

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Sarah Bascom
(850) 294-6636
Jay Schleuning
(850) 321-1695

Key Education & Business Leaders Voice Support of Senate Bill 6 *Education Advocates Come Together to Support Governor Crist*

Tallahassee, Fla. – Key education advocates and business leaders, including Foundation for Florida's Future, The Florida Council of 100, Florida Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Florida, today voiced their support for Senate Bill 6, the performance pay measure sponsored by Senator John Thrasher (R-St. Augustine) and Representative John Legg (R-Port Richey), and urged Governor Charlie Crist to sign the bill into law.

“All of Florida’s teachers must be effective, top-to-bottom, if we are to provide our students with the skills they need to succeed in the global innovation economy,” said Marshall Criser, III, chair, Florida Council of 100, PreK-14 Education Committee. “Education lies at the heart of the business community’s success and, thus, our ability to create jobs for our citizens.”

“If SB 6 is signed into law, Florida would be poised to become a leader in education reform, transforming the way we teach our children and reward our teachers,” said Mark Wilson, president and chief executive officer of the Florida Chamber of Commerce.

“In passing SB 6, Florida took a historic step forward on landmark education reform that will forever change our state’s ability to effectively compete in an increasingly competitive global market,” said Jose Gonzalez, vice president of Governmental Affairs for the Associated Industries of Florida. “The success of Florida’s students equates to the success of Florida’s workforce - the teacher tenure and performance pay bill will ensure accountability in the classroom. Associated Industries of Florida and its members thank President Atwater, and Senator Thrasher, and Speaker Cretul and Representative Legg, for bringing this bill to the forefront and we, too, encourage Governor Crist to sign it into law this week.”

“Small business owners, coaches, nurses and many others are compensated according to their work product,” said Dr. J. Robert McClure II, president and chief executive officer of the James Madison Institute. “Rewarding good teachers is an important step in education reform and in providing a quality education for our children, which is key to their success in an increasingly global economy.”

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“Public education is one of the most important investments we make as a state,” said Dominic M. Calabro, president and chief executive officer of Florida TaxWatch. “However, we know that not every dollar we spend has an equal return on investment and that simply throwing more money at education – money which the state does not have right now, is not sufficient to improve actual learning. Instead, we need to focus on the things that recent research by the Florida TaxWatch Center for Educational Performance and Accountability shows matter most to student learning – good teachers and good administrators. Many of these reforms make great strides in improving Florida schools, and I commend the leaders of the House and the Senate for pursuing these measures.”

Other supporters in attendance at today's press conference in Tallahassee included Patricia Levesque, executive director of the Foundation for Florida's Future, Rick Watson, general counsel and chief lobbyist of the Associated Builders and Contractors of Florida, Peter Dyga, vice president of Government Affairs of the Associated Builders and Contractors Florida East Coast Chapter, and Nancy Stephens, executive director and lobbyist of the Manufacturers Association of Florida.

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