

More Than 1,150 Faith Leaders Urge Congress to Support the Educational Choice Children Act (ECCA)

April 10, 2025

Dear Members of the United States Congress:

Across our country, millions of children have access to a quality education in an environment that fits their needs. They graduate from high school, enroll in college or vocational/trade school, and they get opportunities in the workforce. They're less likely to commit crimes or experience violence and bullying, and they can realize their full potential as human beings.

Those children are attending the K-12 schools of their family's choice.

Meanwhile, millions of other students are forced to attend a school based upon the five digits at the end of their home address. Unless a family has the financial resources to relocate to a neighborhood with higher quality public schools or enroll their child in a private school that better fits his or her needs, they will be trapped in a system that has likely failed their community for decades.

These children who are stuck in an educational environment that doesn't meet their needs cannot wait another year or five years or ten years for systemic change. The need for alternatives, for greater educational choice, is urgent because the crisis is so widespread.

The vast majority of children in America read below grade level. The recent release of results from the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal the depth of this crisis. Despite strong state budgets and over \$190 billion invested in public education via federal pandemic relief funding, NAEP reading scores continued to decline and the lowest performing students are now upwards of 4 years behind their higher achieving peers. According to the 2024 NAEP, only 31 percent (31%) of 4th graders are proficient in reading. For the first time in over ten years, a majority of black and Hispanic students scored "Below Basic" in 4th grade reading, which means they lack the foundational skills needed for later success in life.

This is a tragedy and it should not be tolerated any longer. Yet, those in control of our K-12 system are resistant to necessary change and broadcast the same platitudes and promises that have gone unfulfilled for generations.

There is no more time to wait. Our children need better options immediately. As leaders of the faith community dedicated to empowering our families and lifting our children, we urge all leaders to help open the doors to new educational opportunities – right now.

Millions of students can access schools of their choice when it comes to college, so why not provide those same scholarship opportunities to the critical, formative years in elementary and secondary schools? Thirty-four (34) states and the District of Columbia currently do this to

varying degrees. More than 20 years of study also show that when families are given the freedom to choose the best educational option for their children, all schools improve, student outcomes improve, and families are more satisfied as rising tides lift all boats.

Each child is a unique son or daughter of God. Each child has unique needs, values, talents, dreams, and desires, but sadly, the one-size-fits-all educational system has essentially become one-size-fits-none system. Every child in every state, regardless of their family's income, deserves the dignity of a high-quality education. Every child, regardless of ZIP code, deserves a school that expands rather than limits opportunity. And we all deserve a community that will come together and stand up for the best interests of our children.

Therefore, we, fellow leaders of faith, urge our Congress to empower families *in every state* with the freedom and opportunity to select the best education for their children. For far too long, our nation's students have been left on the outside looking in, and educational choice has opened the door for many, but not all. To see these respected and committed leaders unite—for the common good of our students' educational future—should serve as a rallying cry for Congress to bring educational freedom to every state through the Educational Choice for Children Act. *The time is now.*

Sincerely,

Black Pastors United for Education (BPUE)

Reverend Joshua C. Robertson – Senior Pastor of The Rock Church of Harrisburg, PA and CEO and Founder of Black Pastors United for Education (BPUE)

National Faith Leaders in Education

Paul Abner – Oklahoma City, OK
Raymond Ackerman – Edmond, OK
James Adams – Miami, FL
Idubel Aguirre – Las Vegas, NV
Rafael Aguirre – Las Vegas, NV
Michael Alameda – Tucson, AZ
Walter Alexander – Scottsdale, AZ
Angeles Alfaro – North Las Vegas, NV
Gene Allen – Nicoma Park, OK
Maria Allen – Nicoma Park, OK
Donald Altom – Hollis, OK
Sylvia Ames – Durham, NC
Christopher Anderson – Maricopa, AZ
Dave Anderson – Maricopa, AZ
Drew Anderson – Maricopa, AZ
Kenya Anderson – Maricopa, AZ
Mirissa Anderson – Minneapolis, MN
Otha Anderson – Phoenix, AZ
Shawn Anderson – Collierville, TN
Toby Anderson – Yukon, OK
Karl Anthony – Scottsdale, AZ
Merlin Antoine – Kenner, LA
Joseph Arledge – Woodward, OK

