



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

June 27, 2007

Mr. Kurt S. Browning
Secretary of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

FILED
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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Dear Secretary Browning:

By the Authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby transmit Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1920, with my signature, enacted during the 39th Session of the Legislature of Florida, convened under the Constitution of 1968, during the Regular Session of 2007, and entitled:

An act relating to ballot initiatives ...

This bill states explicitly that Florida's Election Code does not prohibit private property owners from restricting individuals from collecting signatures for initiatives to amend the Florida Constitution.

This bill highlights a tension between two fundamental rights, both of which are central to our democracy: private property rights and the right of private citizens to engage in political discourse. While I am sympathetic to the concerns of political groups who seek to advocate their positions in places where citizens gather, the solution to that problem cannot be to force all grocers, shopkeepers, and restaurateurs to acquiesce to potentially disruptive political activity at their commercial establishments.

Citizens of Florida are guaranteed the right to engage in robust political discourse on *public* property open to the public—on streets, sidewalks, public parks, libraries, and all other public areas open to the community at large. This bill simply, and accurately, recognizes that nothing in the Florida Election Code requires ordinary private property owners to assume this traditional governmental function.

For these reasons, I sign Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1920 into law.

Sincerely,

Charlie Crist

CC/dmm