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Cherberg Favors Unfettered Office

"The office of lieutenant governor should remain independent if we are to maintain the checks and balances between the legislative and executive branches of government."

Lt. Gov. John A. Cherberg, seeking re-election to a fourth term as the Democratic candidate, made this statement today.

"As the presiding officer of the senate when the legislature is in session, the lieutenant governor actually is an integral part of the legislative branch of government," he said.

In his other duties, as a member of various boards and commissions, not the least of which is membership on the capitol committee, it is imperative that he vote as an independent state official rather than standing in the shadow of the governor, regardless of whom he may be."

The lieutenant governor said nothing can be gained by the people in having the governor and lieutenant governor run as a team and he sees no advantage in the proposal to amend the constitution to require that the governor and lieutenant governor be of the same political faith.

"There is nothing wrong with the two state officials being members of the same party, but a lieutenant governor who is free from pressures that may be brought from the chief executive's office could function far more independently and objectively," Cherberg said.

"I think this has been proven in the 12 years I have served the people as their lieutenant governor when both a Democrat and a Republican have occupied the governor's office. The lieutenant governor, aside from his specified duties, is an understudy to the governor."

Cherberg said that, because of his varied responsibilities, the lieutenant governor is knowledgable of state departments, programs, plans and laws.

Interest Cited

"Anyone worth his salt as a lieutenant governor indulges in study and keeps abreast of developments so that he is prepared to step in should it be necessary for him to assume the chief executive's role," he maintained.

Cherberg said his Republican challenger, Art Fletcher of Pasco, appears to have a misconception of the lieutenant governor's service on the Senate Rules Committee.

"I serve as rules committee chairman because the senators want it that way and not by virtue of any law," he said. "The Senate makes its own rules and it could at any time choose one of its own members as the chairman and lock the lieutenant governor out of its meetings.

"The lieutenant governor also has no voice in determining whether or not voting in rules committee is done openly or in secret."