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FOR WOMEN & GIRLS



LEADERSHIP TALLAHASSEE
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**Women Can Run! Applauds
Electoral Victory of Cohort Participant
*Verna Brock Elected to Wakulla County School Board on Aug 26th***

Tallahassee, FL -- Yesterday, Verna Brock, one of the participants in the inaugural Women Can Run! cohort, was elected to the Wakulla County School Board. In 2013, Ms. Brock was a participant in Women Can Run!, a nonpartisan program designed to encourage women to run for elected office, where she gained invaluable knowledge and skills through a series of workshops and events.

"I was excited about participating in the inaugural Women Can Run! cohort," says Verna Brock. "I knew that I would walk away with skills and information designed to help me mount a successful campaign--but what I got in addition to that was camaraderie, support and encouragement that was just as crucial."

Women Can Run! is hosted by The Oasis Center for Women & Girls, in conjunction with the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund and Leadership Tallahassee. The program includes a series of workshops on different aspects of running for office, and women from Leon, Gadsden, Wakulla and Jefferson counties have participated. The impact of the Women Can Run! program has been growing since its inception in 2011 and is funded by the James L. and John S. Knight Foundation.

"Having women adequately represented in all levels of elected leadership is critical for many reasons. We need the actions of the electorate to represent the voice of the people--and we the people are very diverse. Women's representation in elected leadership ensures that women's perspectives and experiences inform policy decisions and that girls have role models in visible and powerful positions of leadership," says Haley Cutler, Executive Director of The Oasis Center for Women & Girls.

In 2013-2014 program year, Women Can Run! hosted six workshops that were open to the public free of charge and seven cohort members, including Ms. Brock, participated in additional more intensive training. The cohort members ranged in age from 21 to 65, were racially diverse and represented Leon, Jefferson and Wakulla counties.

"The incredible women we were privileged to work with in the inaugural Women Can Run! cohort demonstrate that there is no wrong time to throw your hat in the ring," Cutler continued. "Encouraging more women to run for office is an essential step in the right direction. We knew that offering training, capacity building and encouragement could make

a difference in women's likelihood to declare candidacy--we're thrilled to see that the program is making a difference locally."

"I am proud to have raised my family in Wakulla. I am thrilled about the opportunity to serve Wakulla County as a School Board Member and look forward to the important work ahead," Brock concluded. "In my experience, the Women Can Run! program is an important local strategy to bridge the gender gap in elected leadership."