

George, Cynthia

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To: George, Cynthia; Ryan, Jackie; Dorothy Pirovano (E-mail); Robert Baudino (E-mail); Langley, Rick; Cassity, Ed
Subject: Attorney Client Material

Folks, a couple of thoughts on the conference call the PR team held this afternoon:

1. A Gathering Media Storm -- At the risk of repeating myself, the countersuit and the Austin Scott open records request will almost certainly produce two very damaging story lines. "Whistleblower Charles Rehberg is countersuing Phoebe and alleging the hospital may have bugged his offices and tried to monitor his computer use" And: "For X years, Phoebe Putney maintained lucrative contracts with the former chairmen of the House and Senate appropriations committees" The discovery phase of the countersuit will almost certainly pull Jim Velghe and the ex-FBI agents into the spotlight, but it's the contract story that is particularly troublesome; it holds the potential to produce shock waves that will be felt across the state. If Rep. Scott, a Republican, is smart (or getting good advice), he will announce that he is filing identical open records requests with every other community hospital in Georgia -- and if he gets similar results, it will produce a statewide story with the potential to impact state legislative races in November and tip the balance of power in the House to the GOP. I don't think this is an exaggeration. I think the steps we talked through this afternoon are appropriate, and I think it's especially important that the PR team have an opportunity to evaluate the open records material before it goes to Scott. As important, I strongly recommend that Joel and others in executive management be made aware of this assessment.
2. A Secondary Media Strategy -- I realize our core media strategy is to try to change the subject by putting out positive news about Phoebe and by focusing on industry issues as opposed to Phoebe issues. I recommend we undertake another strategy aimed at following up with media and really pushing them on errors and omissions. TIME magazine, for instance, got the Caymans amount wrong, and now it's out there on the Web forever; this is a small point, but we should push to correct that number. More importantly, I think we've got to push the CON-as-motive issue; we haven't gotten traction with that, but I think we've got to keep trying with, for instance, follow-up communique with the journalists and media ombudsmen. I'd want to talk to Andy first, but could see putting together a private letter to Andy Miller and Mike King, the AJC ombudsmen, making the case for that the CON fight is a big part of this. The objective isn't just to correct the record (important as that is), but hopefully to slow these folks down a bit and at least make them think twice before they swallow the Bagnato/Scruggs/Scott story line. I'd be glad to take the lead in organizing this.

I hope this is helpful.

Charlie Hayslett

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