

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

DR. GREGORY L. STRAND,

Appellant,

v.

CASE NO. SC06-1894  
L.T. Case No. 2006-CA-881

ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
a political subdivision of the State of  
Florida,

Appellee.

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**APPELLANT DR. GREGORY L.  
STRAND'S RESPONSE TO MOTION  
FOR LEAVE TO FILE AMICI CURIAE BRIEF**

Appellant DR. GREGORY L. STRAND (“Dr. Strand”), by and through his undersigned counsel, pursuant to Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.300(a), hereby files this Response to the “Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief” filed by the School Districts of the Counties of Alachua, Brevard, Indian River, Marion, and St. Johns (collectively, the “School Districts”) on September 17, 2007, and, states as follows:

**I.**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. On September 15, 2006, Dr. Strand appealed a Final Judgment entered by the First Judicial Circuit Court validating bonds to be issued by Appellee Escambia County, Florida (“Escambia County”), in an amount not to

exceed \$135,000,000.00, and funded through the utilization of tax increment financing.

2. On May 10, 2007, the Court heard Oral Argument in this case.

3. On September 6, 2007, the Court issued its Opinion in the instant case, thereby reversing the Circuit Court's Final Judgment and invalidating the proposed bond issuance. In so doing, the Court receded from its prior decisions in *State v. Miami Beach Redevelopment Agency*, 392 So. 2d 875 (Fla. 1980), and *State v. School Board of Sarasota County*, 561 So. 2d 549 (Fla. 1990), stating, in part, that the Court can no longer support the "legal fiction" underlying such decisions, which has "allowed localities to indirectly pledge ad valorem taxation for the repayment of long-term bonds without the consent of the electorate," as required by Article VII, Section 12 of the Florida Constitution. *Strand v. Escambia County*, No. SC06-1894, slip op. at 25 (Fla. Sept. 6, 2007).

4. On September 17, 2007, the School Districts filed their "Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief."

5. The Court should deny the School Districts' *post-opinion* Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief because:

- A. Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.370, which governs the appearance of amicus curiae, does not authorize an amicus curiae to appear for the first time for purposes of moving for rehearing and/or clarification; and

- B. The issues sought to be raised by the School Districts have been fully and adequately presented by Escambia County and the Florida Association of Counties in their Motions for Rehearing and Clarification.

## II.

### ARGUMENT

#### A. Florida Rule Of Appellate Procedure 9.370 Does Not Authorize The Post-Opinion Appearance Of Amicus Curiae For Purposes Of Moving For Rehearing And/Or Clarification

6. Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.370, which governs the appearance of amicus curiae, was amended in 2006 to clarify the timeframe in which amicus briefs are to be served. As amended, Rule 9.370 provides:

(a) **When Permitted.** An amicus curiae may file a *brief* only by leave of court. A motion for leave to file must state the movant's interest, the particular issue to be addressed, how the movant can assist the court in the disposition of the case, and whether all parties consent to the filing of the *brief*.

\* \* \* \*

(c) **Time for Service.** *An amicus curiae must serve its brief no later than 5 days after the first brief, petition, or response* of the party being supported is served. An amicus curiae that does not support either party must serve its brief no later than 5 days after the initial brief or petition is served. A court may grant leave for later service, specifying the time within which an opposing party may respond. The service of an amicus curiae brief does not alter or extend the briefing deadlines for the parties. An amicus curiae may not file a reply brief.

(Emphasis supplied).

7. As reflected above, Rule 9.370 does not contemplate the *post-opinion* appearance of amicus curiae for the purpose of filing *motions* for rehearing and/or clarification. Indeed, by its plain language, Rule 9.370 states that “[a]n amicus curiae must serve its *brief* no later than 5 days after the *first brief, petition, or response.*” *Id.* (emphasis supplied). Nothing in the plain language of Rule 9.370 permits a non-party to appear *post-opinion* as amicus curiae for the purpose of seeking rehearing and/or clarification. To hold otherwise, would permit an interested party to simply “monitor” a case and avoid incurring the time and costs associated with participating in the case-in-chief, and then, *after-the-fact*, move to appear as amicus curiae if the Court’s ultimate ruling is not to the party’s liking.<sup>1</sup>

8. In addition, allowing a non-party to appear *post-opinion* as amicus curiae is inequitable to the parties to the case, such as Dr. Strand in this matter. Permitting the School Districts to file a *post-opinion* amicus curiae brief in support of Escambia County and the Florida Association of Counties (“FAC”) unfairly imposes additional costs upon Dr. Strand in having to respond to the same.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the instant case was specifically listed by the FAC on its “Litigation Watch” page on its website. Thus, interested parties were well aware of the instant proceeding since the time Dr. Strand filed his appeal.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that, in addition to the School Districts, twenty-eight (28) other entities have filed five (5) separate *post-opinion* requests for leave to serve amicus briefs seeking rehearing and clarification in this case. Significantly, Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.330(c) provides a shortened

