

August 19, 2008

VIA EMAIL AND UPS DELIVERY

Dr. Wayne Blanton, Executive Director
Florida School Boards Association
203 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Subject: NSBA Support for Appeal in *Ford v. Browning*

Dear Dr. Blanton:

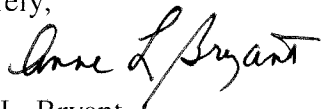
Although the expedited briefing schedule prevents us from filing an *amicus* brief in support of your appeal in *Ford v. Browning*, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) wishes to express its support for the challenge to Ballot Initiatives 7 and 9 as proposed by the Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission (TBRC).

NSBA does not express any opinion as to the complexities of the Florida Constitution. However, we do know that measures that allow the diversion of tax dollars away from public education to private institutions that are not subject to the same academic, operational, and accountability standards as public schools do not serve the best interests of school children and do little to ensure they receive the high quality education they need to succeed. We also know that simplistic proposals like mandating that 65 percent of school funds be spent "in the classroom" have the gloss of reform but in most cases are meaningless because they address things school boards already are doing. In other cases these proposals ignore the hard realities and changing circumstances that school boards face in stretching their education dollars to meet the needs of their local communities.

We believe that the education of its people is the most important function of government at every level. When proposals are made that will fundamentally affect the ability of school boards to provide that service, it is essential that such proposals be based first and foremost on the needs of school children and not on other political agendas. Moreover, if such proposals are brought before the electorate, the measures should clearly state their purpose and effect in plain language that allows citizens to make informed choices about the future education of their community's children.

NSBA commends the Florida School Boards Association for its efforts to ensure these things for the people and the children of Florida.

Sincerely,



Anne L. Bryant
Executive Director



*Excellence and Equity
in Public Education
through School Board
Leadership*