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**PRESS RELEASE**

August 30, 2012

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**The Hon. Jeb Bush**  
Former Governor, Florida  
**Sean Duffy**  
**Frantz Placide**  
(Remarks as Prepared for Delivery)  
August 30, 2012

(BUSH)

Welcome to Florida! Bienvenido a Florida!

This election is about the future of this nation. We can shape that future with what we do here, with what we do November 6.

We can restore America's greatness.

That starts with a strong economy, a smart energy policy, lower deficits, and a president who puts America's workers and job-creators first.

But to have a great future - a secure future - a future that is equal to our potential as a nation, we need to do something else.

We must make sure that our children and grandchildren are ready for the world we are shaping today.

It starts in our homes, in our communities, and especially in our schools.

As a candidate and Governor, I visited over 400 schools. I saw children read their first sentences. Solve their first long-division problems. Explore the miracles of chemistry and physics.

That's the essence of education – students getting a chance at a future.

There are many reasons to believe America's future is bright, but also reasons to worry.

Of 34 advanced nations in the world, American students rank 17th in science, 25th in math.

Only one-fourth of high school graduates are ready for their next steps.

China and India produce eight times more engineering students each year than the United States.

There is a moral cost to our failing schools.

We say that every child in America has an equal opportunity. Tell that to a kid in whose classroom learning isn't respected.

Tell that to a parent stuck in a school where there is no leadership. Tell that to a young, talented teacher who just got laid off because she didn't have tenure.

The sad truth is that equality of opportunity doesn't exist in many of our schools. We give some kids a chance, but not all.

That failure is the great moral and economic issue of our time. And it's hurting all of America.

I believe we can meet this challenge.

We need to set high standards for students and teachers and provide students and their parents the choices they deserve.

The first step is a simple one.

We must stop pre-judging children based on their race, ethnicity or household income.

We must stop excusing failure in our schools and start rewarding improvement and success.

We must have high academic standards that are benchmarked to the best in the world.

All kids can learn. Governor Romney believes it, and the data proves it. While he was governor, Massachusetts raised standards and today their students lead the nation in academic performance.

Here in Florida in 1999, we were at the bottom of the nation in education.

For the last decade, this state has been on a path of reform. Under the leadership of Governor Rick Scott and local leaders, our focus every day is whether students are learning. That's it.

Today, more students are reading on grade level, passing rigorous college prep courses and graduating from high school.

And perhaps most exciting, those traditionally left behind are showing the greatest gains.

Among African-American students, Florida is ranked fourth in the nation for academic improvement.

Among low-income students, we're ranked third for our gains.

Among students with disabilities, we're ranked first.

And among Latino students, the gains were so big, they required a new metric. Right now, Florida's fourth grade Hispanic students read as well or better than the average of all students in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

These kids were once written off. But today thanks to teachers like Sean Duffy we're changing that.

(DUFFY)

I'm honored to be an educator, to help the next generation of leaders, thinkers, builders, and entrepreneurs. Sadly, I'm part of a dwindling field.

I've seen too many good teachers come and go, mainly due to poor working conditions and little pay. Bad teachers get locked into the system and good teachers leave for more money.

On top of the bureaucratic challenges, what we're teaching doesn't always match what our students need.

To that end, I launched a STEM lab at my high school. These labs focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and help students learn proficiency in these fields.

We turn students away from education each year by not providing a robust curriculum that keeps up with the world in which these students live – and will eventually work.

And at the end of the day, all of what we do from the educators to the policy makers has to be student-focused and student-centered.

Students matter most.

(BUSH)

Thanks, Sean. I know Del Valle High School is proud of your efforts.

We need more great teachers like you. Teachers who don't give up on a kid, who recognize that every child can learn, and don't waste a precious year of a student's life.

If you're a great teacher and your students are mastering their subjects, no matter your age or years of experience, you should have a job.

Education is hard work, but if you follow some core principles, and you challenge the status quo, you get great results.

