



Walton County Democratic Party  
P.O Box 526  
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435  
Ray Padgett, Chairman

### **Gov. Bush and the Florida Constitutional Amendments**

Amending our state constitution by petition is a difficult and serious undertaking. Over 488,722 registered voter signatures were required for the class size ballot initiative. After these signatures were collected the proposed amendment was required to be reviewed and approved by the State Attorney General and the Supreme Court before it could be placed on the ballot. We believe any citizen, including Governor Jeb Bush, has the right to seek repeal of any amendment using this same process. However, neither Governor Bush nor anyone else should be allowed to circumvent this process to further their personal agenda.

While we do not agree with every constitutional amendment passed by the citizens of Florida, we believe this process gives everyone a voice independent of our government officials and must be protected. Our elected officials are required to take appropriate actions and implement these constitutional amendments even if they do not personally support the amendment. We believe it is illegal to impede the required implementation progress of any constitutional amendment, including the fiscal responsibility of fully funding each project.

The Walton County Democratic Party positions on each of the specific constitutional amendments in question are different in emphasis and priority. While an alternative high-speed ground transportation system is important, even critical to many areas in Florida, this amendment will have little or no short term impact on our county. Because of this and its high cost, this amendment should not be a top priority initiative. The class size amendment on the other hand is a critical concern throughout Florida and should be at the top of everyone's priority list.

The Amendment to Reduce Class Size is required to be phased in and must be fully implemented by the beginning of the 2010 school year. At the beginning of the 2010 school year the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in prekindergarten through grade 3 is 18, in grades 4 through 8 is 22 and in grades 9 through 12 is 25.

Providing funding for the class size reduction initiative is the responsibility of the state and not the local school districts. This amendment forces the state legislature and governor to fund one of the many critical needs in our public school system. We believe passage of the class size reduction amendment was a reflection of the frustration of

Florida citizens in their attempt to obtain adequate funding to improve our public schools. The Democratic Party considers this a mandate for this administration to make improvement of our public school system the state's top priority. Anything less is a slap in the face to the many parents, teachers and students who are working tirelessly to make our public schools a better education experience for students and teachers.