9. Accordingly, the Court should deny the School Districts' *post-opinion* Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief. *See, e.g., Devon-Aire Villas Homeowners Ass'n, No. 4, Inc. v. Americable Assocs., Ltd.*, 490 So. 2d 60, 67-68 (Fla. 3d DCA 1985) (referring to post-opinion motions to appear as amicus curiae as "untimely efforts to appear in this case"); *City of Temple Terrace v. Hillsborough Ass'n for Retarded Citizens, Inc.*, 322 So. 2d 571, 580 (Fla. 2d DCA 1975) (stating that post-opinion motions for leave to appear as amicus curiae filed by a state agency and the Florida Attorney General "come too late and are hereby denied").

**B. The Issues Sought To Be Raised By The School Districts Have Been Fully And Adequately Presented By Appellee Escambia County And Amicus Curiae Florida Association Of Counties In Their Motions For Rehearing And Clarification**

10. Even assuming the School Districts' *post-opinion* Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief is appropriate under Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.370, which it is not, the Court should deny the School Districts' *post-opinion* Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief.

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time frame in which Dr. Strand can respond to such *post-opinion* amicus briefs seeking rehearing and clarification, if ultimately permitted by the Court, thereby further prejudicing Dr. Strand given the sheer volume of *post-opinion* requests.

11. In their *post-opinion* Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief, the School Districts state:

The issues to be addressed in the Amici Curiae Brief will be (a) the error of the court in failing to appreciate the significance of and to clearly enunciate the well-established principles and rationale which underpinned the decision of the court in *State v. Miami Beach Redevelopment Agency*, 392 So.2d 875 (Fla. 1980); (b) the incorrect characterization by the court in the Strand Decision of the holding in *Sarasota*, supra; and (c) the advisability of making the Strand Decision prospective only, without reference to validation.

(Motion at ¶ 2).

12. It is well settled that “amicus briefs should not be used to simply give one side more exposure.” *Ciba-Geigy Ltd. v. Fish Peddler, Inc.*, 683 So. 2d 522, 523 (Fla. 4th DCA 1996). Moreover, Florida courts have denied requests to file an amicus brief when the amicus brief will do no more than simply present the same argument as contained in a party’s brief. *See id.*

13. In the instant case, the three (3) “issues” sought to be addressed by the School Districts in their *post-opinion* amicus brief have been fully and adequately presented by Escambia County and the FAC in their Motions for Rehearing and Clarification filed with the Court on September 17, 2007. Thus, the School Districts’ *post-opinion* participation in this case would be duplicative and would not involve the presentation of *additional* information that would in any way aid the Court in the disposition of this case.

14. Accordingly, the Court should deny the School Districts' *post-opinion* Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief.

**III.**

**CONCLUSION**

15. In sum, for the reasons set forth above, the Court should deny the School Districts' *post-opinion* "Motion for Leave to File Amici Curiae Brief" filed on September 17, 2007.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this \_\_\_\_ day of September 2007.

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DAVID A. THERIAQUE, ESQUIRE  
Florida Bar No. 832332  
S. BRENT SPAIN, ESQUIRE  
Florida Bar No. 320810  
TIMOTHY E. DENNIS, ESQUIRE  
Florida Bar. No. 575410  
THERIAQUE VORBECK & SPAIN  
433 North Magnolia Drive  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
Telephone: 850/224-7332  
Facsimile: 850/224-7662

KERRY ANNE SCHULTZ, ESQUIRE  
Florida Bar No. 563188  
BORDELON & SCHULTZ  
LAW FIRM, P.L.  
2721 Gulf Breeze Parkway  
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32563  
Telephone: 850/934-1000  
Facsimile: 850/934-1050

CO-COUNSEL FOR APPELLANT  
DR. GREGORY L. STRAND

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been furnished via United States Mail to:

Patricia D. Lott, Esquire  
Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, P.L.C.  
25 West Cedar Street, Suite 500  
Pensacola, Florida 32502  
Counsel for ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Richard I. Lott, Esquire  
Lott & Associates, P.L.  
362 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Suite 288  
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561  
Counsel for ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Elaine Johnson-James, Esquire  
Richard J. Miller, Esquire  
Mark-David Adams, Esquire  
Christine Senne, Esquire  
Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge, LLP  
One North Clematis Street, Suite 400  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401  
Counsel for ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Leslie M. Norwood, Esquire  
Managing Director and Associate General Counsel  
Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association  
360 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 10017  
Counsel for ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Kevin M. Carroll, Esquire  
Managing Director and Associate General Counsel  
Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association  
1399 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Counsel for ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

John Molchan, Esquire  
Assistant State Attorney  
Post Office Box 12726  
Pensacola, Florida 32591  
Counsel for STATE OF FLORIDA

Gregory T. Stewart, Esquire  
Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A.  
1500 Mahan Drive, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
Counsel for FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, INC.