So here's another thing we can do: Let's give every parent in America a choice about where their child attends school.

Everywhere in our lives, we get the chance to choose.

Go down any supermarket aisle - you'll find an incredible selection of milk.

You can get whole milk, 2% milk, low-fat milk or skim milk. Organic milk, and milk with extra Vitamin D.

There's flavored milk-- chocolate, strawberry or vanilla – and it doesn't even taste like milk.

They even make milk for people who can't drink milk.

Shouldn't parents have that kind of choice in schools?

Governor Romney gets it. He believes parents – regardless of zip code or income – should be able to send their child to the school that fits them best.

That has set him against some entrenched interests.

There are many people who say they support strong schools but draw the line at school choice.

“Sorry, kid. Giving you equal opportunity would be too risky. And it will upset powerful political forces that we need to win elections.”

I have a simple message for these masters of delay and deferral: Choose. You can either help the politically powerful unions. Or you can help the kids.

Now, I know it's hard to take on the unions. They fund campaigns. They're well-organized. Election day? They'll show up.

Meanwhile, the kids aren't old enough to vote.

But you and I know who deserves a choice. Governor Romney knows it, too.

Let me introduce you to Frantz Placide. Because we gave him a choice, he got a great education.

(PLACIDE)

I grew up in the inner city of Miami. In a place where your zip code determined your chances of success, my only option was an unproductive and failing school.

I knew that could lead to an unproductive and failing future. Thanks to Governor Bush's school choice program, I got the chance to choose a better school.

Making my education my priority, I enrolled at one of the toughest private schools in Miami - Archbishop Curley Notre Dame.

I'm sure like a lot of us, it was my mother, Carlette, who really pushed for a choice in my education.

I'm glad she did. Her devotion to my future has given me a chance to succeed. I've graduated from Wagner College, and am looking forward to a life of learning, and serving my community.

Who knows what the future would have held, if there hadn't been a choice in my education?

But I do know the numbers for failure, and I probably wouldn't have had a very good chance. Governor Bush's school choice program gave me the chance to achieve academic success, in the school that was the best fit for me.

I took it from there.

(BUSH)

Thank you Frantz, it's been an honor to see you grow up. Your story is driving powerful change across this nation. And some of the biggest reformers are Republicans.

Governor Mitch Daniels in Indiana and Governor Jindal in Louisiana have expanded school choice beyond what we have in Florida.

Governor Martinez in New Mexico is raising expectations - holding schools accountable for students gaining critical reading skills.

Governor LePage in Maine and Deal in Georgia are transforming education by pushing schools to harness the power of technology and digital learning.

Idaho's Governor Otter and Superintendent Luna are raising up the best teachers and separating out the ineffective ones. That earned some enemies. Some of them slashed the superintendent's tires. But he didn't back down.

Governor Walker in Wisconsin led his state to adopt reforms that promote early literacy and require that teacher evaluations incorporate student achievement.

In Nevada, Governor Sandoval pushed for reforms to end the damaging practice of "last in, first out" - where teachers are hired or fired based on their years in the system, not on their impact in the classroom.

Governor Haslam in Tennessee is making sure every classroom has an effective teacher.

Because he is a former governor, Mitt Romney understands that states must lead this national movement. In Massachusetts, Governor Romney narrowed the gap between students of different races, raised testing standards, and put into place a merit scholarship, the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship that gives students four tuition free years, at any Massachusetts public institution of higher learning.

He's a champion for bringing hope to education.

And he intends to be a champion for equality of opportunity, a president who always puts students first.

So in this election, remember this: Our future as a nation is at stake.

Fact is, this election is not about just one office. It is about one nation. If we want to continue to be the greatest nation on the planet, we must give our kids what we promise them: An equal opportunity. That starts in the classroom. It starts in our communities. It starts where you live.

And it starts with electing Mitt Romney the next President of the United States.

Thank you. God bless you, God bless our excellent teachers and God bless the United States of America.

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