Rex Arnold – Yukon, OK
Tom Arnould – Yukon, OK
Tonya Arrington – New Orleans, LA
Randy Barnett – Edmond, OK
Elder Bailey – Vint Hill Farms, VA
Bradley Baker – Marietta, OK
Don Barnes – Lawton, OK
Elisha Barnes – Apopka, FL
Todd Barnes – Apopka, FL
Rick Barrett – Pensacola, OK
Chad Barron – Ringling, OK
Brian Barton – Drumright, OK
Blake Bastible – Chickasha, OK
Jon Baucom – Durant, OK
Carol Bearden – Fisherville, TN
Linda Bennett – Charlotte, NC
Chad Bernard – Edmond, OK
Renee Bernard – Edmond, OK
Maritza Berrios – Trujillo Alto, PR
Jacob Bice – Tulsa, OK
Bernard Black – Phoenix, AZ
Don Blake – Henrico, VA
Shasta Blue – Memphis, TN
James Bond – Stroud, OK

Jose Bonilla – Henderson, NV
John Borders – Stoughton, MA
Billy Bowen – Dover, OK
Chalaundra Bradley – Memphis, TN
Kim Bradley – Broken Bow, OK
Michael Bradley – Durant, OK
Richard Bradley – Tulsa, OK
Terry Bradley – Broken Bow, OK
Geraldine Brandt – Cache, OK
Claudia Brewer – Oklahoma City, OK
Eddy Brewer – Oklahoma City, OK
Herbert Brisban – New Orleans, LA
Darryl Brister – New Orleans, LA
Dennis Britt – Fayetteville, NC
Susan Brock – Coyle, OK
SE Broden – Dallas, TX
David Brooks – Oklahoma City, OK
Gregory Brooks – New Orleans, LA
Linda Brooks – Oklahoma City, OK
Rachel Brown – Chicago, IL
Syntel Brown – Griffin, GA
Barbara Bruner – Kingfisher, OK
Ron Bruner – Kingfisher, OK
Norma Bryant – Sanford, NC
Brian Buettner – Lawton, OK
Mike Buie – Broken Arrow, OK
Mike Bunch – West Siloam Springs, OK
Adam Burgess – Jonesboro, GA
Jerry Burnside – McAlester, OK
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Mrs. Byrd – Luling, LA
Gary Caldwell – Piedmont, OK
Marty Campbell – Monroe, LA
Amber Carolizette – Scottsdale, AZ
Robert Carter – Grove, OK
Carlos Carus – Hiawassee, GA
Pamela Cassimere – Ville Platte, LA
Jerry Cato – Altona, IL
Connie Caufield – Gretna, LA
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Dena Chitwood – Oklahoma City, OK
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Johnnie Clark – Lathrop, CA
Wallace Clary – Aurora, CO
Bill Cleveland – Alexandria, VA
Clint Cline – Plant City, FL
Paul Coakley – Oklahoma City, OK
John Coburn – Fisherville, TN
Tim Cockrum – Ponca City, OK
Kelly Coffey – Tonkawa, OK
Bertha Colbert – Charlotte, NC
Judith Cole – Oklahoma City, OK
Richard Cole – Oklahoma City, OK
Cheryl Coleman – North Miami Beach, FL
Gilbert Coleman – NJ
Rusty Coleman – Ponca City, OK
Joe Connelly – New Orleans, LA
Mary Connelly – Valdese, NC
Clifton Conrad – New Orleans, LA
Carlos Contreras – Trujillo Alto, PR
Gwen Cooper – Raleigh, NC
Genea Council – Denver, CO
Krista Cowan – Mustang, OK
Steve Cowan – Mustang, OK
William Cox – Battle Mountain, NV
Carole Craig – Norman, OK
Tim Craig – Maricopa, AZ
Stuart Crevcoure – Tahlequah, OK
Dave Crittendon – Oklahoma City, OK
Jacqueline Crockett – Memphis, TN
Ronnie Crockett – Kenner, LA
Sam Crouch – Lee, NV
Arnold Culbreath – Cincinnati, OH
Barbara Culbreath – Cincinnati, OH
Craig Dacus – Newcastle, OK
Vicki Dacus – Newcastle, OK
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Ivelisse Davila – Fajardo, PR
Amy Davis – New Orleans, LA
Catherine Davis – Stone Mountain, GA
Gary Davis – Glenpool, OK
Jason Davis – Phoenix, AZ
Nathaniel Davis – Durham, NC
Yuri Davis – New York, NY
David Day – Phoenix, AZ
Rick Dominic – McAlester, OK
Sandra Dorsey – Slidell, LA
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Gregory Drake – Red Oak, TX
Nancy Dry – Weatherford, OK
Allen Duhon – Chalmette, LA
Michael Dwailabee – Oklahoma City, OK
Hilda Espadas – Las Vegas, NV
Dan Edens – Cleveland, OK
Kelly Edward – Norman, OK
Matthew Ehlen – Las Vegas, NV
Kristen Elizondo – Las Vegas, NV
Rhonda Ellis – Oklahoma City, OK
Steve Ely – Bethany, OK
Todd Ervin – Long Beach, CA

