
THE BRECHNER REPORT

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Judge grants paper access to teachers' records

TALLAHASSEE – A judge ordered the Department of Education to release public records containing teachers' Social Security numbers to the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*.

The newspaper requested the information for a story about where high-quality teachers worked. The Social Security numbers were needed to merge two databases, one that showed basic information on the teachers and another about teacher certification.

The Department of Education released some of the records last year but then decided not to release the rest, claiming the newspaper didn't have a right to the numbers. This spring, the Florida Legislature passed a new law that lets government workers, including teachers, request that their Social Security numbers be held confidential and only the last four digits be released when requested. But, the law wasn't effective until July.

Judge Nikki Ann Clark of the 2nd Circuit Court ordered the department to give the records to the paper within five days.

"The *Herald-Tribune's* public records requests do not require the department to reformat its data or create new data," Clark wrote. "The department has the capability and technology to provide the information in the format that the *Herald-Tribune* requested, which is what the law requires."

Florida Secretary of Education Jim Horne said the state will appeal the ruling.

Rachel Fugate, the newspaper's lawyer, said the paper did not intend to publish the numbers, but needed them to determine if high-quality teachers were being assigned fairly to students around the state. (6/17/04)

Judge rules board must release felons list

TALLAHASSEE – A state court judge ruled that the Florida board of elections must immediately release a list of nearly 50,000 suspected felons to Cable News Network (CNN).

In May, CNN sued Florida's Division of Elections for access to the list, which contains the names of people who could be ineligible to vote in this year's presidential election because they are felons, have multiple registrations or have died since the last election. The state responded to the lawsuit, claiming the list was preliminary and should not be released publicly.

The list is a public record, but according to state law, only certain people and groups such as political parties or candidates can get copies. CNN, in addition to members of the general public, was invited to view the documents at the division's headquarters in Tallahassee, only under the condition that there was no photocopying or note-taking.

"The right to inspect without the right to copy is an empty right indeed," Leon County Circuit Judge Nikki Clark said. "Whether the public chooses to inspect or copy [the list] is not the choice of the governmental agency which has custody of the record. It is the choice of the

Judge refuses to order release of records

LEE COUNTY – A circuit judge refused to order the Lee County Sheriff's Office to hand over some public records.

Michael F. Hornung, a south Fort Myers attorney, sued the office in March, claiming the agency refused to let him inspect the personnel files of Maj. George Mitar III and Deputy Jeff Pierot. He also objected to a \$100 deposit the sheriff's office demanded before agreeing to copy other documents.

Judge James H. Seals said Hornung requested an "extraordinary remedy"

person who has requested access."

In the 2000 election, Florida state officials purged voter rolls of more than 173,000 names identified as felons or otherwise ineligible to vote.

According to CNN.com, many civil rights activists and county election supervisors have charged that those lists contained numerous errors and that these errors prevented thousands of voters from casting ballots in the election. Nearly all of the people wrongfully purged from the voter list were Democrats and more than half were African-Americans, said BBC reporter Greg Palast. President Bush edged opponent Al Gore in Florida by a margin of 537 votes to win the state and the national election.

"With only six months remaining until the next election, the issue of potential voter disenfranchisement is of critical importance," CNN's complaint said.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson recently filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting CNN's lawsuit.

"There's no excuse not to let the public check and double-check a list of 48,000 people to be stricken from eligibility to vote," he said. "The very openness of government in the sunshine has been thwarted." (7/01/04)

under the law and had failed to meet the required legal burden.

Hornung said he was disappointed with Seals' ruling and it will have "a chilling effect on attorneys along with the public in obtaining the public information we are entitled to" under the state Public Records Law.

Ultimately, Hornung obtained the records he wanted through the State Attorney's Office as part of the discovery process in a case he is handling. (5/22/04)

**ACCESS
RECORDS**

Lawsuit against city claims Sunshine violation

ST. AUGUSTINE—Three people filed a lawsuit against the city of St. Augustine, claiming the approval of a development at the Ponce de Leon Golf Course should be reversed because of Sunshine Law violations.

The Madeira Project, which includes 749 homes at the state's second-oldest golf course, was approved by the St. Augustine City Commission in March. A mediator negotiated the agreement between developer Chester Stokes and the city.

