

Georgia insight

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*"She hath done what she could."
Mark 14:8a*

Vote December 2nd

Georgia's U.S. Senator to be Decided in Run-off Election

Candidates for Georgia's U.S. Senate Seat

Saxby Chambliss, Senior Senator from Georgia: Respected in Senate and the State

Saxby Chambliss was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2002 and supported conservative principles throughout his six-year term. He is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Senate Rules Committee and ranking Republican member of the Senate committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. He has always been a strong advocate for the U.S. military and a very strong supporter of the proposed FairTax (sic).

Jim Martin, former Legislator and former DHR Director: Unsavory Legacy in Both

Jim Martin's focus in Georgia was homosexual rights, which he will continue to foster whether he's in office here or in D.C. The following in a nut-shell is what he has done:

- ❖ *As a Representative in the General Assembly*, Martin's goal was to repeal sodomy laws. He introduced many bills to legalize all consensual sex and reduce penalties for forcible sex.
- ❖ *As Judiciary Chairman*, Martin killed a bill protecting the right of Boy Scouts to enforce their membership policies, saying the bill had "anti-gay implications."
- ❖ *In his two years as DHR Commissioner*, Martin brokered the out-of-court settlement of *Bellmore v. United Methodist Children's Homes (UMCH)* requiring DHR-funded children's services to affirm homosexuality, eliminate all hostility toward alternate lifestyles and hire applicants for most positions, regardless of their sexual orientation. Also, Martin agreed that UMCH and all other tax-supported children's services must enforce terms proposed by the homosexual advocacy group Lambda Legal or lose state funding, despite public opinion. Result: now, any amount of tax money for children's services has these strings attached:
 - (a) No child may be required to attend or participate in religious services or training in United Methodist Children's Homes or other religious entities receiving any support from taxes.
 - (b) Religious influence must be purged from all DHR-funded children's programs statewide.
 - (c) Recipients of DHR funding must affirm homosexuality and teach it as a positive lifestyle.
 - (d) Recipients of DHR funding must hire pro-homosexual counselors and other personnel.

A note for your refrigerator door:

"I must vote in the run-off December 2nd!"

Two Georgia Constitutional Amendments Passed, One Lost

Passed: Amendment 1. Reduced Taxes for Forest Land in Tracts Exceeding 200 Acres

The General Assembly is now authorized to pass special tax assessment rates to reduce taxes on forest land in tracts of over 200 acres, with the provision that qualified owners must agree to a specific covenant and don't breach it for 15 years. State taxpayers will subsidize local governments for half of the first 3 percent (or less) loss in taxes and 100 percent of any loss over that first 3 percent. The tax assessment will not include the value of timber on the tract.

Socialistic redistribution of wealth. Government will control parts of privately owned forests. State taxes will be redirected to that locale to make up a portion of the loss in local revenue caused by the conversion of forests into greenspace. Local governments lose at least one-and-a-half percent of taxes they previously collected when forest owners controlled all their land.

Passed: Amendment 2. Use of School Tax Funds for Community Redevelopment

This could be a dream come true for developers eager to dip into this year's \$8,195,597,771 appropriation for education. The first beneficiary of this pot of gold will be the Atlanta Beltline that came to a halt after the State Supreme Court ruled in February that the Atlanta School System could not use its future tax money to fund the project. The Beltline plan is 22 miles of redevelopment in metro Atlanta. It combines greenspace, trails, transit and new development. (Did you see any schools or education facilities or equipment on that Beltline project list?)

The rationale they used to justify the redirection of education money: "If tax allocation districts (TAD) are unable to access educational funds, they must rely solely on city or county taxes, which in most cases do not generate enough revenue to finance a redevelopment project. If a TAD does not have enough funding to draw from, they are rendered ineffective."

Q. Will education taxes be increased to compensate for development projects' drain on funds?

Remember this? Recently, Governor Perdue issued a media release stating, "Taxpayers in these school districts¹ need to know that their education tax dollars have been used to pay lawyers suing the state instead of in their children's classrooms. My hope is that in the future decisions on school funding will be made through the public policy process, not in a courtroom where the plaintiffs' lawyers are paid with local education tax dollars to battle defense lawyers paid with state tax dollars." The governor then asked the Attorney General to rule on this.

There's no word from the attorney general yet, but I have another question for him.

Q. Did Amendment 2 free up school districts to use education taxes for non education whims, such as dues to the Consortium for Adequate School Funding in Georgia or other entities?

