



March 14, 2011

The Honorable Rick Scott
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RE: SB 736 Extraordinary, Unsustainable, Unfunded Taxpayer Cost- Public Testimony

VIA: hand delivery, Representative Mike Weinstein and rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com

Dear Governor Scott:

As leaders of Florida's broadest alliance of citizen-driven education advocates, we urge you to take a hard look at the **unfunded \$2 Billion dollar initial taxpayer cost associated with SB 736 followed by recurring annual costs of \$1.8 Billion**. The first two years of SB 736 will cost taxpayers \$3.8 Billion. There's a profound disconnect between your fiscally conservative ideals and the bloated unfunded spending found in SB 736.

The long-term ramifications of this unfunded bill are unsustainable. Maintaining this program for 10 years will cost Florida taxpayers \$18 Billion dollars!

Floridians sent a clear message in November: stop the spending, stop the borrowing, and pay as you go. SB 736 and its billions of unfunded dollars shows a deep disrespect for the taxpayers of this state. Because of SB 736, hardworking Floridians are on the hook for \$2 Billion dollars* in start-up costs, and \$1.8 Billion dollars** in recurring annual costs statewide for unproven and untested reforms.

Legislators who knowingly write and pass expensive, unfunded bills, are just like the guy who writes a bad check, knowing there are no funds in the bank. It's fiscal suicide.

SB 736 COST BREAKDOWN	
(1) District required non-core test development* <i>(\$1.5 M x 1,000 tests)</i>	\$1,500,000,000
(2) Teacher Quality Development/Implementation**	\$500,000,000
Total Upfront Cost	\$2,000,000,000
(3) Total Recurring Annual Cost*** <i>(\$27.3 M x 67 FL districts)</i>	\$1,829,100,000
<small>* 2010 SB4 bill analysis (senate staff), conservative figure, could exceed estimate http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2010/Senate/bills/analysis/pdf/2010s0004.ed.pdf ** Gates/Hillsborough framework development cost \$204 M for one district. Developing and implementing a framework for 67 counties will cost more. http://communication.sdhc.k12.fl.us/empoweringteachers/?page_id=321 *** Gates/Hillsborough projected recurring annual costs: \$32M. \$27.3 M reflects the deduction of Hillsborough's teacher mentor program which places 100 of the districts best teachers into classrooms as mentors in a rotating manner. SB 736 does not provide for this level of collaborative support. http://communication.sdhc.k12.fl.us/empoweringteachers/?page_id=321</small>	

Senate Bill 736 propels our state toward higher debt and more taxes. It goes against the premise of the Tea Party ideal of fiscal responsibility.

By building SB 736 on a foundation of \$3.8 Billion in unfunded dollars, the Florida Legislature is violating their "November Promise" to reduce taxes. Lawmakers have to put the credit card away. Florida does not have the money for SB 736. It's not there.

The hardworking people of this state do not deserve to be treated like a money tree. The November elections were clear. Taxpayers don't want to pay \$3.8 billion dollars for an unfunded bill stuffed with unproven reforms. *Even the current pilot reform program, Race to the Top with \$350 million earmarked for districts falls far short of funding that effort.*

It may not make you popular, but true leadership seldom does. Telling the truth to Floridians means all Floridians, even senators and house members. Florida cannot afford reckless spending. Concealing unfunded billions in a bill is the height of reckless spending. Passing a massive \$3.8 Billion dollar cost to the general public is called raising taxes, even if it is buried in a reform bill.

Please advise your colleagues. Unfunded mandates don't work for us. We ask that you take this matter up for the people, remember their faces when you do.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Oropeza, partner
Christine Bramuchi, partner
Linda Kobert, partner
www.FundEducationNow.org