

# Skidaway Island Republican Club

# MAGAZINE

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2018 ISSUE NO. 1

## SIRC

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### **TRUE PERSPECTIVES SEMINAR - December 18 - Buddy Carter**

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### **GOVERNOR CANDIDATE FORUM - January 18**

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Georgia Secretary of State (and gubernatorial candidate) Brian Kemp described crucial issues facing Georgia on election integrity and voting rights. See page 7.

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The Savannah Council of World Affairs hosts seminars on Skidaway Island. Iran expert Trita Parsi gave his perspective from behind the scenes for the Obama negotiations on page 10.

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### **SEMINAR on DETERRING NORTH KOREA - February 18**

The Savannah Council of World Affairs invited cyber warfare expert Dr. Megan Reiss to describe other deterrents to preventing North Korea from pursuing nuclear weapons. See summary on page 11.

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### **FUTURE EVENTS**

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April 17: TP Seminar - Jesse Petrea and Ben Watson on the State of the State  
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At a sold-out audience for this year's Presidents Day Dinner, former UN Ambassador John Bolton put virtually all the foreign policy threats into an unvarnished perspective. He also highlighted the myriad ways—both purposely and through negligence -- that the Obama Administration diminished American status and power.

### **Russia Collusion?**

The recent indictments of Russians by Special Prosecutor Mueller should have been no surprise as Russia has been doing this for years, with the Obama Administration doing virtually nothing about it. In 2014, long before anyone even knew that Donald Trump would be running for president, they sent 80 espionage agents to the U.S. to try to disrupt a U.S. image of success in the world. They even tried to help Bernie Sanders. In the past, the Soviet Union targeted labor unions and even Hollywood to undermine America's image.

With expertise in cyber warfare now, Russia is now exploiting social media to great effect, even while spending a minuscule amount compared to what the American political campaigns spent in messaging (0.005% of the total spent by others). Their goals were not so much to push one candidate or another, but to sow discontent and to tarnish the American ideals envied by other countries, fearful that American values might undermine support among native Russians at home.

To counter this, Bolton suggests launching a disproportionate response against Russia to deter future meddling. While not supporting laws restricting election spending, Bolton advocates very strong sanctions against any foreign spending to influence our elections.

The Democrat mantra that Trump colluded with the Russians is historically very ironic, as Liberals for years have sought to dismiss Russia as a serious threat. Also noteworthy is that President Obama said and did nothing about the Russian meddling until *after* Hillary lost. The implication is that playing the Russian card after a Hillary election would only undermine her legitimacy. Better to come on strong after Trump surprisingly won to try to delegitimize him. (Many Trump supporters were actually surprised on election night that Hillary lost.)

Bolton also lamented the rise of Russian influence (and decline of American power) in the eight years of the Obama regime. Russia now has two military bases in the Middle East, the only ones now outside of the former Soviet Union boundary lines. This and the aggression against Ukraine were major Russian successes since Anwar Sadat ejected the Soviets from Egypt in the 1970s, and moved towards the West.

Russia's Syrian alliance fits in neatly with their move to aid Iran. Who knows how much technology was given to Iran? The Iranians have also managed to turn Iraq into a quasi-satellite state under the pretext of fighting ISIS.

ON Iranian Nuclear Deal in 2015, few really believe this made us safer. Not only did we remove the crippling economic sanctions against them, we awarded them billions in cash and got virtually nothing in return but bogus

promises to reform. Even John Kerry was surprised that Obama gave up the ability to inspect Iranian bases (the usual concession when doing arms control) in order to get any "deal" with Iran. (Was Obama just trying to bur-nish some foreign policy "legacy"?)

### **North Korea Not Deterred Under Obama**

Another Obama failed legacy was his "strategic patience" with North Korea, which translates to doing virtually nothing for eight years. Susan Rice's recent op ed suggested it was acceptable to let North Korea go nuclear, because we had been successful when the Soviets had a nuclear arsenal during the Cold War. But even if it worked when the nuclear threat was bipolar (U.S. vs. U.S.S.R.), how much more dangerous it is when there are rogue regimes with nukes? It especially reckless to allow a rogue nuclear state who might sell or give nukes to terrorists who have no fear of meeting their maker, or who even seek a glorious martyr's death. As for trusting Kim Jong-un (KJU) with nukes, recall he had his half-brother assassinated with VX nerve gas administered by two females in a Malaysian airport. He also ordered torture and death on other internal opponents.

### **Down To Only Two Options in North Korea**

KJU's resolve to stay in power gives us a Hobson's choice in North Korea. Either accept a nuclear North Korea with an ability to target Los Angeles with a thermonuclear weapon, or destroy his capability with massive military strikes on his nukes, rockets and submarine bases.

The military option risks KJU's retaliation against Seoul, as it is not easy to simultaneously destroy all of the artillery positioned close to the DMZ. There is also a possibility of regime collapse after a U.S. massive military strike, occasioned by his military rebellion, but that is a faint hope. As is the likelihood of China negotiating with KJU to disarm and reunite the peninsula, even if it is in North Korea's best interest.

### **Decline of U.S. Military Under Obama**

This was a major message from Bolton. If the U.S. is no longer safe internationally, domestic priorities shrink to minor importance. The systematic dismantling of the U.S. military under the Obama regime was in effect a \$1.5 trillion decline in needed spending. The \$80 billion boost under Trump is only a small down payment on what is needed. We have fewer naval ships than we had at the end of World War I. And our enemies, principally China, are arming with sophisticated weaponry. China is expanding in the South China Sea to deny potential oil access to major U.S. allies, and is bent on acquiring hegemony in the Indian Ocean as well.

