



# ST. JOSEPH

SCHOOL DISTRICT

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The St. Joseph School District has received a copy of Secretary of State Ashcroft's press release suggesting that the District improperly used public funds to promote Proposition 1. In his press release, Secretary Ashcroft also stated his support for transparency and accountability and the wise spending of tax dollars so as not to violate the public trust. Ironically, the District's communications were designed to promote exactly what Secretary Ashcroft says he supports—transparency in how the District intends to spend tax dollars.

The District vigorously denies violating *any* laws. Missouri law clearly allows the District to advise the public as to the impact of a ballot measure, and explain how tax dollars will be spent. This is the very definition of transparency.

Unfortunately, Secretary Ashcroft has not himself followed Missouri law, according to the school district's legal counsel. Missouri statutes are clear about the process Secretary Ashcroft must follow, but he has failed to do so. He is authorized to refer a complaint to the local prosecuting attorney, not the Attorney General, and then only after he has conducted an investigation and issued a statement of probable cause. He has done neither, but instead has asked the Attorney General to investigate. Missouri law does not allow Attorney General Hawley to be involved in this complaint.

No one from the Secretary of State's office has even discussed the complaint with any District official. Aside from its concerns over Secretary Ashcroft's failure to follow the law, the District is further troubled by the fact that the leading opponent of Proposition 1, Herzog Contracting Corp., contributed \$125,000 last year to Secretary Ashcroft's campaign. This leads the District to believe that this is really a last-minute, coordinated effort by those opposing Proposition 1 to smear the school district, and ultimately harm the children of St. Joseph. Proposition 1 is a non-partisan issue.

We are confident that neither the Secretary of State nor the Attorney General wants to become involved in last minute election shenanigans such as this. We urge both to follow the process established by the Missouri Legislature. The school children of St. Joseph do not deserve to be pawns in Jefferson City political games.