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Dear South Florida Black neighbor, something

POLITICS NEWS

Ben Carson tops national poll, Bob Sutton leads Broward GOP



By DAN SWEENEY
OCT 27, 2015 AT 11:15 AM



It's Tuesday, and it's a new day in the presidential campaign. Let's start with the numbers in today's Power Lunch.

Carson comes out ahead: West Palm Beach neurosurgeon [Ben Carson has topped a major national poll for the first time](#). The New York Times/CBS poll has 26 percent to **Donald Trump's** 22 percent. Is it too early for this to matter? Sure. But it was also too early when Trump overtook **Jeb! Bush** back in July, and Lord knows we in the media have made plenty of hay out of that. Still, let's get off of polls quickly and get to something in which results actually matter -- namely, elections.

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Broward GOP elects new leader: Keeping with the GOP but moving into local territory, the [Broward County Republican Party has elected 52-year-old Bob Sutton as party chair](#) over 23-year-old **Lauren Cooley**. This was about much more than electing a status quo candidate, the Sun Sentinel's own [Anthony Man](#) tells us. Sutton was the acting chairman and represents a more traditional, no-drama wing of the party. Cooley is young, quite conservative, and drew Tea Party support. The final vote was 90 to 80, and one person voted for Donald Trump just because.

Another problem for Cooley -- she had been attacked in the Broward conservative press. [Red Broward](#), the conservative political blog, [spent way too much time poring over Cooley's social media](#) accounts and found that her dedication to the local party online was not exactly something to tweet home about. And that was after it reported that [RINOs were backing Cooley](#) and played to parochial concerns by [accusing the Miami-Dade GOP of interfering in the election on behalf of Cooley](#). The blog had also gone on the warpath against a third candidate, Gene Robinson, before he dropped out late last week. Sutton becomes the Broward GOP's eighth chairman in nine years.

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Keeping up with the Wass: I spent some time yesterday with Rep. **Debbie Wasserman Schultz**, D-Weston, who does double-duty as the Democratic National Committee's chairwoman. The congresswoman held a news conference to promote Obamacare and raise breast cancer awareness. Obamacare is a success story in Florida per the numbers offered at the news conference, with more than 200,000 enrolled in Broward and more than 400,000 enrolled in Miami-Dade. (Of course, there are some less-positive numbers, such as [potential rate increases throughout 2016](#).)

But a lot of the press conference focused on mammograms and Wasserman Schultz's plan to get medical organizations to agree on an age at which to start getting them regularly. As I said in [my story](#), right now, three major medical groups recommend 40, 45 and 50 years of age. That's admittedly confusing, and Wasserman Schultz and the doctors who spoke with her at the news conference all want women to start getting exams at 40.

After the news conference, I got a quick question in to The Wass on Democratic debates -- namely, the fact that [the pressure's off to have more of them](#). She was circumspect, as politicians often are, but the fact remains that, after the [Biden/Webb/Chafee](#) news of the last week, there's not much reason to hold more debates.



The bear hunt is dead, long live the bear hunt: Although not everyone who got a permit got to shoot a bear -- some such as state Rep. **Frank Artiles**, R-Miami, [didn't even get a chance to go hunting](#) -- the fact remains that the proposed week-long hunt ended in two days. Nevertheless, [the state is ready to kick off another bear hunt next year](#), reports the Sun Sentinel's [David](#)

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A Bush is a Bush is a Bush: I don't know if you've heard this, Power Lunchers, but the **Jeb! Bush** campaign is in a bit of a bind. He's fallen way behind in the polls, the money is dropping off, staff and salaries are being cut. He's a long way from nearly two years ago, when he said the question he asked when he wondered whether to run was "[Can I do it joyfully?](#)"

Well, the answer now is, no. No, he cannot. Presidential campaigns are not joyful places. Sure, there's the smile and waves out in front, when you meet the people you have to convince to vote for you, but in the backrooms it tends to be a foul-mouthed, long-knived business. Jeb! has gone from having to run from his brother's legacy to actively using **George W. Bush** on the campaign trail. Brother George spent his Monday [talking deep-pocketed donors off the ledge](#), according to the Associated Press.

