



NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

SENATOR MARC BASNIGHT

RALEIGH 27601-2808

1ST DISTRICT

STATE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27601-2808

PH: (919) 733-6854

FAX (919) 733-8740

August 16, 2006

Mr. William J. Brooks, Jr.
President
North Carolina Family Policy Council
Post Office Box 20607
Raleigh, NC 27619

Dear Mr. Brooks:

Thank you very much for sending me the survey from the North Carolina Family Policy Council. I sincerely appreciate your efforts on behalf of North Carolina's families as well as your interest in the 2006 elections; however, I must decline your invitation to participate in the questionnaire.

It has been my long-standing practice while serving in the North Carolina Senate to not sign pledges or fill out questionnaires committing myself to be either for or against a specific issue on a wholesale basis. I believe that these pledges and questionnaires impede officials' abilities to use their best judgment when dire situations arise, or to change their minds as new information becomes available – these impediments are not in the best interests of our state.

When I consider any matter that may come before the Senate, I want to be free to hear the debate, to consider all information available, and – if my previous position is wrong – I want to be free to change my mind so I can make the right decisions for our people and our state. That is my job as a representative of the people.

This is not to say that public servants should not make promises – all of us should make a promise to represent our constituents and our state to the best of our abilities, and to use good judgment, compassion and common sense in our decisions. But to do that, we need the freedom to respond to new information and changing circumstances in a manner that is in the best interest of our state. That is why I refuse to sign any pledge or questionnaire from any group because, in restricting my freedom, I believe I weaken my ability to effectively represent my district and my state, and worse, limit myself to a position which may not ultimately be in the best interest of those whom I have been elected to serve.

The freedom to listen, to debate, and to make decisions is at the very crux of my duties as a public servant – and the duties of the 169 other state lawmakers who serve our people. As you can imagine, with 170 people in the legislature it can often be challenging to come to agreement – yet another reason freedom and flexibility are critical for legislators.

Thank you again for your letter. Please feel free to contact me anytime if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marc Basnight".

Marc Basnight