



FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, Jan. 25, 2018

Florida Superintendents Urge Vote Against Constitution Revision Commission Proposals 71, 45 & 4

On behalf of Florida superintendents, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents issues the following statement in advance of tomorrow's Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) Education Committee meeting on Friday, January 26, 2018 regarding Proposal 71 by Donalds, Proposal 45 by Donalds, and Proposal 4 by Martinez which will be brought before the committee for a vote.

Florida superintendents – as Constitutional Officers and stewards of Florida's public school system – cannot support Proposal 71, Proposal 45 or Proposal 4.

Proposal 71 – Education by Commissioner Donalds

Proposal 71 seeks to broaden the scope of power of the Florida legislature by giving them the authority to create an alternate process to authorize the establishment of charter schools. This proposal is in direct conflict with the requirement that the system of free public schools be uniform and would create a bi-furcated system of education.

It circumvents the decision-making power of local elected school boards which presently establish programs based upon the educational needs of their communities through an approval process overseen by the Department of Education. By contrast, charter schools are not restricted by these same guidelines – charter schools can build anywhere, anytime, and anyplace regardless of the impact on the limited availability of taxpayer funds.

Big Picture Question: The current system is not broken. How would this ensure a uniform, efficient, and effective public education system that is fair, high quality and accountable to the taxpayer?

Proposal 45 – Education, Public Education by Commissioner Donalds

Proposal 45 seeks to create “a free system of public schools allowing the opportunity for each student to obtain a high quality education.” The proposal is so vaguely written that the true outcome is unable to discern. At its core, it is a veiled attempt to undermine Florida's public education system and move full force towards the privatization of public education, where tax payer dollars are doled out to for-profit companies with little or no oversight, and void of the same standards-based accountability and performance measures that Florida public schools are held to.

Big Picture Questions: Does this provision mean that the system of free public schools only “allows the opportunity” for each student to obtain a high quality education? Is the state no longer responsible for ensuring that a high quality education is available to all students through a system of free public schools?

Proposal 4 – Declaration of Rights, Religious Freedom by Commissioner Martinez

Proposal 4 seeks to repeal the language commonly referred to as the “Blaine Amendment” in Article I, Section 3 relating to Religious Freedom and the use of tax payer dollars to support church or religious-based education entities which do not fall under the oversight or administration of the state education system. Accountability for these tax payer dollars is non-existent and it sets the stage for increased student selection and segregation.

Big Picture Question: Why should tax payer dollars be used to financially support religious education organizations that are not held to the same accountability standards as Florida public schools?

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