



House of Representatives
State of South Carolina

Bruce W. Bannister
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Majority Leader

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Committee:
Judiciary

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Joseph M. McCulloch, Jr.
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Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Joe:

For the second time, I write to you about how the Ethics Reform debate happened in the Statehouse this year. One of my colleagues in the South Carolina House shared with me a link to your video with unfounded attacks concerning Rep. Kirkman Finlay's role in the debate.

In May, I wrote to you that Representative Finlay was an "active and clear voice for substantial and meaningful Ethics reform." Today, I want to share with you the famous quote by the great American statesman President Teddy Roosevelt:

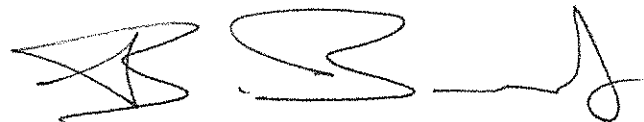
"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds...; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Rep. Finlay's bills did nothing that you accuse them of doing. A cursory reading of the legislation – rather than taking the word of others – would lay that fact out to you. I can think of few other legislators who have taken such an active role in the "arena" of Ethics Reform over the past two years. We have not always agreed, and while we didn't achieve true Ethics Reform this year, Rep. Finlay's passionate promotion of the issue earned him great respect in the Chamber.

As this debate progressed, people fell into two camps. The first were people like Representative Finlay who put their ideas, their political capital, and their reputations on the line to further a critical issue. The second were people obsessed with sniping, attacking, and mischaracterizing what was going on for their advantage and to fundraise from people who have no interest in actually supporting Ethics Reform.

We are ready and willing to accept any serious voices to the arena debating how Ethics Reform should be achieved in South Carolina. Please let me know if I can help you decide which path you will take.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce W. Bannister". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bruce W. Bannister
SC House District 24

BWB/klc