China also has cyber warfare capabilities to knock down crucial grids, so no one can say we are safer now than when the Obama Administration's self-imposed military disarmament began eight years ago.

Despite these threats, Bolton remains optimistic on America's future because of our talented populace and our system of free enterprise.

(continued on page 3)



**Q&A Session**

1. What are our realistic military options in North Korea?  
 A. Bolton was confident we could destroy their nuclear facilities and missile and submarine bases. However, there is the real risk of half a million South Korean casualties in a retaliatory strike. For Bolton, the real calculus is how important it is to save a million lives in LA versus South Korea's devastation or even Tokyo, the next closest target.  
 What is at stake is how, for instance, a President Elizabeth Warren would react to a crazy ultimatum from KJU or his successor, given a new vulnerability of American cities. KJU could also give nuclear secrets and technology to terrorist regimes where we could not trace the source of a horrendous attack for retaliation to a fearless adversary.
2. Could a smaller U.S. force, like the Navy Seals taking out Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, effect the removal of KJU or cause a coup?  
 A. Any such smaller U.S. pre-emptive strike would leave KJU or his successor with too much retaliatory fire power to even consider that option.
3. What is the best response to Russia's meddling in our election process?

- A. Strong sanctions for any future intrusions and much stronger laws forbidding foreign investment in election ads or processes. Obama's non-reaction to North Korean threats on SONY may have emboldened others to continue nefarious actions.  
 The stolen information by China on millions of individual privacy information may have potential for later blackmail against individuals. This cyber warfare is very dangerous to our security.
4. What's your view of Nikki Haley's performance as Ambassador to the UN?  
 A. Very good; She is strong and effective, and doesn't seem to be constrained by career advisers in the State Department.
5. Has the UN been helpful in dealing with North Korea?  
 A. Suffice it to say that this dirt-poor "Hermit Kingdom" of 25 million people has gotten to within months of potentially threatening major American cities with thermonuclear destruction. Also note that the hereditary dictatorship of the Kim family has managed to take a North Korea with a GDP greater than South Korea in the 1950s to barely 2% of South Korea's GDP now.



Pictures from February 19





# Pictures at February 19 Presidents Day Dinner





## Major Tax Legislation About to Happen

From his Washington office where he is steeped in last minute votes, 1st District US Congressman Buddy Carter appeared in a SKYPE broadcast at the Plantation Club. He gave an overview of the major tax reform legislation that is a superb accomplishment of President Trump and the GOP controlled Congress this year. It's being done with Democrats being totally partisan and ignoring the needs of the American public.

### Individual Taxes

The winners will be the American public – a \$2,000 cut in taxes for the median income family earning \$78,000 a year, and allowing 90% of them to file their federal taxes now on a simple post card. This reverses decades of increasing complexity where almost 90% of filers needed help adhering to the 73,000 pages of IRS rules. Helping to achieve that is a new \$24,000 standard deduction to married couples filing.

Helping even lower earners is a new \$2,000 child tax credit, \$1,400 of which is fully refundable (some will actually get a check, even though their tax liability is zero). Recall that some 43% of Americans now pay no income tax. (Getting them jobs will hopefully reform that and also help to reduce the national debt.)

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## This should unleash America's overall economy to be able to grow again at over 3% on a sustained basis or ... 4%

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The goal of all the negotiations was to keep the charitable tax deductions and the mortgage interest deduction (on mortgages below \$750,000). However, he credited the Senate for the bold move to limit high tax states allowing federal deductions for more than \$10,000 of state and local income and property taxes. (Not many in NY NJ and California voted for Republicans anyway, and Georgians resented subsidizing rich people in those states).

### Corporate Taxes

This was a major coup, taking the U.S. from the most uncompetitive status of a rate of 35% to highly competitive in the industrialized world at 21%. This should unleash America's overall economy to be able to grow again at over 3% on a sustained basis or even 4%, compared to the anemic Obama years of 1% to 2% at best.

This growth potential is also a major key to reducing our unsustainable national debt at over \$20 trillion and climbing. This was a major hurdle, and growth is the most painless way to reduce the debt. The other ways, which are still a priority are cutting wasteful spending and reforming the entitlement system (Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security).

Helping smaller businesses who are S Corporations (not eligible for the 21% tax rate) will be a new 20% deduction from initial total income before starting to pay the individual tax rates.

### Q&A Session

The first one dealt with the frustration of a never-ending Mueller investigation, but no end is in sight on that.

The next frustration was the realization that the ObamaCare "mandate" to buy overpriced health coverage would not disappear until 2019.

The next concern was the apparent inability of Congress to deal with needed tort reform and a lack of a line item veto at the federal level.

Regarding ObamaCare's chances of replacement, there is a movement in Georgia to actually get the ACA declared unconstitutional by passing laws that defy the ACA's other illegal mandates. To make state innovative plans more competitive, however, Congress needs to deal with the tax inequality between individual policies and employer based policies. The lack of such solution in the Democrat rammed ACA plans is almost proof that they never intended it to last, but to just be a stop-gap measure until single payer could be imposed. Carter conceded that some Republicans are reluctant to let go of ACA (Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski and John McCain) without a solid plan to guarantee health insurance access to many Americans.