Lost: Amendment 3. Create Special Infrastructure Development Districts in Underserved Areas

Had it passed, this would have authorized the General Assembly to pass laws for infrastructure development districts wherein local governments could appoint or elect an oversight group to provide and expand services and facilities. Had it passed, the group could have borrowed money, imposed and collected fees and assessments (taxes) as the General Assembly specified.

¹ Dues to the Consortium for Adequate School Funding in Georgia were paid with education funds by these school districts: Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Bremen City, Brooks, Calhoun, Charlton, Chattahoochee, Clarke, Clay, Clinch, Coffee, Commerce City, Crawford, Crisp, Dodge, Echols, Effingham, Elbert, Griffin-Spalding, Irwin, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, Long, Madison, Marion, McDuffie, McIntosh, Meriwether, Miller, Montgomery, Murray, Oglethorpe, Peach, Pierce, Polk, Pulaski, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Tattnall, Taylor, Toombs, Towns, Truetlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Worth

Constitutional Amendments Passed by Other States

Three More States Voted to Protect Traditional Marriage

California. By a vote of 6,156,848 (52.2%) to 5,646,170 (47.8%) on November 4th, California voters passed Proposition 8 that amended the state constitution with this sentence:

“Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.”

The initiative was necessary to override a California Supreme Court decision that overturned the popular California Defense of Marriage Act passed by the legislature. That Court decision contradicted the will of the people and declared same-sex marriage to be a fundamental right in California.

“Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry” was the official name of Proposition 8. Though it required only 694,354 valid petition signatures to qualify for the ballot, the “Yes on 8” group took no chances. They obtained almost twice as many signatures (1,120,801) and on June 2, 2008, the initiative qualified, resulting in the nation’s most expensive campaign about a ballot question. The campaign cost a total of \$73.4 million. “Yes on 8” raised \$35.8 million and “No on Prop 8” raised \$37.6 million.

Florida. Over three years ago, grassroots Floridians began their campaign to protect traditional marriage. The battle was fierce, but proponents obtained more than the 610,000 signatures needed to qualify for the ballot. Opponents outspent them by a margin of 3-to-1 and a super majority of 60 percent was required for it to pass. Proposition 2 “The Marriage Protection Amendment” passed 4,645,602 (62.1%) to 2,833,052 (37.9%) and solidified Florida’s position on marriage. The Florida constitution was amended with this language:

“In as much as a marriage is the legal union of only one man and one woman as husband and wife, no other legal union that is treated as marriage or the substantial equivalent thereof shall be valid or recognized.”

With the passage of this amendment, Florida’s two laws prohibiting same-sex marriage are now protected from judicial activism. The amendment goes further than redefining marriage. It, also, rejects pseudo-marriage and denies benefits to domestic partners in both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships, while rendering invalid in Florida civil unions conducted elsewhere.

With victory assured by 11:00 p.m., supporters who gathered at Orlando’s First Baptist Church of Central Florida sang Fanny Crosby’s hymn, entitled “To God be the Glory.” The church’s pastor, who led other pastors to support the amendment, had the honor of closing in prayer.

Arizona. Proposition 102 passed on the November ballot. Proponents in the “Yes on 102” campaign received multiple donations of \$100,000 as they raised a total of \$7.6 million, 17 times more than the opponents could raise to fight it. Voters passed it 1,077,055 (56.4%) to 834,083 (43.6%) and amended the constitution with this language:

“Only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state.”

As in Florida and California, laws in Arizona already prohibited same-sex marriage, but court decisions overruling marriage laws in other states prompted the passage of Prop 102.

“My Confession”: Written and Recited by Ben Stein on CBS Sunday Morning Commentary

“I only hope we find God again before it is too late!!” – Ben Stein

I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees, Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are: Christmas trees.

It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, “Merry Christmas” to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near by beach house in Malibu. If people want a crèche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away.

I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution and I don't like it being shoved down my throat.

Or maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from and where the America we knew went to.

In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her “How could God let something like this happen?” (regarding Katrina) Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, “I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?”

In light of recent events... terrorist attacks, school shootings, etc. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found a few years ago) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK. Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said OK.

Then Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said OK.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with “WE REAP WHAT WE SOW.”

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how you can send “jokes” through e-mail and they spread like wildfire but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing yet? Funny how when you forward this message you will not send to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it. Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us. Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not then just discard it... No one will know you did. But if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.

My Best Regards, Honestly and respectfully,
Ben Stein

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