Demetrio Escobar – Las Vegas, NV
Demetrio Escobar – Las Vegas, NV
Brian Ewing – Maricopa, AZ
Yolanda Ewing – Maricopa, AZ
Brad Ezell – Norman, OK
Michel Faulkner – Philadelphia, PA
Denton Field – Owasso, OK
Carolyn Fields – Memphis, TN
Lamont Finch – North Miami, FL
Tracey Fitzgerald – Pawhuska, OK
Rocky Flint – Lawton, OK
Weldon Fraizer – New Orleans, LA
Phil Freeman – Etowah, OK
Cynthia Frizzelle – Miami, OK
Raymond Frizzelle – Miami, OK
Brant Frost – Newnan, GA
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Chandra Fugh – Memphis, TN
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Gary Furr – Pickens, OK
Rita Futrell – Savannah, GA
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David Gaines – Glen Burnie, MD
Marco Gamboa – Las Vegas, NV
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Christian Garcia – Miami, FL
Gail Gardner – Ocoee, FL
Andrea Gates – Adamsville, AL
Anthony Gathers – Phoenix, AZ
Kim Gathers – Phoenix, AZ
Jim Gentry – Antlers, OK
Rodney George – Glenpool, OK
Matthew Gerlach – Broken Arrow, OK
Blake Gideon – Edmond, OK
Roger Ginn – Lake Park, NC
Jack Gleason – Tulsa, OK
Clarence Glover – Lauderdale Lakes, FL
James Goins – Norman, OK
Kelly Goins – Tulsa, OK
Lisa Goins – Broken Arrow, OK
Darrla Golden – Geary, OK
Mark Gonzales – Dallas, TX
Guadalupe Gonzalez – Altus, OK
Marleny Gonzalez – Alexandria, VA
Denise Goulet – Las Vegas, NV
Paul Goulet – Las Vegas, NV
John Grant – Tulsa, OK
Alicia Garcia – Las Vegas, NV
Ricky Graves – Phoenix, AZ
Andrew Green – Phoenix, AZ

Doneshia Green – Orlando, FL
Joseph Green – Harrisburg, PA
William Green – Montgomery, AL
Perry Greene – Yukon, OK
Ronald Gregory – Vernonburg, GA
Brian Grider – Yukon, OK
Tim Grier – Concord, NC
Kevanlynette Griffin – New Orleans, LA
Daniel Grover – Oklahoma City, OK
Gary Gunsolus – Ardmore, OK
Geoffrey Gunter – Broken Arrow, OK
Dean Guthrie – Oklahoma City, OK
Garry Guthrie – Mccurtain, OK
Joy Guthrie – Oklahoma City, OK
Hector Guzman – Las Vegas, NV
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Cleophus Hall – North Miami, FL
Richard Hall – Pooler, GA
Pastor Hamm – VA
Alexandra Hamrick – Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
Bob Hancock – Muskogee, OK
Mark Haney – Leedey, OK
Landers Hardy – Winter Springs, FL
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Jay Hawpe – Edmond, OK
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Magan Holder – Oklahoma City, OK
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Linda Holland – Las Vegas, NV
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Shawn Hopkins – Maricopa, AZ
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Aaron Hudson – Millington, TN
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Sheila Humphrey – Memphis, TN

