



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**8000 Floridians Urge State Leaders to
Stop HB 7189/SB 6:
CIVIC Concern Garner's Signatures in Less Than a Week**

Tallahassee, Florida (March 31, 2010) – This week, more than 8000 Floridians signed a letter urging state leaders to stop HB 7189 and SB 6. The 197-page petition was delivered to Governor Charlie Crist and members of the Florida House this morning via email.

“Politicians frequently talk about the need for parental involvement in their children’s education. Well, today, thousands of parents from around the state have spoken up to protect their kids’ schools, and the politicians need to listen,” said Bernie Campbell, spokesperson for CIVIC Concern.

The petition was addressed to Governor Charlie Crist, House Speaker Larry Cretul, Rep. Will Weatherford, chair of the House Education Policy Council and all members of the Florida House. The text reads:

The undersigned 8012 Floridians, concerned citizens from around the state, urge you not to allow the provisions of Senate Bill 6 or House Bill 7189 to become law. We urge House leadership to simply stop moving the bill forward and allow it to die. If it does pass, we urge Governor Crist to veto it.

While many Floridians agree that we need a better system of accountability, this bill punishes all public school teachers and students, especially those children most at risk. It would jeopardize the quality of public education in Florida, focusing inordinate attention on standardized tests and driving good teachers out of the public schools.

Florida would be the first state in the nation to tie teacher compensation (and job security) so closely to standardized test results. Our children won't be taught to think...they'll just be taught to pass a test. We don't want Florida's classrooms transformed into test-prep factories.

How will we persuade good teachers to work in low-performing schools where they are needed most when they risk not just losing pay but losing their teaching certificate if those at-risk kids don't make sufficient gains on the test?

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This bill also prohibits school districts from increasing the salary of teachers who seek graduate degrees. If we want better teachers, we should give them incentives to continue their training.

This bill takes control of our schools away from local communities, and it will hurt students and teachers. We oppose it and urge you to do the same.

“Just when everyone thought bipartisanship was dead, the Florida Legislature has found a way to unite people from both parties and all walks of life, bringing them together in opposition to this terrible policy,” Campbell said.

The signatures were entirely the result of electronic grassroots organizing and were garnered in just six days.

CIVIC Concern is a non-profit, non-partisan policy incubator, legislative watchdog, and advocate for public policy that benefits ordinary Floridians. For more information, please visit our website at www.CIVICconcern.org.

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