

Responses to Skip Smithwick's commercials, fliers, and statements to the media:

1. Smithwick said in a WSFA TV interview, aired on May 30, 2008, that Stephanie Bell had served two terms on the state board as a Democrat.

CORRECTION: Stephanie Bell has been a lifelong Republican. Her husband, John, was appointed in 1981 by President Ronald Reagan to serve as U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama. Stephanie has been a member of the Federation of Republican Women for nearly 30 years. John and Stephanie Bell have been members of the Montgomery County Republican Executive Committee for nearly 15 years. In July 1994, Stephanie was asked by the State Republican Executive Steering Committee to replace (because of health problems) a very fine gentleman who qualified to run for the state Board of Education. She was elected and re-elected, as Republican, in 1994, 1998, 2000, and 2004. (Smithwick has heard Stephanie share this information at Republican candidate forums.)

2. Smithwick said in his literature and television/radio ads that Stephanie Bell, in 1995, "opposed"/ "even voted against" the school lunch program.

CORRECTION: The state Board of Education DOES NOT vote on free or reduced or ANY school lunches. Federal funds are distributed to local schools by the state Department of Education based on a formula approved by federal officials. The board is not part of that process. Stephanie Bell DID, however, vote recently to require schools to serve healthier school lunches.

3. Smithwick said in his literature and telephone calls (without a disclaimer) that Stephanie Bell voted against a Bible literacy course for our high schools.

CORRECTION: Since 1995, Stephanie Bell has helped interested teachers implement Bible courses in local schools in her district. More recently, she voted to approve a list of textbooks that included a textbook for an optional Bible course. Other textbooks for Bible instruction will be included on a textbook approval list to be submitted in the next few months. Stephanie did, however, oppose a textbook pushed by the Alabama Education Association and Democrats in the Legislature. The textbook included numerous major inaccuracies, including the statement that Jesus was born in Nazareth (not Bethlehem). It also would have been the first and only time that the Legislature (not the state school board) approved a specific textbook for use in public schools.

4. Smithwick said in his literature and television/radio ads that Stephanie Bell in 1998 "opposed"/ "voted against" teacher background checks.

CORRECTION: Stephanie Bell was a part of discussions in 1996 that led to the state board of education's implementation of teacher background checks long before they were finally approved by the state Legislature. Stephanie has voted for background checks for all employees in K-12 and the two-year colleges. Smithwick refers to a vote on an AEA-pushed resolution supporting a Bill in the Legislature in 1998 (written by AEA and

Democrats), which included private and home school teachers along with public school teachers, a move that would have generated lawsuits. Their objective was to kill legislation offered by former state Sen. Bill Armistead. Again, Stephanie had already voted to approve teacher background checks and they were already in place before the vote cited by Smithwick.

5. Smithwick said in his literature and television/radio ads that Stephanie Bell in 2003 “opposed”/ “voted against notifying parents about bad teachers.”

CORRECTION: Stephanie Bell voted to approve the actual letter that was sent to notify parents about teachers who were not deemed “highly qualified” according to federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards. Like MOST states, Alabama, with the help of U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, requested and received a one-year waiver from the federal government before sending the NCLB-required letters. Alabama was forced to delay sending the letters because AEA had stopped teacher testing, one of the primary “highly qualified” standards. The letters to parents, which Stephanie voted for/approved, have been sent to parents for nearly five years. By the way, Stephanie also voted for teacher testing, including subject matter, which has provided a tool, to determine whether a teacher is considered “highly qualified.”

6. Smithwick said in his literature and in media reports that Stephanie Bell voted against replacing portable classrooms.

CORRECTION: Stephanie Bell worked with former Gov. Fob James’ administration and legislators in 1998 when the Legislature approved a bond issue to replace portable classrooms and/or upgrade/replace existing facilities. Stephanie supported the plan that was based on input from local school systems, state department architects, and Auburn University engineering students. The February 1999 political resolution offered by former Gov. Don Siegelman “rewrote” the 1998 bond issue and created some major problems. (Read the board minutes from February 1999.) Stephanie actually voted FOR a plan to replace portable classrooms and upgrade existing facilities.

7. Smithwick quoted a *Birmingham News* editorial (April 24, 2008). He then said in his literature and in television/ radio ads that “Stephanie Bell has been asleep at the switch as millions in sweetheart deals and no-show jobs have been doled out in the two-year college system.”

CORRECTION: *The Birmingham News* has endorsed Stephanie Bell. In fact, Stephanie’s efforts to reform Alabama’s two-year college system have been widely reported in the media since her election in 1995. Stephanie was the only board member who opposed Roy Johnson as chancellor and was one of two board members who voted against Johnson’s lucrative contract. Stephanie, along with Gov. Riley and fellow board members Randy McKinney and Betty Peters, pushed for a ban on double-dipping legislators in the two-year college system. It is clear that Stephanie’s strong opposition (estimated to be nearly \$500,000 contributed by AEA and Democrats to Smithwick) is the result of her strong stand against abuse and corruption in the two-year college system.