What's more, Jeb!'s campaign has gone where I and many others have long predicted it must go -- in attack mode against **Marco Rubio**. It may not be the most joyful thing to do, but a Jeb!'s gotta do what a Jeb!'s gotta do, and right now, [calling Rubio the "GOP Obama"](#) is what must be done. In the end, of course, there is only room in this race for one nominee. But even before that, there's only room in this race for one establishment candidate to sell himself as the anti-Trump to all the major donors. For Jeb! to win, Rubio's campaign has to die, and vice versa.

Another "joyful" campaign: Republican-turned-independent-turned-Democrat **Charlie Crist** has released [his first campaign ad](#). At about the 45-second mark of the 1:05-minute video, you can hear Crist refer to campaigning as "a joyful experience." Apparently, "joyful" tests well even though it's a word almost no one ever uses. It's sort of like how political reforms have to be "bold." Of course, this will be a joyful experience for Charlie Crist because it means he gets to run for office again, and that seems to be when the man is at his best. Heck, as a congressman, he'll get to run for office every two years. Might as well be heaven.

Redistricting, in court and in the Senate: The congressional redistricting map is now before the Florida Supreme Court. A few days ago, U.S. Rep. **Dan Webster**, R-Winter Garden, filed a motion to intervene in the case. He claimed

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constitutional amendments. It's quite a novel argument, and it's one that all sides in the redistricting mess want no part of. In a show of unity that's positively stupefying in its implications, yesterday the Florida Legislature and the voting-rights groups that sued it over gerrymandered districts actually agreed on something. Namely, that [Webster has no business intervening in the case](#). Meanwhile, the Florida Senate will vote on a state Senate district map either today or -- if arguments on the floor go on too long (which is entirely possible given that politicians are real good at speechifying) -- tomorrow. The Orlando Sentinel's [Gray Rohrer](#) gives us [the latest update from Tallahassee](#), which finds that senators have come up with a pile of alternatives to the map that passed out of committee next week. In other words: This could take a while. And the House still has to have its say next week.

Go Noles: Even as a new gambling agreement draws closer, [the Seminole Tribe is taking the state to court](#). It's possibly a political maneuver to add chips to the tribe's side of the negotiating table, or it could be the real deal if Seminoles truly believe the state is just stringing them along.

Joltin' Joe has left and gone away: And finally, Joe Biden. Or more accurately, **Steve Schale**, the Florida campaign director of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign. Schale had been taken with ol' Joe the few times he met him, and when a Draft Biden movement got started, Schale said somewhat offhandedly that he'd support it ... which led to 10 weeks of being a non-Biden spokesman for the Biden noncampaign. [Schale himself writes an account of the surreal experience](#) for Context Florida. It's a good read.

MEANWHILE ON THE TWITTERVERSE ...

Steve Schale @steveschale

Just heard [@SenBillNelson](#)'s Pete Mitchell is leaving. There are few people whose advice I've leaned on more. Pete's a true public servant.

≥140 CHARACTER HOT TAKE: I hear there's plenty of positions open for unofficial spokespeople for nonexistent campaigns.

Past Frontrunners @pastfrontrunner

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≥140 CHARACTER HOT TAKE: The Wash. Post issues these tweets daily. Worth remembering that the 2016 campaign is far from over.

Ben Sharpe @iamsharpe

is it too late to sign up to live on mars?

≥140 CHARACTER HOT TAKE: Why bother? You already live in Tallahassee.

As always, I'm [@Daniel_Sweeney](#). Troll me there.

Dan Sweeney

South Florida Sun Sentinel



Dan Sweeney is the author of "Sound Off South Florida," where he covers our readers' view on local news and solicits your comments and opinions on various topics. Previously, Dan covered the state legislature and statewide political issues. He graduated from the University of Missouri in 2000 and has lived in South Florida ever since.

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