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Lonnie Irons – Maricopa, AZ
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Regina Jackson – AZ
Terri Jackson – Paint Lick, KY
Bobby Jackson – Phoenix, AZ
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David Jarvis – Edmond, OK
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Lisa Jillani – Charlotte, NC
Cynthia Johnson – Memphis, TN
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John Johnson – New Orleans, LA
John Johnson – Yukon, OK
Rebecca Johnson – Yukon, OK
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Essie Jones – Maricopa, AZ
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Rodrick Jones – Phoenix, AZ
Sadai Jones – Phoenix, AZ
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Vonna Jones – Memphis, TN
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Adam Kuehny – Sallisaw, OK
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Harry Layden – Tulsa, OK
Mark LeMarr – Crescent, OK
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Rollo Leimer – Charlotte, NC
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Frank Lightfoot – Memphis, TN
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Benny Llanos – Lawton, OK
James Logan – Concord, NC
Christopher Long – TN
Kevin Long – Charlotte, NC
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Kendra Lowder – Oklahoma City, OK
Terry Lowder – Oklahoma City, OK
Betty Lumar – New Orleans, LA
Vanessa Mack – Harvey, LA
Gerod Macon – Marrero, LA
Roger Maddox – Poteau, OK
Sidney Malone – Fisherville, TN
Marta Marquez – NC
Jonathan Marshall – East Point, GA
Maxine Marshall – Fisherville, TN
Tecia Marshall – Memphis, TN
Paul Martin – Tulsa, OK
Silma Martinez – Las Vegas, NV
Vincent Mathews – MS
Hawthorne Matthews – Brewton, AL
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Crystal McCorkell – Raleigh, NC
Randy McCown – Piedmont, OK
Kyle McGlotten – Vint Hill Farms, VA
Jo McGuffin – Edmond, OK
Tyrone McIntosh – Orlando, FL
Kevrick McKain – Eden, NC
Dave McKellips – Tulsa, OK

Caprice McKelvey – Pontotoc, OK
Kenneth McKinney – Memphis, TN
Metrell McKinney – New Orleans, LA
Bill McKissick – Blackwell, OK
Tami McKissick – Blackwell, OK
Jennifer McMullen – Creedmoor, NC
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Michael Mckinnies – Marrero, LA
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David Middleton – Memphis, TN
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Ronald Mitchell – Slidell, LA
Tamaricus Mitchell – Phoenix, AZ
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Danielle Moore – New Orleans, LA
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Rosa Morris – TN
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Steven Mosley – Alexandria, VA
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Jim Moss – Tulsa, OK
Theodora Moten – Austin, TX
Rafael Mundo – North Las Vegas, NV
Todd Nance – Sand Springs, OK
Valentine Ndebilie – Pryor, OK
Scott Neighbors – Skiatook, OK
Gene Newberry – Yukon, OK
Francis Nguyen – Kingfisher, OK
Brad Nicar – Edmond, OK
Sharon Norris – Lake Park, NC
William Novak – Oklahoma City, OK
Francisco Nunez – Buford, GA
Brian O’Brien – Stillwater, OK
Clestine Obidiegwu – Tulsa, OK
Ken Ogdon – Tom, OK
Jovita Okonkwo – Tulsa, OK
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Darryl Owens – Carrboro, NC
David Oxley – Bethany, OK
Nettie Ozier – Memphis, TN
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Tyson Parks – Galesburg, IL
Al Perna – Oklahoma City, OK
Martin Perryman – Oklahoma City, OK
Jamie Phares – Cole, OK
Kendall Phillips – Deepstep, GA
De’Andre Pickett – Hampton, GA
Jim Pierce – Oklahoma City, OK
Janie Pietz – Oklahoma City, OK
David Player – Guymon, OK
Andrew Poh – Mccarran, NV
Jeffrey Polasek – Bixby, OK
Miriam Pollard – Chesapeake Beach, MD
Cathy Polyak – Las Vegas, NV
Darrell Porter – Las Vegas, NV
Albert Powell – Mazie, OK
Angela Powell – Creedmoor, NC
Laura Price – New Orleans, LA
Mark Price – Binger, OK
Merlisa Pugh – New Orleans, LA
Camilo Perez – Henderson, NV
Dann Ragan – Bethany, OK
Doug Redding – Sapulpa, OK
Teresa Redding – Sapulpa, OK
Olden Reese – FL
Roger Reston – Anadarko, OK
Deveina Reynolds – Citronelle, AL
Faye Richards – Atlanta, GA
Elvira Rincón – Las Vegas, NV
Jose Rincón – Las Vegas, NV
Damian Rivas – Las Vegas, NV
Billy Rivers – Memphis, TN
Jack Robbins – Tulsa, OK
Kermit Roberson – New Orleans, LA
Bev Robertson – Oklahoma City, OK
Linda Robins – Oklahoma City, OK
Darrell Robinson – Oklahoma City, OK
Jim Roebuck – Wilson, OK
Dale Rolland – Tulsa, OK
Annette Ross – Charlotte, NC
Stephanie Ross – New Orleans, LA
Dexter Rush – Memphis, TN
Victor Rushing – Phoenix, AZ
Bob Rutherford – Oklahoma City, OK