Another frustration was the U.S. Military being held hostage to the "sequestration" rule and inability to get a budget approved. The real need is a long-term commitment to restoring military readiness, with tone-year fixes totally inadequate. (We now have fewer ships and planes than before World War II.) A movement is now taking place to remove the Military from the sequestration rules, at a minimum, but the Democrats still have a say in that.

As for the Wall being delayed, Carter had some optimism that the DACA and Dreamer negotiations in the Spring may free up resources to begin building the Wall.

As for the astonishment that no Democrats would even vote for tax cuts for the middle class, Carter was also optimistic that some would cave, after they see it will actually pass. The rationale is that some Democrats are in states and districts that were strong double digit margin victories for Trump in 2016.



On December 7, 2017, the Chatham County Republican Party sponsored a candidate forum for the Lieutenant Governor slot in 2018. Two candidates appeared: Jeff Duncan and David Shafer.

**Jeff Duncan** is a five-year representative in the Georgia Legislature from Forsyth County. He is a Georgia Tech graduate who had a baseball scholarship as a pitcher and was drafted by the Florida Marlins, spending six years in professional baseball, before starting a business career. He sold the business and in 2012 ran for the Georgia Assembly defeating an incumbent in his first election.

He sponsored the Cargo Theft Act in Georgia that helped reduce thefts by 68%. His Rural Relief Bill also helped give financial help to local hospitals.

His main thesis for running: not spending decades in politics, voted no on many tax increase issues, and is honest, effective and courageous in everything he pursues.

**David Shafer** is a University of Georgia graduate whose first job was with the Georgia GOP, where he became its Executive Director. He was elected from Duluth, Georgia to the Georgia Senate in 2002, where he has risen to now being the President Pro Tem.

His accomplishments include introducing the first zero based budgeting discipline in Georgia. In Democratic controlled politics, only about 5% of the budget was ever questioned, as past programs were automatically continued without much scrutiny. He also introduced a permanent cap on any increases in Georgia's income tax.

His roots are in real conservatism, believes in the dignity of work, and has an A+ rating from the NRA and the equivalent on Pro-Life issues.

### Q&A Session

#### 1. What are your skills and competencies for the job of Lieutenant Governor?

**Shafer:** His entire 15-year political career showed his leadership and experience in Georgia legislative and executive matters. He even led an overriding of a governor's veto in the prior administration.

**Duncan:** He brings a business perspective to the position, relying on the free market to create jobs not government actions. He is also a huge supporter of competition to spur public education to improve.

#### 2. What are two key conservative principles that drive your actions and what are examples to prove that?

**Duncan:** Lower taxes and smaller government are major beliefs. He voted against the Transportation bill that converted gasoline to an excise tax, and voted against a hotel fee tax increase of \$5 per night per person.

**Shafer:** Smaller government is a good thing, but roads and bridges are functions that only government can do, so do them right. He defended ending the sales tax on gasoline, as world oil markets are volatile, and when gas prices are high, so is a sales tax on them. Also, an excise tax (per gallon) is more predictable than a sales tax. And when gas prices go up again, the excise tax is more stable and lower than a sales tax.

#### 3. Any regrets on legislation previously supported?

**Shafer:** Can't think of any. He did struggle over a deer baiting issue. He laments that there are still bills with multiple issues in them, and castigated the old Democratic ploy of delivering a new bill a day, with not much chance for review. He conceded that perhaps 100 bills a session are too much to review; and Republicans need to change that. He applauds a new effort to broadcast live the deliberations of the Georgia Legislature in the spirit of transparency on how its legislators behave.

**Duncan:** He regrets he couldn't vote against the gas tax twice. He believes that Transportation should be a more public part of the budget. He also believes that Obama-Care was a hoax on the American public.

#### 4. The Lieutenant Governor's job includes selecting which bills to fast track first. What are your highest priorities?

**Duncan:** Bills involving better education outcomes, improved healthcare, and anything which is good policy and not done for political reasons.

**Shafer:** Getting essential healthcare for all Georgians, improved access to broadband everywhere in Georgia, and further limiting taxes to attract more business and employers to Georgia.

#### 5. What's your vision for Savannah within Georgia?

**Shafer:** Have business flourish and keep the pressure on improving the port facility that is a major asset to Savannah and to all the Southeast.

**Duncan:** Expand the Georgia economy via a healthy business climate, support for families and making us a great place to retire. Savannah area armed forces locales are also a major plus.

#### 6. What's your view on Georgia's DOT head getting a \$100,000 raise for merely doing his job?

**Duncan:** Against that. Also, we need more leadership on future transportation issues. Consider the future expansion of electric vehicles (no gas tax revenue on that), and self-driving vehicles, as well as the utter failure of MARTA where yearly costs are nearing \$100 million a mile.

**Shafer:** Also against that waste. He stressed again that the excise tax fix on gasoline made all the revenue go to roads and bridges, where the sales tax on gasoline siphoned off revenue to other generic purposes.

### Closing Statements

**Duncan:** His mission is to be a problem solver. He left the Assembly after five years beholden to no special interests, or lobbyists. His perspective is that of a business person, committed to conservative, free market principles.

**Shafer:** His 30-year career in politics was to promote the GOP brand and conservative principles. That experience allows him to overcome obstacles, as the political process is not easy to navigate in governing.



## Kemp's Legacy as Secretary of State

Long-time Georgia Secretary of State (and candidate for Governor this year) Brian Kemp gave his perspective on his staunch conservative values in the face of numerous liberal challenges over his past two terms in Georgia.