A lawsuit was filed on behalf of Thelma Shearer, Robert Ulanowicz and Rose Walker, residents near the historic golf course. According to their lawsuit, during the mediation, Special Master Dennis Bayer led "private break-out sessions" with a city commissioner, city attorney and a developer representative.

Cape Coral attorney Ralf Brookes said the participants formed a group with all the attributes of an advisory committee subject to the Sunshine Law. He said there were more than two members and they went beyond fact-finding in their decision.

Because the Sunshine Law prohibits two or more board members from discussing business outside a public meeting, the lawsuit says the mediator's recommendation and the settlement agreement should be invalid.

City Attorney Jim Wilson said break-out sessions are a standard part of mediations and that the residents' attorney attended the session in question. He added that the suit lacked merit and will be contested. (4/22/04)

DECISIONS ON FILE

Copies of case opinions, Florida Attorney General opinions, or legislation reported in any issue as "on file" may be obtained upon request from the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information, College of Journalism and Communications, 3208 Weimer Hall, P.O. Box 118400, University of Florida, Gainesville,

County school administrators violate Sunshine Law, make adjustments

LEE COUNTY—According to *The News-Press* (Fort Myers), Lee County school administrators selected contractors and negotiated in private rather than in public meetings as the state law requires.

Superintendent James Browder, his staff and district review committees made the selections and negotiated millions of dollars worth of management fees during August and November 2003.

According to the paper, the school construction committee picked five finalists for the contract jobs, Browder changed some of those recommendations, and his staff negotiated construction contracts in private.

Florida's Sunshine Law says the public must be notified of any meeting between two or more officials.

District officials also set fixed amounts for management fees before the negotiations began, in direct conflict with an Attorney General's Opinion that says the school district does not have authority to fix fees before negotiations.

A few days following the controversy

of the private meetings, Browder decided to open up the selection process for construction firms competing to build new schools.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we will be changing the process," he said. "From now on, it'll [meetings] be open to the public. We don't have anything to hide."

At the same time, according to *The News-Press*, he denied any wrongdoing in his decision to expand the list of contractors to be considered for the schools.

He claimed the district saved \$1 million in management fees by soliciting a second round of bids and waiting for firms to lower their fees.

Some school board members were very willing to open up the process to the public.

"We need to start holding all of these meetings in public," board member Robert Chilmonik said. "I am going to make sure we start moving in that direction. Let the people see what we are doing."

(5/19/04)

Planner files suit against city, claims officials failed to respond to requests

DAYTONA BEACH—A land-use planner filed a lawsuit against the city of Daytona Beach claiming city officials violated the Public Records Law when they failed to respond to his records requests.

R. Bruce McLaughlin, who represents a number of adult entertainment venues, said he asked the city clerk's office for any and all communications between officials and Consolidated-Tomoka Land Co., the largest property owner in Volusia County.

He requested the information twice, once in October 2003 and again in April 2004, but never received a response from the city clerk's office. City attorney Robert Brown said McLaughlin's request was too broad.

"The way his request was drafted, we would never have responded to that," Brown said. "It's a legitimate request, but we would never have responded."

According to Florida's Public Records

Law, correspondence between city officials is open to public inspection.

McLaughlin said he wanted to see the records on behalf of his clients to determine what was discussed between officials and Consolidated-Tomoka three years ago. During that time, 210 acres of land in west

Daytona Beach were zoned to allow adult entertainment businesses, among other things.

According to City Clerk Jennifer Thomas, the office staff processed McLaughlin's request to the various city departments that would keep such records.

"This case was one of those that fell through the cracks," she said. "We never got a response from the departments we sent the request to, and we never responded to Mr. McLaughlin."

McLaughlin's suit asks that the records be produced within 48 hours of an order being issued.

(5/20/04)

ACCESS RECORDS

AGO: Board should change procedure

KEY WEST – Attorney General Charlie Crist suggested the Key West Citizen Review Board (CRB) does not have the authority to receive complaints before the police have investigated them.

The seven-member police oversight board, created by voters in November 2002, takes complaints by mail, phone and walk-ins. Citing the state’s Sunshine Law, the board made complaint information, including police officer’s names and any allegations against officers, immediately available to the public and the press.