RJ Saladin – Oklahoma City, OK
Janelle Sanders – Gastonia, NC
Martin Santiago – Pittsburg, CA
Bermann Sejour – Biscayne Park, FL
Ray Sikes – Choctaw, OK
James Simmons – Marrero, LA
Ron Simpson – Oklahoma City, OK
Karen Sims – Blackburn, MO
Angela Smith – Cary, NC
Danny Smith – Albany, CA
Douglas Smith – Rochester, NY
Gloria Smith – Huntersville, NC
Gregory Smith – Oklahoma City, OK
Jerry Smith – Oklahoma City, OK
Scott Smith – Prague, OK
Shaddy Soliman – Heathrow, FL
Harvey Sparks – Oklahoma City, OK
Larry Sparks – Shawnee, OK
Laura St Julien – Kenner, LA
Rex Stafford – Oklahoma City, OK
Cory Stanley – Altus, OK
Samuel Stanton – Fallon, NV
Kelley Steele – Phoenix, AZ
Reginald Steele – Phoenix, AZ
Bill Stevenson – Mesquite, NV
Derrick Strong – New Orleans, LA
Paul Sublett – Bethany, OK
Ryan Summers – Oklahoma City, OK
Greta Summerville – Gainesville, VA
Elise Tape – Charlotte, NC
Anthony Taplin – New Orleans, LA
Debreita Taylor – Orlando, FL
Jason Taylor – Oklahoma City, OK
Larry Thoma – Elgin, OK
Ronald Thomas – Las Vegas, NV
Leona Thompson – Chesapeake, VA
Willie Thompson – Chesapeake, VA
Kevin Thornton – The Village, OK
Jose Thottathil – Dewey, OK
Dr. Threatt – Matthews, NC
Brenda Timberlake – Creedmoor, NC
Calvin Timberlake – Stem, NC
Donald Timberlake – Stem, NC
Tim Timberlake – Jacksonville, FL
Debra Tindall – Fort Mill, SC
Gail Torres – Sapulpa, OK
Luis Torres – Sapulpa, OK
Merry Trujillo – Las Vegas, NV
Kelley Tucker – Oklahoma City, OK
Frank Tunstall – Yukon, OK
Pasqual Urrabazo – Las Vegas, NV

Charlie Vaughn – Austin, NV
Richard Ventonis – Tulsa, OK
Devonsidet Vigee – New Orleans, LA
Ray Wade – Yukon, OK
Kevin Wagner – Owasso, OK
Barbara Walker – Matthews, NC
Charles Walkup – Marvin, NC
Chrain Walls – Ocoee, FL
Patricia Ware – Alexandria, VA
Lance Warren – El Reno, OK
Justin Watkins – Memphis, TN
Aubery Watson – New Orleans, LA
Robert Weger – Lawton, OK
Charles West – Oklahoma City, OK
Kin Wetteland – Lansing, IL
Dennis Wheeler – Afton, OK
Steve Whitaker – FL
Darnell White – Chandler, AZ
David White – Oklahoma City, OK
Yolanda Whitfield – Lewisville, TX
James Wickersham – Drumright, OK
Allen Wiggins – Orlando, FL
Mary Williams – New Orleans, LA
Brian Williams – Charlotte, NC
Clarence Williams – Savannah, GA
Edwina Williams – New Orleans, LA
Domonique Williams – Fayetteville, GA
Inez Williams – New Orleans, LA
Jayson Williams – Tampa, FL
Samuel Williams – Vernonburg, GA
Siegfried Williams – Eutaw, AL
Steve Williams – Enid, OK
Lavern Williamson – North Miami Beach, FL
Cedric Wilson – New Orleans, LA
Rich Wood – Yukon, OK
Pamela Woodridge – Gretna, LA
Ed Wrather – Leedey, OK
Beatrice Wright – New Orleans, LA
James Wright – Miami Gardens, FL
Keshia Wright – Apopka, FL
Bennie Yarbrough – Alafaya, FL
Doug Young – Tulsa, OK
Melissa Young – New Orleans, LA
Ernesto Zarraval – North Las Vegas, NV