Starting his career as a small business owner in Athens, Georgia, he then decided to run for the Georgia Senate to try to change some oppressive and anti-business rules and regulations. He surprisingly won in a very liberal district that had voted for Michael Dukakis for president in 1988.

He became Secretary of State in 2010, and began a whole series of defenses of Georgia's Photo ID Law to combat voter fraud passed in 2005, with an onslaught of liberal attempts to undermine it. The Obama Administration twice sued Georgia (unsuccessfully) under the Voting Rights Act to try to overturn the very effective Photo ID aspects of Georgia's law. They claimed it suppressed voting for minorities in Georgia, despite overwhelming evidence that voter participation by blacks and Hispanics increased dramatically after the passage of the Photo ID Law in 2005.

The arguments that it was too hard to get a photo ID were patently absurd on their face as well as in actual historical evidence. Photo ID requirements are almost universal in application throughout society, and Georgia gives out free photo IDs to those who don't have a driver's license. Kemp has also testified in other states (Ohio, North Carolina, Texas) that contemplated emulating Georgia's innovative Photo ID Law.

## Is Voter Fraud Real?

In the 2016 election, liberals denied the existence of voter fraud, and Democrats on the Special Commission on Election Integrity to investigate the extent of fraud killed the whole effort. They refused to cooperate with requests for voter records in many Democratic stronghold states (e.g., California, New York). The Commission was disbanded and the investigatory effort is now passed to the Department of Homeland Security.

Kemp's observation was if there was no widespread incidence of fraud, why not let the Commission do its work and come to that conclusion. Kemp conceded that some mistakes were made initially on the Commission, such as one request for Social Security Numbers on the voter rolls. That was corrected, but the overall resistance from liberal legislators on the bipartisan Commission was overwhelming, as evidenced by the lawsuits filed to prevent getting crucial information.

His observation in Georgia is that there are many ways to cheat, and the states need to do a better job of maintaining eligible voter rolls. States that allow voting by merely showing a local bill for electricity is not sufficient to prove citizenship. And even in Georgia, there have been 86 cases alone in 1917, where illegitimate voting has been attempted. This includes felons applying for

absentee ballots as well as relatives of deceased persons requesting the same.

## List Maintenance is Crucial

In Georgia alone over the past few years, 600,000 voter addresses were suspended, until the persons demonstrated a valid address. This effort got Kemp labelled "Secretary of Suppression" by the ACLU, even though comments that it was too hard to get a photo ID were patently absurd on their face as well as in actual historical evidence.

Kemp's Department introduced a modern "e-net" method of flagging questionable records, such as using Vital Records information on newly deceased persons. Rather than suppressing voting, his department innovated by allowing on-line registrations especially valued by young people, and which saves costs by eliminating coding from written applications.

His philosophy for Georgia was "it is easy to vote, but hard to cheat". This is recommended for all states to adopt, but Kemp was not a fan of having the federal government intrude in what essentially is a state-by-state function.

## Other Questions

One dealt with the shortage of poll workers in Chatham County. Apparently 30% of past workers were culled from the eligible list due to prior felony convictions. Perhaps the renewal process could be improved by relying more on the online training modules instead of continually requiring a two-hour physical presence in Election Headquarters.

Kemp said he would look into this, but he also heralded an effort to get veterans and young people qualified as poll workers. He pointed to his Students Ambassadors Program, where some 150 High Schools are allowing civics programs to be taught on the value of the U.S. voting system, as well as how to vote and how to be a poll worker.

He surmised that this was only done in states that had a record of voting more for Republicans over Democrats (Georgia versus California).

He also observed that in many instances where he testified about Georgia's record under the Photo ID law, the overwhelming statistics record that rebutted the allegation of voter suppression was not received well by the liberal ideologues that wanted lax voter monitoring.





## Meet the GOP Candidates for Governor

At the Wilmington Island Club on January 18, the Chatham County Republican Party delivered all six GOP candidates for Governor who will run in a primary on May 22, 2018. CCRP Chairman Linda Olson introduced the candidates and described the format of the Forum.

### Introduction (Alphabetical list)

**Casey Cagle** – was the first Republican ever elected to Lieutenant Governor in Georgia.

**Hunter Hill** – A former Army Ranger, with three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, he started a business after retiring from the Army. He has served two terms in the Senate, fighting for lower taxes, school choice and other conservative values.

**Brian Kemp** – has served two terms as Georgia Secretary of State, and has 30 years' experience starting and running a small business.

**Clay Tippins** – is a Stanford grad, a decorated Navy Seal, and a successful businessman. He has never run for a public office before.

**Marc Urbach** – taught school for 11 years, and is a professional author, journalist and public speaker, who uses the Courts to fight for justice and enforce the law. (He tried to get President Obama and Hillary Clinton indicted.)

**Michael Williams** – is a businessman and two-term Senator in Georgia, who was Georgia's Co-chair for the Trump Campaign.

### Opening Statements

**Brian Kemp** – a 30-year businessman, he first ran for office successfully in a liberal district (Athens GA) that had supported Michael Dukakis for president. His motivation was to cut regulations, make state government more efficient, and preserve conservative Georgia values. As Secretary of State, he cut through red tape, and also stood up to the Obama Administration's attempt to overturn Georgia's innovative Voter ID law.

