



**“Turncoat.”**

**“Saul Alinsky acolyte.”**

**“Inaccurate and petty.”**

**“JoAnn, you are going to hell.”**

**Wow. Just wow. Sit and ponder this just a bit...**

Those words were directed toward me, personally, and toward Grassroots America by a few due to the withdrawal of our endorsement of Mary Lou Bruner last week. Many more folks appreciated how hard it was for us and valued our principled stand. Thank you!

But, my, my – the politics of personal destruction are certainly on the rise in 2016, aren't they? See how quickly the “fall from grace” happens when we don't happen to agree with certain folks, when we actually apply the rules of personal responsibility and accountability? To them, all our years of work in the conservative trenches just instantly go down the drain, and we are now deemed “the enemy.”

Dr. Dwayne (Doc) Collins – a good, decent man who helps everybody and anybody in need and the founder of five TEA Parties, has been “dressed down” – all because he also dissented on the SBOE runoff race. **When did it become acceptable behavior to start “hating on” folks if they disagree on one particular candidate or issue?**

It appears we need to revisit a few definitions:

**Principle** is a moral rule or belief that helps you know what is right and wrong and influences your actions.

**Personal responsibility** means individuals are responsible, accountable, and answerable for their own actions. Without personal responsibility, one tends to assign the responsibility for anything unfavorable to someone else.

**Accountability** is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.

**Endorsement** is an act of giving one's **public approval** or support to someone or something. **The act of endorsing means you stand behind what another person says or does and will assume your own level of personal responsibility for what they say and what they do.**

**A Grassroots America endorsement is not a life-long commitment.** The candidates bear the responsibility of keeping our endorsement. **We have every right as an independent organization of 100% volunteers to hold those we endorse accountable for what they say and do as candidates.** As long as a candidate takes personal responsibility and **immediately** (as soon as they are aware of errors/mistakes) **publicly** corrects the record and set facts straight, we won't have a problem.

While we are disappointed by a few harsh and unkind words, we aren't going to surrender principle to those on the left or the right. Here's how we roll...

- We don't require folks to agree with us on every issue. ***We didn't contact other endorsers to ask them to join us.***
- We don't tell other organizations how to run their business. ***We didn't throw a fit and demand others follow us.***
- When other conservative organizations or "education specialists" hold an opinion different from our own, **we don't attempt to burn them to the ground**. Enforcement of lock-step marching orders is not what we do.
- We don't call people names.
- We don't use social media as a schoolyard bully sandbox, spreading gossip, rumors, and unsourced information.
- We don't kick every barking dog, nor swat at every gnat while carrying out our mission. Life is just too short.
- We try very hard never to bear false witness against anyone – even a self-declared enemy. **Truth matters.**

To set the record straight, we have not endorsed Keven Ellis, but we haven't set out to destroy Mr. Ellis, either – which is what some folks want us to do. By virtue of the fact that he is endorsed by two state representatives, whose records demonstrate an unwillingness to hold public education accountable for academic results and an opposition to parents' freedom to choose the right school for their children, Mr. Ellis never got to the first step with us. His endorsement by Texas Parent PAC, whose major contributor is ardently anti-school choice and anti-education reform, didn't help him any either. Some may say those associations are unfair; however, we always begin our vetting process with the most demonstrably conservative candidates, and that includes looking closely at associations and other endorsements.

The Grassroots America Board of Directors asked Mrs. Bruner to issue a public written statement – a press release, correcting the record on four issues. President Ernie Clark and I both sent separate written requests to her, which outlined the Board's concerns and the remedy. Two other board members were charged with continuing to call her when our first voice mail message was not returned. Finally, a conference call with three board members took place. All communications failed to bring about a written, public statement (press release) which set the record straight. Just the facts – that's all we asked.

Our concerns were not inaccurate or petty. Truth and accuracy are never petty requirements. If you missed the facts we laid out last week, you can find them [here](#).

To watch the raw, unedited video, which we reviewed several times, see it [here](#).

For the Sunday WFAA interview with Mrs. Bruner and Mr. Ellis, click [here](#).

Learn more about the candidates – Mrs. Bruner [here](#) and Mr. Ellis [here](#).

**You must make the choice for yourself when you go to vote on Tuesday.**

We wish ill to no one.

For those in the name-calling, hell destination-proclaiming camp, we will not seek to repay your ill will with "get even" tactics. I'll continue to pray for you and practice the Golden Rule.

Respectfully serving,



JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director, Grassroots America – We the People PAC