

Education Alert

Legislation of Vital Concern to Miami-Dade County's Students

Date: Thursday, July 25, 2002
To: The Honorable E. Clay Shaw
From: Merrett Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools
Re: **SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AMENDMENT**

Congressman Shaw, you have been active and supportive in the area of school construction in the past, particularly with your introduction of Private Activity Bonds. However, in large districts such as Miami-Dade and Broward, Private Activity Bonds provide little or no financial assistance.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools strongly urges you to support the Johnson-Rangel school construction amendment – as you have in the past – when it is offered as a substitute for tuition tax credits on Thursday's House Ways and Means Committee.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ACTION: The House Ways and Means Committee will be marking up a proposal on Thursday, July 25, to extend tuition tax credits to K-12 expenses for public and private school costs. As a substitute, Congresswoman Johnson and Congressman Rangel are preparing to offer the Johnson-Rangel School Construction America's Better Classrooms Act.

We believe that the Johnson-Rangel approach is a less costly, more effective approach that will better serve Florida's schoolchildren by increasing school construction and permitting lower class sizes.

- Johnson-Rangel provides significant bonding authority for the entire State of Florida, as well as direct assistance to Miami-Dade County and Broward County.
- Florida already has its own voucher program for private/public school tuition, and tuition tax credits would provide no value added for Florida voters.
- The estimated cost of the tuition proposal is \$10 billion over ten years. Johnson-Rangel is actually cheaper than tuition tax credits with an estimated cost of \$6.7 billion over ten years, and of real and significant value to improving student achievement and public education.

RECOMMENDATION: Johnson-Rangel would provide critical assistance for Dade, Broward, and the State. Miami-Dade County Public Schools respectfully requests your advocacy in support of Johnson-Rangel once again when it is introduced in the Ways and Means Committee as a substitute for the tuition tax credits for private schools. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.



Miami-Dade County Public Schools ♦ 1450 N.E. 2nd Ave. ♦ Suite 562 ♦ Miami, FL 33132
Telephone: 305/995-1426 ♦ Facsimile: 305/358-8706
e-mail: prutledge@dadeschools.net email: cmanrique@sbab.dade.k12.fl.us
<http://www.dadeschools.net>