**Michael Williams** – A CPA who is new to politics, he got involved after ObamaCare destroyed his small business's ability to compete. His goal is to get the lobbyists, corporations and the rich elites out of influencing gov-

ernment decisions. He is the only candidate who supported Donald Trump in both the primaries and the general election.

**Hunter Hill** – After a college football career, he became an Army Ranger seeing combat in Iraq. His five years in the Georgia Senate has been spent pushing a conservative agenda of less government, and lower taxes.

**Marc Urbach** – As a former teacher and businessman, he is running to bring power back to the people and drain the political swamp.

**Clay Tippins** - Clay is a different kind of candidate in this race. He jumped in because he believes Georgia deserves better than politics as usual, with Georgia's government operating largely the same manner for the past fifty years. Clay wants to draw upon his unique experiences to bring Georgia's government from a past broken bureaucracy into the future.

**Casey Cagle** – Having served two governors (Deal and Perdue), he has seen Georgia become number one for business in the U.S. He believes the future for Georgia is bright – potentially 500,000 new jobs, that can be achieved by tax reform.

### Question One: What do you offer that is unique and that can get you elected in 2018 against the Democrats?

**Marc Urbach** – His belief in returning power to the people, his plans and his statesmanship will make a stark contrast with whomever the Democrats put up.

**Casey Cagle** - A staunch conservative who has delivered on his promises. He has created new career Academies to help young Georgians get started in new jobs. His agenda is to build roads and bridges for the new jobs in Georgia, and to rapidly expand broadband in Georgia to help jobs in less populated areas.

**Brian Kemp** – The key to election success is a candidate that can be trusted and will fight for the right ideals. His record as Secretary of State proves the above. He also believes the Democrats really don't understand Georgians and their conservative values.

**Hunter Hill** – believes the U.S. has gotten off its true values, and government has gotten too big. It will take true leadership to turn things around and do what is necessary to expand the economy via better education through competitive school choice, and the elimination of the income tax to compete in the South.

**Clay Tippins** – His Navy Seal grit plus extensive management experience is what is needed to really shrink the size of government, yet build more roads and improve the healthcare system. It will also take some new thinking to solve a growing opioid problem in Georgia.

**Michael Williams** – The current government system is broken. It will take an outsider to fight against the establishment that is reluctant to change.





## **Question Two: With beach erosion and the prospect of off-shore drilling, how do you protect the environment?**

**Casey Cagle** – The real question is how one maintains the hugely important Port of Savannah, where the Harbor deepening is a constant need to maintain. The Port is a \$60 billion annual generator of business in the Southeast.

**Brian Kemp** - As governor, he would approach every problem as he did as Secretary of State: use common sense. And consider the effects on all areas of the economy, including tourism – a major factor on the coast of Georgia.

**Clay Tippins** – He is believer that offshore drilling is a crucial benefit that can be managed as to its risks, to preserve Georgia's coastline as an ecological gem. He also knows that the Savannah Port maintenance is now 2.5 years behind schedule. Getting it back on schedule will boost economic development — not only in Savannah, but throughout Georgia.

**Michael Williams** – Is all for more drilling, and believes less government meddling is better, as the free market can manage the risks and rewards better.

**Marc Urbach** – Let the local communities have more of a say in oil drilling. And he is a real supporter of growing the Port of Savannah.

**Hunter Hill** – Natural resources can be protected even under the concept of more limited government, but keeping government to its core competencies. He believes in eliminating the state income tax, expanding school choice and helping the workforce be better prepared for the jobs of the future.

## **Question Three: What's your position on a state income tax, casinos and entitlements?**

**Brian Kemp** – No casinos; reduce the income tax via spending cuts; and put more responsibility on individuals to become less dependent on government.

**Casey Cagle** – Incent individuals to reject food stamps, avoid casinos, and have broad tax reform.

**Marc Urbach** – Reject casinos, kill the state income tax (Florida and Texas have none), and give entitlement recipients three months to enroll in a school or training program or get a job.

**Michael Williams** – Don't need casinos; we have a lottery to support education, but the \$4 billion is not all used for that purpose. Cut entitlements, but our tax revenue increase of 70% in the past ten years has resulted in more spending, Cut spending.

**Clay Tippins** – Cutting income tax without increasing the sales tax means cutting spending. Clay would use his business skills and data to target waste, fraud, and abuse. On entitlements, some counties have abuses that can be curtailed, based on looking at their data.

**Hunter Hill** – Also is opposed to casinos. On entitlements, it is morally important to wean them off the government largess to restore dignity to an environment of working. Taxes can be reduced if government is restored to its true core purposes: Safety, transportation and education. Reducing the income tax would not mean increasing the sales tax.

## **Closing Statements and Final Perspective**

**Casey Cagle** – Distinguish candidates not based on their ideas but their accomplishments. Georgia population is expected to grow by 4 million in the next 15 years (the size of South Carolina today). A major governor role is to plan for and shape that future. Need to rapidly expand broadband in Georgia, and help create vast new jobs. Over 100,000 jobs are unfilled today due to lack of skills – not only college trained, but industry apprenticeships. Also recognize 25% of children today live in poverty in Georgia.

**Clay Tippins** – In Education, get the federal government out of it; and get the banks and the federal government out of college loans. Have businesses get involved. In Georgia today, two thirds of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders can't read at grade level, and there are too many opioid prescriptions being given. These are emerging disasters. It may need an outsider with a very different perspective to start pushing appropriate solutions, as the establishment has allowed this to happen.

