

NEWS

Senator Gary Siplin Press Conference on FCAT

Senator wants the Truth in Testing: Parent's Right to Know.

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ORLANDO – Senator Gary Siplin (D – Orlando) will hold a press conference on Friday, February 13, 2004 to announce legislative campaign for parental access to FCAT. Senator Siplin is teachers, school board members and local City and County officials. The FCAT town hall meeting will take place at Howard Middle School, 800 E. Robinson from 6pm – 7:30pm.

Senator Siplin along with several other state and local leaders are calling for a suspension of this year's test results and for the Governor to reexamine the FCAT policies. "This test is being administered as if all students are on one accord, which is not the case" argues Senator Siplin. "There are students that have language barriers, slow learning disabilities and the inability to test well in certain testing environments. These same students are expected to perform at a level that they are not prepared to achieve well in." said Senator Siplin.

Approximately 137,000 high school seniors statewide were administered the FCAT, and of those, nearly 13,000 seniors will not graduate this year due to their failure to pass the FCAT. Some of these seniors have already been accepted into the colleges, universities, or armed services of their choice, but will be unable to pursue those dreams. They have maintained their academic grade point averages, have passed other standardized tests such as the SAT, ACT, and other college entrance exams, however their failure to pass this new state requirement will hold them back.

The recent release of FCAT scores are not just affecting high school seniors, but also 25% of Third graders statewide that will not advance to the Fourth grade next year.

Special guests at the town hall meeting will be Senator Frederica Wilson (D-Miami), a former educator and advocate of FCAT alternatives and Bishop Victor Curry of New Birth Baptist Church in Miami and former President of the NAACP Miami-Dade Chapter. Several Orlando city and county officials are also scheduled to be in attendance. They have called for a boycott of industry until the FCAT has been suspended.

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