But, in response to CRB attorney Robert Cintron’s letter requesting an opinion about confidentiality, Crist suggested CRB stop this practice.

“It [the opinion] seems to say we have

to keep things confidential until Internal Affairs is done with a case,” board chairman Todd German said.

Citing Florida Statute 112, the “Policeman’s Bill of Rights,” Crist said the board doesn’t have authority to be a complaint-receiving entity.

“Other than the law enforcement officer or correctional officer who is the subject of the complaint, no other outside entity is recognized as privileged to the complaint or information until the employing law enforcement agency makes a final determination whether to issue a notice of disciplinary action,” he said.

The board did not vote on a resolution to change its procedure. (4/06/04)

Jockey, stable sue newspaper for libel

MIAMI – The jockey who rode Funny Cide in last year’s Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes is suing *The Miami Herald* for libel.

Jose Santos, along with Funny Cide’s owner Sackatoga Stable, filed a federal lawsuit in a U.S. District Court in Louisville, Ky., seeking \$48 million in damages. The suit claims *The Herald* printed articles and photographs about the jockey that were libelous even after Santos “directly and inarguably disagreed with, contradicted and denied all of the allegations.”

According to the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale), *The Herald*

printed a story that raised questions about whether Santos might have been holding an illegal device as he crossed the finish line. It later concluded Santos was holding only his whip.

“I have not seen the lawsuit and as a result can’t comment on any of its particulars,” Tom Fiedler, the newspaper’s executive editor said.

The newspaper, its parent company Knight-Ridder Inc. and many employees are named as defendants in the suit. To prove libel, Santos will have to show the newspaper had knowledge that it falsely reported the facts, or that it acted with reckless disregard of the truth. (5/10/04)

Court rules student records are private

DAYTONA BEACH – Florida’s 5th District Court of Appeals ruled that records of school bus fights, even when redacted to remove personally identifiable information, may not be made public.

In December 2001 and January 2002, Patti Parker, WFTV news producer, requested Transportation Student Discipline Forms and school bus surveillance videotapes from the Seminole County School Board. Parker was reporting on a series of fights and other misconduct by students on the buses, and limited her request to records redacted to remove anything that would reveal the identity of the students.

The school board refused her request, citing a student privacy exemption to the open records provision of the Florida Constitution. WFTV filed suit in June

2003, when Judge Donna McIntosh ruled for the school board. The television station appealed. The three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals unanimously affirmed the judgment,

saying there is a difference between records that the legislature has defined as exempt and records that are defined as confidential. Student records are confidential and may not be released to the public, even in redacted form.

“If information is made confidential in the statutes, the information is not subject to inspection by the public,” the court held.

According to the TV station’s attorney, Jonathan Hart, WFTV has not yet determined whether or not to appeal the decision. (5/25/04)

LIBEL

PRIVACY

Four people sue DMV, claim privacy violations

MIAMI – Four people sued the executive director of the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), claiming he and other employees violated a federal privacy law by disclosing personal information from drivers’ records.

The lawsuit names Executive Director Fred Dickinson and seven employees, accusing them of formatting personal information into mailing lists and selling them to third parties. A 1999 amendment to the Driver Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) says that the state must have the driver’s consent before releasing personal information.

The suit claims the defendants “knowingly authorized, directed, ratified, approved, acquiesced or participated in acts and practices in direct violation of the DPPA.” It seeks \$2,500 for every time a plaintiff’s information was released without consent.

This spring, the state Legislature passed a bill concerning driver privacy. The law, effective on Oct. 1, conforms Florida to the federal standard under which personal information in motor vehicle records is private unless the driver takes action to remove the block.

Existing Florida law makes the information available unless the driver acts to block it. (6/11/04)

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

TALLAHASSEE – The following 14 bills enacted during the 2004 legislative session create new exemptions to the state Public Records and Open Meetings laws. Copies of the legislation are available at the Florida Legislature's Web site, Online Sunshine, at: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>. Chief sponsors of the bills are in parentheses next to the bill numbers.

HB 155 (Harrington, R - Punta Gorda) Firearm Records - Prohibits knowing and willful creation or maintenance of any list, record or registry of privately owned firearms or any list, record or registry of owners of those firearms; provides for imposition of civil fines on certain governmental agencies; requires state attorney to prosecute criminal violators of this act; prohibits expenditure of public funds for defense counsel for persons charged with violation of this act.