Virginia Saunders Delegal, Esquire  
General Counsel  
Florida Association of Counties, Inc.  
100 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Counsel for FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, INC.

Robert L. Nabors, Esquire  
Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A.  
1500 Mahan Drive, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
Counsel for FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.,  
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS, and SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DUVAL,  
HILLSBOROUGH, AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Major B. Harding, Esquire  
Ausley & McMullen, P.A.  
227 Calhoun Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Counsel for FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.,  
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS, and SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DUVAL,  
HILLSBOROUGH, AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Frank Kruppenbacher, Esquire  
General Counsel  
Orange County Public Schools  
445 West Amelia Street  
Orlando, Florida 32801  
Counsel for FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.,  
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS, and SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DUVAL,  
HILLSBOROUGH, AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Cindy A. Laquidara, Esquire  
Chief Deputy General Counsel  
Duval County  
117 West Duval Street, Suite 480  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202  
Counsel for FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.,  
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS, and SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DUVAL,  
HILLSBOROUGH, AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Thomas F. Gonzalez, Esquire  
Hillsborough County School Board Attorney  
Thompson, Sizemore & Gonzalez  
201 North Franklin Street, Suite 1600  
Tampa, Florida 33601  
Counsel for FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.,  
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS, and SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DUVAL,  
HILLSBOROUGH, AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Joy Causseaux Frank, Esquire  
Florida Association of District School Superintendents  
208 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Counsel for FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.,  
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS, and SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DUVAL,  
HILLSBOROUGH, AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Scott D. Makar, Solicitor General  
Craig D. Feiser, Deputy Solicitor General  
Charles B. Upton, II, Deputy Solicitor General  
Office of Attorney General  
The Capitol – PL 01  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050  
Counsel for BILL MCCOLLUM, ATTORNEY GENERAL

Randall W. Hanna, Esquire  
Bryant Miller Oliver, P.A.  
101 North Monroe Street, Suite 900  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Counsel for FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

Harry Morrison, Jr., Esquire  
Post Office Box 1757  
Tallahassee, Florida 32302-1757  
Counsel for FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

David E. Cardwell, Esquire  
The Cardwell Law Firm  
7380 Sand Lake Road, Suite 500  
Orlando, Florida 32819  
Counsel for FLORIDA REDEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

Bruce Giles-Klein, Esquire  
Greenberg Traurig, P.A.  
1221 Brickell Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33131  
Counsel for CITY OF HOLLYWOOD AND THE CITY OF HOLLYWOOD,  
FLORIDA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Eugene M. Steinfeld, Esquire  
5790 Margate Boulevard  
Margate, Florida 33063-3699  
Counsel for CITY OF MARGATE AND THE CITY OF MARGATE  
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Jose Smith, Esquire  
1700 Convention Center Drive  
Fourth Floor  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139  
Counsel for CITY OF MIAMI BEACH AND THE CITY OF MIAMI  
BEACH REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Michele S. Hall, Esquire  
Michele S. Hall, P.L.  
505 25th Street W.  
Bradenton, Florida 34205  
Counsel for COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE  
CITY OF PALMETTO

Douglas J. Sale, Esquire  
Kevin D. Obos, Esquire  
Harrison, Sale, McCloy, Thompson, Duncan & Jackson, Chtd.  
Post Office Drawer 1579  
Panama City, Florida 32402  
Counsel for CITY OF PANAMA CITY BEACH

John C. Wolfe, Esquire  
Post Office Box 2842  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731  
Counsel for CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

Frank S. Bartolone, Esquire  
3301 Gun Club Road, MSC 1410  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406  
Counsel for SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Claudia M. McKenna, Esquire  
City Attorney  
200 2nd Street  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401  
Counsel for CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH AND THE WEST PALM  
BEACH COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Judson Freeman, Jr., Esquire  
Livermore, Freeman & McWilliams, P.A.  
320 North First Street, Suite 603  
Jacksonville Beach, Florida 32250  
Counsel for SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTIES OF ALACHUA,  
BREVARD, INDIAN RIVER, MARION, AND ST. JOHNS

Arthur England, Esquire  
Greenberg Traurig, P.A.  
1221 Brickell Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33131  
Counsel for SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTIES OF BROWARD,  
LAKE, LEE, OSCEOLA, PALM BEACH, POLK, AND ST. LUCIE

George N. Meros, Jr., Esquire  
Gray Robinson, P.A.  
Post Office Box 11189  
Tallahassee, Florida 32302-3189  
Counsel for CITY OF NORTH MIAMI COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY

on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September 2007.

---

DAVID A. THERIAQUE, ESQUIRE