is an accomplished conservative with the skills to

help manage Trump's legislative agenda.

Trump is not racist.

When he bought Mar-a-Lago in 1985, he welcomed blacks and Jews as members. His companies have been well researched — and no racism has been found.

He does not like the ideology of Muslim extremists, their wish for Sharia Law, their hatred for America and their unwillingness to integrate into American society.

His campaign is not paid for by special interests. He does not have a charity slush fund paid for by foreign dictators and businessmen doing deals with foreign dictators.

Trump tells the truth.

It has gotten him in trouble. But you also know that he is not hiding anything.

And Trump is not sexist.

He has employed women in senior positions for many years, including the first woman to be a project manager on a New York high-rise.

Robert Black, Jacksonville

NEW JAGUARS FACILITY Taxpayers have been let down

So the city of Jacksonville agrees to pay corporate welfare of \$45 million in a 50-50 deal with the Jaguars and team owner Shad Khan for an indoor practice facility and amphitheater.

Now that the deal is done, we find that the renderings that agreement was based on have morphed into something that's less appealing.

The development agreement puts the Jaguars in charge of construction with only oversight by the city.

So the city has no input on the design? Will our investment by the taxpayers be reduced accordingly?

Khan is a skilled businessman.

And he is taking advantage of the city.

I can only imagine that this less elegant design won't come in under budget — and that it will use up the city's entire contribution to the project.

Chris Lofstrand, Jacksonville

LETTER POLICY

■ Letters of about 200 words are preferred.

■ All letters should include a name, address, occupation and telephone number.

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