

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 10, 2017**

**Contacts:**

**Sen. Joyce Elliott**

**Sen. Linda Chesterfield**

**Sen. Will Bond**

**Rep. Fred Love**

**Rep. John Walker**

**Rep. Warwick Sabin**

**Rep. Charles Blake**

**Rep. Clarke Tucker**

**Rep. Fred Allen**

**STATEMENT FROM PULASKI COUNTY LEGISLATORS FOR RETURN OF THE LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT TO LOCAL CONTROL**

We were on various sides of the Little Rock School District millage extension campaign, which culminated yesterday. Some of us ardently supported the extension, others vigorously opposed it, and some did not take a public stance. However, we are united in our view that the time has come for an elected, empowered school board to return as the decision-making body in LRSD, working in collaboration with Superintendent Mike Poore to create a truly vibrant school district. In contrast, we feel that ongoing lack of local control only serves to deepen the divide in the Little Rock community and to restrict the promise of the Little Rock School District.

The State Board of Education has the power under current law to establish a date for a school board election to occur with the board gaining the authority after being appropriately trained. We urge the State Board to take this action now to begin the process for preparing a return to local control as soon as possible but no later than 2018.

The strong community engagement in the issue of the millage extension shows that the patrons of LRSD are passionate about the opportunities provided our children. This was shown yesterday in the exceptionally high turnout for a May special election. But, it has also been shown in the vigorous debate over the millage and the ongoing community activism related to the schools for the past two and a half years. More people than ever before are ready to step up to run for the school board, to vote in school board elections, and to work to support their schools. It's time for a return to local control.