

## Answering Marsha Farney's Misinformation

**Question:** Why is Marsha Farney lying about Brian Russell?

**Answer:** Marsha Farney has spent over a quarter of a million dollars of her own money to buy a seat on the SBOE and is becoming desperate because her campaign is floundering. She realizes that fabricating lies and distorting the truth is her only hope of electoral victory and of deflecting attention from her husband's donation of the maximum amount allowed by federal law (\$2300) to Barack Obama.

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State Board of Education - District 10  
**Eyes of Texas on education runoff**

By RACHEL SLADE

After only 203 votes separated them in the March 2 primary, the race for the State Board of Education District 10 spot between heavyweights Marsha Farney and Brian Russell isn't just heating up anymore — it's on fire.

Ms. Farney, of Georgetown, and Mr. Russell, of Austin, each earned their way onto the Republican runoff ballot by taking 35 percent of the vote in March, edging out educator Rebecca Osborne, who pulled off a close third place at 30 percent.

The 16-county district that includes all of Williamson County is one of eight seats up for re-election on the 15-member board this year, and with controversial incumbent Cynthia Dunbar, R-Richmond, stepping down after her first term, the candidates say the stakes have never been higher that dictates the benchmarks of Texas schools' 4.7 million students.

The candidates' various supporters, it seems, agree, in the interest of tipping the scales, Ms. Farney's been called a "RINO" (Republican in Name Only) and a closeted Obama supporter while Mr. Russell's been portrayed as Ms. Dunbar's protégé, a political insider hell-bent on dismantling the public education system.

**She has been attacked for what she calls a "strategic donation" her husband made to the Obama campaign aimed**

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Lie: Brian Russell opposed Attorney General Greg Abbott's Child Protection Policies and Actions.

**Truth:** Brian authored the recent March 2010 Republican Party of Texas resolution commending the great work of Attorney General Greg Abbott.

**Truth:** Brian spoke for Texas Eagle Forum in opposition to bad bill SB 1440, which empowered CPS to violate parental rights, and asked Governor Perry to veto the bill. In response to the public outcry (and the request of the bill's author to veto it), Gov. Perry vetoed SB1440. SB 1440 had nothing to do with Attorney General Greg Abbott or his child protection policies.

Lie: Brian Russell supports removing Thomas Jefferson from the World History curriculum standards in our public schools.

**Truth: Brian supports the United States history standards adopted by all 10 Republican members of the SBOE**, which mention Thomas Jefferson 16 different times (2<sup>nd</sup> most of any Founding Father). Brian supports the SBOE decision to replace a single reference to Thomas Jefferson with a reference to earlier thinkers who influenced Thomas Jefferson.

Lie: Brian Russell failed to contribute money to any Republican candidates for “key” offices.

**Truth: Brian has contributed thousands of dollars to the Republican Party of Texas and Republican candidates.** Brian has spent hundreds of hours block walking and phone banking for numerous Republican campaigns (including the McCain/Palin campaign), and has also recruited and trained precinct chairman to work their precincts for Republican candidates.

Lie: A majority of Brian’s identified supporters do not live in this district and cannot vote in this race.

**Truth: Brian has the enormous support across the district** from members of the State Republican Executive Committee, Republican county chairmen, and Republican clubs. Brian has the support of most statewide Republican, conservative, and pro-life organizations that have thousands of members in District 10, as well as the support of hundreds of grassroots volunteers residing in District 10.

**Truth:** Farney, while claiming to support local educational control, is now touting an endorsement by the former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, who worked to take away power from Texas and other states and to nationalize public education under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Lie: Brian has no experience in Education or Public Schools, refuses to send his children to public school and will never send his children to public school.

**Truth:** Brian attended public primary and secondary school for 12 years and attended public university for an additional 7 years. Brian has additionally taught many different ages of children in different settings. Brian told the *Austin American Statesman* that “we evaluate each year what is best for each of our children and have decided up to this point to educate our children at home” This was misquoted in the *Austin American Statesman* and further distorted by Marsha Farney, who in one mail piece quoted Brian as saying “he will never send his children to public school”

Lie: Farney attributes to Brian certain out of context quotations of Cynthia Dunbar taken from liberal media sources such as *Austin American Statesman* and Texas Freedom Network.