**Brian Kemp** – A small business owner's perspective is to cut taxes and cap spending. The electorate is looking for a governor to be trusted to do what he says he will do, based on a past track record. As Secretary of State, he cut his budget by 25% and innovated to save by outsourcing technology formerly done inefficiently by government. His four-point plan is to make Georgia No. 1 for small businesses, strengthen rural Georgia, reform state government, and put Georgia first.

**Michael Williams** – we can eliminate the state income tax, and cut spending. Cut the influence of lobbyists and special interests, and don't give special tax credits to corporations (who then contribute to election campaigns).

**Marc Urbach** – The voter choice seems to be between “career politicians” and “fake conservatives” versus new visionaries and statesmen.

**Hunter Hill** – Eliminate the state income tax, cut entitlement spending, and empower parents with more decisions on child education through more competition. Get government back to its core purpose. Be wary of all talk politicians, and go for results oriented leaders.



### Inside Story of the Iran Nuclear Deal

On December 7 the Savannah Council of World Affairs invited Trita Parsi to give his perspective on the background of the Iran Nuclear Deal. He concluded this was the best deal possible, given the terrible conditions that existed. There were earlier opportunities that could have given a better result, but the signals were missed by earlier Administrations.

Parsi believed we were on the brink of war, had the negotiations failed, due to massive misinterpretations of the stakes involved and the huge vacuums of power in the Middle East from the Iraq conflicts. Iraq's defeat created this, and Iran stepped in as a major power broker, when the U.S. meddling in Iraq caused a loss of confidence in the U.S. as a major mediator. The start of the vacuum was the 1991 Iraq war, was complicated by the fall of the Soviet Union – both in 1991.

Israel now viewed Iran as the major foe in the region and did much to try to demonize Iran's intentions, siding more with the Sunni states of Saudi Arabia and Egypt against Shia-controlled Iran. Iran's self-imposed isolation was exacerbated by their support of Hamas and trying to prevent a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

The final demise of Iraq's influence came in 2005 after the second Iraq war, which created massive instability in the region. Iran felt a weakened U.S. influence would allow Iran to attain dominance in the region.

The Bush Administration was viewed by Parsi as maintaining the chaos because it would not even recognize Iran as a legitimate state, or understand the politics of the region. Iran viewed U.S. negotiation terms such as "a carrot or a stick" as an insult, likening them to donkeys who needed two types of prods.

### Nuclear Beginnings

In 2003, Iran was a fledgling in enriching uranium (only 150 centrifuges). (Editor's note: way short of the 5,000 needed for a bomb, and way short of the 8,000 needed for nuclear energy. Did anyone believe Iran only wanted to produce more electricity?) By the end of the Bush Administration in 2008, Iran had 8,000 centrifuges. Parsi alleges Iran was willing in 2003 to negotiate with Bush to allow 2,000, but starting the negotiation with a target of 3,000.

When Obama took office, he removed the military option in negotiation, leaving the pressure points on Iran at three: Sanctions, Sabotage, Cyber attacks. The stepped up sanctions, with European cooperation, were having a crippling effect on Iran's economy – a 25% reduction in GDP, with the prospect of worse results in the future from severe banking restrictions.

The real question then was: Would crippling sanctions make Iran come to the bargaining table and give up its nuclear ambitions? Iran's Islamic leaders instead chose nuclear to the detriment of their people's suffering.

By 2012, Iran convinced Obama that they were within a year of getting a bomb, not the two or three year breakout suggested by other observers. And restricting Iran's nuclear enrichment program was not apparently negotiable.

Parsi viewed the Israelis as not helping in the negotiation process (which he believed was possible), because Israel wanted a military strike. They would do it, if necessary, without asking advance permission of the U.S.

Not wanting a war in the Middle East, Obama then tried to act quickly, using back channels to signal a willingness to negotiate. Parsi felt that Israel's belligerence and Obama fear of Iran going nuclear impelled this process.

So, Obama's (and Parsi's) view was accepting partial enrichment now was the best obtainable deal possible, given the intransigence of the parties involved.

### The Real Questions

**Has the U.S. has just kicked the can down the road ten years to avoid a current confrontation?** Parsi believes not. Even the U.S. press has conceded Iran is free to fully resume enrichment after a stay. Yet Parsi says that UN inspections can harness world opinion against Iran to prevent final bomb making. Perhaps there was a belief by the Obama negotiators that negotiating back from the brink will allow ten or 15 years of returning Iran to the community of nations through resumed trade to soften their belligerent focus on threats. (Editor's Note: does Israel believe that? Will Israel sustain its position that they don't need U.S. permission to peremptorily strike Iran to avoid a nuclear attack on Tel Aviv?)

In the negotiation process, apparently granting UN free access to inspect was denied by Iran. So, only if there is credible evidence, can the AEA team go in.

**Why was no restriction put on Iran pursuing a ballistic missile capability?** Parsi's answer was there was no UN governing precedent on missiles as there is on Nuclear Non-Proliferation.

In a subsequent query to Parsi about Iran possibly joining with North Korea to get ICBM capability, he was skeptical, mainly because he believes Iran has excellent scientific resources on their own. And given their long-term goals of hegemony in the region, Iran would be willing to wait to develop it themselves, with no UN prohibition of missile development, as anyone can plan to put up satellites.

Parsi also pointed out that on military capability, Iran is only spending \$16 billion a year, while Saudi Arabia is buying \$80 billion year of U.S. aircraft.

On Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism and a supporter of the Assad regime in Syria, Parsi's view is that Iran is not alone in fomenting violence. There are a thousand years of precedent on Shia versus Sunni conflicts versus the West. Saudi Arabia has had more recent involvement with Al Qaeda, and the Sunni horrific violence sect of ISIS was strongly opposed by Iran.



Trita Parsi, Ph.D., teaches at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. He was involved behind the scenes at the entire negotiation process between the Obama Administration and Iran.



Dr. Reiss characterized the “Hermit Kingdom” as posing threats of not only nuclear war, but cyber warfare and drug and human sex trade trafficking. The current U.S. Administration is finally drawing a red line (after years of ineffective negotiation) to prohibit North Korea from having nuclear weapons on intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The question is how to accomplish that short of military intervention (an option with potential catastrophic consequences to residents of Seoul or even Tokyo).

**The Conflict Resumes** - The original split of Korea was after World War II at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. In 1950 the North invaded the poorly equipped South, only to be rebuffed by the U.S. (cleverly getting a UN resolution when the Soviet Union was absent from the Security Council). A cease fire ended the war (after Communist China intervened).

North Korea briefly courted nuclear after that, but signed the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) in the 1980s (a likely feint, as no one thought them sincere).

**Early U.S. Responses** - President Bill Clinton even contemplated a pre-emptive military strike when found open NPT violations and they refused inspections. Clinton ultimately a “carrot and stick” approach. (Editor’s Note: That didn’t work as they secretly resumed nuclear development at another site.)

Obama’s response was strategic patience, with little effect, as NoKo has relentlessly pursued nuclear weapons, even miniaturizing them to try to put on a transcontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S.

**Evaluating the Threat** - Is the current “dear Leader” Kim Jong-un (KJU) even considered rational? Probably, but ruthlessly committed to to keep himself in power. The Kim regimes created a cult-like following in a brainwashed populace viewing him as a god. He does not react to sanctions, as he allowed a million of his people to starve to death, rather than acquiesce.

### **Recognizing NoKo’s Strengths and Weaknesses**

KJU also upped his tactics via surprisingly sophisticated cyber measures to extort money to fund his regime: e.g. spearfishing and ransomware (huge payments of untraceable bitcoin revenue from the blackmailed corporations). He successfully threatened SONY with a 9/11 type destruction of theaters if they dared to show a Hollywood film (*The Internet*) mocking him. KJU also attacked the UK financial services industry and robbed a Bangladesh bank.

**Current U.S. Countermeasures** - The U.S. has capable counter cyber measures that are severe, but there is a risk that reverse engineering of them could come back to haunt us. (That capability was show in the Stuxnet virus that sabotaged Iran’s nuclear facilities ambitions for a while until they finally figured out the joint US/Israeli connection.)

Another counter measure is financial embargo, include secondary ones threatening China banks. Pushing those sanctions much further is tricky, as China holds trillions in U.S. Treasury bonds. Overall Dr. Reiss is not optimistic that these measures alone will produce a nuclear free Korean Peninsula.

### **Q&A Session**

1. What about an embargo of ship traffic to and from NoKo? Risky, as technically it is an act of war, and would require China and Russia to willingly comply.
2. Should we accept Putin’s offer to negotiate? No. Russia is only interested in money and keeping the U.S. down.
3. Is NoKo selling nuclear weapons to others? Possibly not yet, but may be selling technology.
4. What is China’s Strategy? They want peace, as a major conflict would see massive refugees. China is also not as influential as before. KJU’s father purged many who were sympathetic to China.  
Yet China is a major key to a potential negotiated solution, but relying on behind-the-scenes talks, because a perceived U.S. victory may mean an adverse reaction by Chinese citizens. We have leverage with China, because a law on our books can cripple the Chinese banking industry by denying them access to world financial markets.
5. Are NoKo’s friendly talks with SoKo driving a wedge between SoKo and the U.S.? SoKo is not fooled as they know most of it is for propaganda within North Korea.
6. Is the U.S. sequestration-like downsizing of the State Department hurting our ability to craft better diplomatic solutions? Not really, as that Department was way over bloated and needed cutting. But better to be selective pruning rather than across the board.
7. Did Gaddafi’s offer of Libyan denuclearization scare NoKo, as the U.S. ultimately double crossed him and got him out of power? It didn’t help, but Libya was way different from NoKo, and the U.S. needs to keep up maximum pressure to get NoKo to denuclearize, out of fear of U.S. repercussions if they don’t.
8. Can NoKo’s threaten our electrical grid? We can limit takedowns to be local, but it still a major headache.
9. Was VP Mike Pence’s snub of the visiting delegation of NoKo a major setback to relations? No. His courting of NoKo would have been viewed as a huge concession, and provided a major propaganda boost to NoKo. His behind the scenes behavior was exemplary.
10. Is Trump’s bellicose behavior hurting the chance of a negotiated settlement? Tweets are not viewed as helpful. The key may be Secretary Mattis who is viewed as very knowledgeable and crucial to keeping a steady hand on the rudder.
11. Would a coup or a replacement of KJU be a help in this? His disappearance may just elevate another relative to be the cult leader, and the military can’t really be viewed as the best step to creating a representative democracy in NoKo. The populace has been brainwashed for so long, it will not be easy to get a sustainable democracy there right now.



