

The School District of Hernando County, Florida

Office of the School Board and General Counsel

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**HERNANDO
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Learn it. Love it. Live it.

Superintendent: John Stratton

Board Chairperson: Gus Guadagnino

Vice Chairperson: Susan Duval

Board Members:

Kay Hatch

Jimmy Lodato

Linda Prescott

August 3, 2022

Via Hand Delivery

Hon. Steve Champion, Chairman

Hernando County Board of Commissioners

15470 Flight Path Drive

Brooksville, Florida 34604

Re: Hernando County School Board, et al., v. Hernando County, et al.

Dear Chairman Champion:

Our Board and its special counsel have been informed by the Supervisor of Elections that she must have ballot language, for the School Board's surtax extension referendum by noon on August 19, 2022, for printing within the existing ballot template to be able to meet early voting requirements for the November 8, 2022, general election. A copy of the Supervisor's letter to our special counsel specifying that deadline is enclosed.

Given your and other Commissioners' comments, both publicly and in social media, and your counsel's pre-suit statements to our special counsel, it seems apparent to many that the County's motion to abate the proceedings to seek, if not demand, a formal mediation process, instead of having the Court resolve our dispute regarding the 2022 ballot referendum, is motivated more as a means of delay to prevent judicial resolution in time for the election, than by a desire to fully follow an alternative dispute resolution process for amicable resolution of this dispute. We seek your good faith cooperation to resolve this matter on its merits instead of by delay.

Nevertheless, although, as an individual member, I have no authority to act for the School Board to resolve this matter, I do have the ability, under statute, to arrange scheduling for the School Board to meet and explore options. It is my expectation that the School Board will resolve to issue the County an invitation to an expedited Ch. 164, *Fla. Stat.*, the Florida Governmental Conflict Resolution Act (the **FGCRA**), process.

This letter is to invite you and your Board to explore a solution to our dispute that empowers the Hernando County voters to decide the School Board ½ penny request in the 2022 general election. It is in the best interests both of the School Board and of the County to do so.

We strongly believe that an amicable resolution is far better than a public airing of the politically motivated arguments between us. Accordingly, given the time deadlines imposed by circumstance, I request that your Board consider whether it would accept an expedited timeline to substantively follow the statutory FGCRA path for alternative dispute resolution within the Supervisor of Election's deadlines for the printing of the general election ballot.

With the hope of optimism, I send you these thoughts to consider. Please let me hear from you at your very earliest convenience.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Gus Guadagnino, Chairman

Hernando County School Board

Enclosure
ec (w/enc.):

Hon. Steve Champion (schampion@hernandocounty.us)
Hon. John Stratton (stratton_j@hcsb.k12.fl.us)
Hon. Jeffrey Rogers, P.E. (administration@hernandocounty.us)