**Truth:** Brian has never said that he agrees with the particular quotations reproduced by Farney, but certainly shares a common conservative perspective with Dunbar and applauds her work on the State Board of Education. Farney apparently is lashing out because Cynthia Dunbar and 4 other members of the State Board of Education have endorsed Brian Russell. None have endorsed Farney.

Lie: Brian claims to be a “businessman” - but actually is a lawyer

**Truth:** How absurd. Brian is a businessman, owning (with three other partners) his own intellectual property law firm. Ironically, Farney's husband is also a patent attorney (and apparently not considered by Farney to be a businessman!).

Lie: Russell supports judicial candidates who voted to legalize homosexual conduct.

**Truth:** This charge is ridiculous. In this primary, Brian has only publicly supported one judicial candidate -- Judge Melissa Goodwin -- who has never served in the legislature.

**Truth:** Brian has worked over many years to support the traditional family, including working for the passage of Proposition 2, the traditional marriage amendment to the Texas Constitution.

Lie: Russell concealed in-kind contributions from the Texas Ethics Commission.

**Truth: I have complied with all required ethics filings.**

Lie: Russell was involved in a physical skirmish after crashing a Republican Executive Committee meeting that led to an arrest by Austin Police.

**Truth: I led a overwhelming public censure of former Travis Co. Republican Party Chairman Alan Sager in March 2004. Subsequently, I was the victim of an assault at an open public meeting of the Travis Co. Republican Party Executive Committee meeting. My assailant was the Sergeant-of-Arms appointed by Sager, who Farney is now using to compose her negative mail pieces and is touted on the latest one as one of Farney's endorsers. Although I successfully later pressed charges against my assailant, no one (including my assailant) was arrested.**

Here's an excerpt from a July 2, 2004 Statesman article:

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Russell said he wanted to film the meeting to document Sager's behavior, which he said included violating basic rules of parliamentary procedure in filling precinct chair vacancies.

Austin police Detective Robert Gross said Sager objected to the filming and asked him to remove the camera from the room. Russell complied but then returned for his camera bag, which was when the assault began, Gross said.

An affidavit said Runyan "jumped him from behind." Russell was in a choke hold, with his arm behind his back and was being wrestled through a set of doors when witnesses intervened.

Lie: Part of the management team that has spent the Republican Party in debt.

**Truth: Apparently, Marsha Farney and her advisors do not understand party finances, including the fact that significant spending must take place in fundraising campaigns before money comes in. Reporting a single figure from one Texas Ethics Commission report does not present an accurate picture of party finances.**

Lie: Brian Russell agreed "it is nearly tantamount to child abuse to put one's kids" in public school.

**Truth: Farney's advisor Alan Sager (see source of previous lie) posted a personal attack on me on the Young Conservatives of Texas Facebook page available at**

[http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=330358877980&comments=](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=330358877980&comments=)

YCT Vice Chairman for Legislative Affairs Tony McDonald responded with a spirited rebuttal as follows:

Dr. Sager,

You say the SBOE has at times been a joke, and of course, some of that blame falls on the members. But more-so, it is because of Texas Freedom Network and other left-wing groups working directly to undermine the board. They criticize, tear down, and take out of context every conservative on the board everytime they get a chance. And they do it, because they seek to empower teachers unions and administrators and because they would like to impose more of their radical agenda on Texas kids.

They have gone all-in in this election to flip the SBOE in ways that I cannot ever recall (though I admit my extremely short frame of knowledge of Texas political history).

The best way to make the board more "legitimate" is to defeat this attempt and make the efforts to flip the board seem fruitless. A loss here will dry up funding and discourage challengers to the conservative orthodoxy in the future. Defeating illegitimate critics is the best way to rebuild legitimacy in the SBOE.

Brian Russell is a solid conservative who will continue to lead Texans in a way that conservatives approve of.

To criticize him because he does not send his kids to public schools is an illegitimate attack. Government run schools have gotten so bad that it is nearly tantamount to child abuse to put one's kids in one of these institutions nowadays. It is exactly the sort of person who is afraid to leave their kids in the hands of the government 5 days a week, 9 months a year who I think adequately understands the problems facing Texas education.

I disagree whole-heartedly with your message. I support Brian Russell.

Tony McDonald  
Vice Chairman for Legislative Affairs  
Young Conservatives of Texas

My response was simply to thank Tony for addressing Sager's illegitimate attack as follows: "Thanks Tony and well said."