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Ernest "Ernie" W. George

A Message From Your President

This special election issue of *Roll Call* reflects the outcomes of PBA's political screenings held throughout Florida. Another issue of *Roll Call* will come out in October prior to the General Election. This issue reflects those candidates who have been endorsed thus far and have primary election opposition. Additional endorsements will be made between now and the general election. Likewise, some candidates without primary election opposition—but with opposition in the General Election—will have their endorsements shown in the next edition of *Roll Call*.

From Pensacola to Key West, literally hundreds of our members met in organized screenings of state and local political candidates. Local candidates were asked about issues pertaining to the treatment of municipal police officers, deputies and correctional officers, pay/benefit issues, and other issues of local importance. Likewise, state legislative candidates were asked about supporting PBA's efforts on such issues as retirement for state and local officers, pay compression resolution, separation of FHP into a stand alone bargaining unit, issues relating to the Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers' Bill of Rights, privatization, etc.

For all concerned, the screenings were an ambitious, educational process. I think these efforts will pay handsome dividends to our members far into the future. It was a golden opportunity to educate candidates on our issues and a chance for us to learn more about the candidates themselves.

Our thanks go out to the many candidates who took the

time to meet with us and to those PBA members who sacrificed their off-duty time in an effort to improve the lot of their fellow officers. Whether it was the local chapters and charters that hosted the events and invited state officers to jointly participate with local members, or the Florida PBA staff members who joined in attending the various screenings, they all did a commendable job. It also showed what can be accomplished with the cooperation and mutual support which exists within the Florida PBA.

Now the matter is up to you, the member! The screening process has identified those who we believe will be the most

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supportive of our officers. It's up to you to help the endorsed candidates by voting for them and supporting them with your efforts and money (including the many PBA PAC funds to which our members contribute). The things our members want, such as better pay and benefits, don't happen automatically or just fall out of the sky. Pro-PBA officeholders make it happen. Identifying the pro-PBA candidates through an elaborate screening process means nothing if we can't get these candidates elected and then get results through the local city or county

commission, the Governor's Office or the Legislature.

PBA's political philosophy is to go out and make good things happen, not sit back, do nothing, and just hope good things will happen. "Hope by itself," as **Jim Spearing** is fond of saying, "is not a good strategy." That's the primary difference between PBA and its competitors. For PBA and its members, the time to act is now!

POLITICAL JUNKIES NEED LOVE, TOO!

By Matt Puckett, Legislative & Political Affairs Assistant



When the Florida Legislature crafted the law allowing early voting in our elections, they cited the virtues that make our country a free democratically elected republic. Many told stories of battles waged to protect our freedoms, or they shared a personal recollection of the trials they endured to get the same voting privileges enjoyed by the majority of Americans. It was all very poignant. Early voting was the

natural progression to our way of democracy and by opening up the polls for more days, we could expect higher voter turnout by those usually too busy with the rigors of life to participate on Election Day.

Yet, I wondered where the voice of the political junkie was in all the debate.

Who was speaking up for the guy with 20 different campaign signs in his front yard and two decades worth of political bumper stickers on his vehicle's rear window?

Where were cries for the woman decked out from head to toe in American flags with her "I voted" sticker pasted in the center of her campaign hat?

Why didn't anyone demand justice for the freelance politi-

cal blog moderator or the unaffiliated political fact checker?

Let's face it. Early voting is really for the people so eager to vote they can't sleep three nights before Election Day. It's for the people who plan to wave campaign signs on street corners during peak travel times. It's for the guy who got up at 5:30 a.m. on Election Day to repair seven severely damaged campaign signs placed 10 miles apart. This is the guy who desperately wants early voting.

Still, no one spoke up for him in any legislative debate, so I will.

Here's to you and your insatiable political appetite, Mr. and Mrs. Political Junkie.

You are the often forgotten few who do so much for the majority. Without you, no campaign would have to release a fifteen point plan emphasizing the importance of any issue. You're the reason for old fashioned campaign fans and refrigerator magnets. Always the first one to show up at a rally and always the last to leave, you will hand out flyers, bumper stickers and smiles to each participant, then ask, "who forgot the campaign key chains, 'cause I'm getting a lot of requests for them?" Make no mistake about it, buddy... early voting was crafted for you.

So for those of you waiting until Monday, September 4th to decide which candidates are the right ones for you, please stop to thank a political junkie on the way into the polling place. It just might be the best political decision you make all day.