Dr. Reiss specializes in cyber security, with the R Street Institute, a think tank dedicated to promoting free markets. She has a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Texas, and a graduate of Stanford University.

# **SIRC LIFE MEMBERS WHO ARE SUSTAINING MEMBERS**

Last Name			Last Name			Last Name		
Barton	Bill	Sue	Farrell	Pat	Sherry	Paul	Barbara	
Bratz	Paul	Betsy	Kane	John	Frances	Seaton	Charles	Nell
Cartledge	Gene	Gale	Karrh	Janice		Sharp	Tom	Mary
Chapman	Verna		Loupee	Jerry	Bonnie	Sherrill	Jack	Ann
Duren	John	Carol	McKenzie	Herb	Joan	Shomaker	Richard	Jean
Eckburg	Dick	Judy	McLaughlin	Sam	Barb	Ulmer	Bill	Patty
Enyeart	George	Verna	Morris	Terry	Johnnie	Vestal	Joe	
Emery	Jim	Melissa	Nickels	Robert	Carol	Winnert	Ken	Mary Lou

# **SIRC SUSTAINING MEMBERS**

Last Name			Last Name			Last Name		
Barrow	David	Elaine	Hoover	Chris		Parrish	John	
Beets	Jerry	Linda	Huffer	Dan	Phyllis	Parrott	Dave	Carol
Berkowitz	Dick	Lynn	Ingram	Chip	Diane	Peterson	Russ	Louise
Beurle	Jim	Ann	Irving	Jeffrey		Petrea	Jesse	Brianna
Blevins	Alan	Amy	Jukic	Drazen	Jasminka	Philippo	Dean	Mary
Bocard	Gary	Sandy	Kaster	Jack	Joan	Pomeroy	Kim	Rosemary
Bodary	Lee	Julia	Klahr	Dean	Carroll	Powell	Don	Phyllis
Boice	Scott	Lorraine	Klavon	Mike	June	Procaccini	Nick	
Bothwell	David	Nadine	Kraft	Bob	Marie	Protz	Jane	
Bourland	Charlie	Susana	Krupp	Joe	Mimi	Randolph	Guy	Sandy
Braswell	Steve	Tena	Lanahan	Tom	Peg	Randolph	Guy, Sr.	
Brown	Darryl	Carolyn	Lasker	Mark	Sybil	Rauers	Debbie	
Bridgers	Dan	Susan	Lavish	Ed	Johanna	Reinhard	Bob	Jane
Bryant	Kevin	Donna	Levenson	Patty		Rizert	Dan	Angela
Carini	Paul	Judy	Levine	Barry	Arlene	Savage	Chris	
Chidsey	John		Lutton	James	Glenda	Schirmacher	Paul	Gerri
Christian	Sue		Mahr	Mike	Libby	Senkowski	Mary Ann	
Cote'	Dick	Marian	Martin	Quentin		Shea	Brendan	Patricia
Coulter	Denny	Julie	Mathis	Debbie		Sheridan	Wayne	Marilyn
Culbreth	Rick	Sara	Maugh	Roger	Judy	Sickles	Bill	Chris Aiken
Dawson	Pat		McCain	Bill	Susan	Simons	David	Rachel
DiGiorgio	Jim	Joan	McGough	Chuck	Liz	Stagg	Bert	Connie
Dimond	Keith	Julie	Meng	Bob	Beverly	Staimer	George	Carol
Drwiega	Paul		Miller	Dick		Steigmeier	Andrew	Carolyn
Duffie	Ed	Onnie	Mitchell	Ken	Betty	Stewart	Jeff	Angie
Eppel	John	Carol	Molella	Lou	Gerry	Stockwell	David	Barbara
Faircloth	Bob	Jean	Morris	Ron	Peg	Stryker	Howard	Audrey
Fielitz	Bruce	Nancy	Murphy	Jim	Sandy	Suelflow	Ray	
Fisher	Paul	Camille	Murphy	Matt	Terry	Sullivan	Frank	Judith
Frohn	Christopher	Kathryn	Myers	Dick	Rhea	Tate	Mark	Carol
Friday	Marc	Laura	Nangle	Jane		Thorne	Ruth	
Fusco	Susan		Newbrey	Jim		Townsend	Al	Barbi
Gartland	Arthur		Nichols	Jim		Towson	Michael	
Glass	Curt	Sandy	Nusloch	Jerry	Caroline	Walters	Mike	MaryAnne
Grader	Jerome	Argentina	Oberdank	Larry	Arlene	Warfield	Terry	Lynn
Grispo	Joe	Barbara	O'Connor	Tim	Margie	Webner	Mack	Corinne
Hamlet	Joe	Barbara	Oldfield	William		Weber	Ronald	Cheryl
Hanlon	Dan	Donna	Oliver	Bob	Brenda	Weitzell	Buz	Ruby
Harrington	Lynn		Olson	Jim	Linda	Whitbeck	Greg	Elaine
Hartson	Verne	Lynnetta	O'Malley	Jim	Maryanne	White	Don	Beverly
Heaton	Frances		Osborn	Tom	Kay	Wickstrom	Tim	Gail
Herberger	Rich	Peggy	Overton	Lis	Jim	Wilcher	John	
Heussler	Bud	Ginger	Overton	Marolyn	Scott	Witsell	Leigh	Ethel
Hipp	Jerry	Ann	Paderewski	Jules	Nancy	Wright	Bill	Alice
Holland	Will	Jean	Palmer	June				