

COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, INC.
P.O. BOX 6002
HUDSON, FLORIDA 34674-6002

March 11, 2009

Honorable Senator Mike Fasano
302 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: SB 2108 & HB 1121 (identical bills)

Dear Senator Fasano:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) in Pasco County, representing in excess of one hundred and fifty-six (156) communities unanimously resolved to support the Clerk of Circuit Court in Pasco County and reject SB 2108 and HB 1121 and its proposed changes.

The Florida Constitution requires that there "shall be in each county a Clerk of the Circuit Court". The clerks of court serve county governments and support the state court system, including circuit and county courts. They act as custodians of public records, protectors of public funds and collectors of court related fines and fees; they are elected by the people and play an essential role in our free and democratic society; they are independent constitutional officers who provide vital checks and balances within the judicial branch and within county government.

It is imperative they remain independent of the judiciary, as was the constitutions intention to have a separate role and independent accountability from judges. Judges are a big constituency clerks serve. The office of the clerk of court is the public's initial point of contact when entering the court system and citizen's case files and records should not be handled by an employee of the judge, but by an impartial officer of the court who answers to the public.

Thank you for taking the time to read this correspondence and consider our plea.

Very truly yours,



Dominick Scannavino, President
Council of Neighborhood Associations

