

'burg Blogs » **Last Call Thursday**

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WMNF 88.5 'Last Call Thursday' with Host Mitch Perry

On Thursday, June 28th I was scheduled to be a guest on WMNF 88.5 “Last Call Thursday” with Host Mitch Perry. We originally planned to discuss civic education and student engagement.

However, on this last day of October Term 2011, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down its decision in *National Federation of Independent Business, et al v. Sebelius* (2012), ruling on the constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”). Needless to say, we discussed the Court’s ruling and its impact on the 2012 presidential election instead.

We cover Congress’s power under the Taxing and Spending Clauses and under the Commerce Clause in POS 4614 US Constitutional Law I (which I will be teaching again Fall 2012). One of the assignments I have developed is a Mock Supreme Court Oral Argument.

We usually have the opportunity to reserve one of the courtrooms at Stetson College of Law for our simulation.

Some students are Supreme Court Justices, while others are the attorneys arguing the case. We typically break the class in half and do one Commerce Clause case and one Separation of Powers case.

In Fall 2010 (when I was teaching on a Fulbright in Moldova at ULIM) I patterned the Commerce Clause case after this challenge to the ACA “individual mandate.” I need to go back and look at my notes to see who won the arguments in our simulation two years ago. We agreed that we would discuss again after the Supreme Court issued a ruling in the case. I’m actually heading back to Moldova this summer, so we may even be able to have a discussion in person.

In any case, what a treat to be a guest on “Last Call Thursday,” and to hear immediate reaction to the Supreme Court’s decision.

When I was Director of the Comment Line at the White House I used to say that we “had our fingers on the pulse of American democracy.” My favorite was fielding the calls on the evening of the President’s State of the Union Address.

Now the news networks have those ticker tapes that run along the bottom of the screen, gauging how the audiences are reacting to the speech. It was a privilege to hear the thoughts of the callers directly.

That’s how it felt in the studio, fielding calls from throughout Tampa Bay.

I will look forward to a future appearance on “Last Call Thursday” to discuss the issue of civic education and civic engagement.

About the blogger



Dr. Scourfield McLauchlan is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, where she teaches courses in American Government and Public Law. Her latest book, *Congressional Participation as Amicus Curiae before the U.S. Supreme Court*, explores how Members of Congress attempt to influence Supreme Court decision-making in specific cases. In addition to her scholarly activities, Professor McLauchlan has extensive experience in American government and politics. McLauchlan worked at the US Supreme Court, the US Senate Judiciary Committee, the US Department of Justice, and the White House. A veteran of several presidential campaigns, she has managed statewide operations across the US, from Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon. During the 2010-11 academic year Dr. McLauchlan was a Fulbright Scholar in Moldova.