HB 317 (Reagan, R- Sarasota) Public Records Requirement - Creates exemption from public records requirements for building plans, blueprints, schematic drawings and diagrams held by a public agency and relating to specified facilities, developments and structures; provides exceptions; provides for legislative review and repeal; provides specific definitions; provides statement of public necessity.

SB 348 (Peaden, R - Crestview) Personal ID Information - Creates exemption from public records requirements; provides for confidentiality of personal identifying information contained in records for U.S. attorneys, assistant U.S. attorneys, judges of U.S. Courts of Appeal, U.S. district judges, U.S. magistrate judges and their spouses and children; provides exemption from public records requirements for Social Security numbers of agency employees upon written request.

SB 464 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity) Medical Facilities - Revises public records exemption for specified information concerning certain employees of hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers and mobile surgical facilities; saves exemption from repeal under the Open Government Sunset Review (OGSR) Act; deletes provisions

that provide for repeal of exemption.

HB 635 (Vana, D - West Palm Beach) Children's Recreation Program - Provides exemption from public records requirements for information that would identify or help to locate a child who participates in government-sponsored recreation programs or camps, or parents or guardians of such child, including, but not limited to, name, home address, telephone number, Social Security number and photograph of such child, names and locations of schools attended by such child.

SB 702 (Saunders, R - Naples) Patient Safety Data - Provides that information contained in patient safety data or other records maintained by the Florida Patient Safety Corp. and its subsidiaries, advisory committees or contractors that identifies person or entity reporting patient safety data, or that identifies health care practitioner or facility, is confidential and exempt from disclosure under public records requirements.

HB 951 (State Administration) Human and Machine Cognition - Creates certain exemptions from public records and public meetings requirements for the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Inc.; provides for future review and repeal; provides a statement of public necessity.

SB 1626 (Margolis, D - Miami Beach) Archival Material - Provides exemption from public records requirements for manuscripts or other archival material donated to and held by an official archive of municipality or county and subject to special terms and conditions that limit the right to copy or inspect manuscript or material; requires that such manuscript or other archival material be made available for inspection and copying after specified period or pursuant to court order.

HB 1737 (Transportation) Motor Vehicle Records - Revises the exemption from public records requirements for personal information contained in a motor vehicle record; removes the requirement that exemption be conditioned on a request for exemption by a person who is subject of record; revises certain conditions under

which the state's Department of Highway & Motor Vehicles may release information in connection with legal proceeding; revises the conditions for release of information for bulk distribution use.

HB 1833 (Natural Resources) State-Owned Land - Provides exemption from public records requirements for written valuation of state-owned land determined by the Board of Trustees of Internal Improvement Trust Fund to be surplus land and related documents used to form valuation or that pertain to valuation; provides for limited duration of exemption; authorizes disclosure of appraisals, valuations and valuation information under specified circumstances.

SB 2496 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity) Military Installations - Creates exemption from public records requirements for specified records of military installations and military missions subject to the U.S. Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure 2005 process and agreements and proposals to relocate or realign military units and missions which are held by the Governor's Advisory Council on Base Realignment and Closure, Enterprise Florida, Inc., or Tourism, Trade and Economic Development Office.

SB 2704 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity) Identity of Child - Provides that personal identifying information of a child or child's parent or guardian held by children's service council, juvenile welfare board or another entity that has been created under that section or by special law is exempt from requirement that public records be open to inspection and duplication; provides for future repeal and legislative review under the OGSR Act; provides statement of public necessity.

SB 2826 (Finance and Taxation) Public Records - Exempts from public records requirements certain records obtained by the Department of Revenue under insurance claim data exchange system; provides for expiration of exemption; provides for future legislative review and repeal; provides findings of public necessity.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW CONTINUED

SB 3006 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity)

Electronic Filings - Creates exemption from public records requirements for user identification and passwords held by the Department of State pursuant to certain provisions; creates exemption from public records requirements for records, reports and files stored in the electronic filing system pursuant to certain provision; provides for expiration of exemption and for future legislative review and repeal.

The following exemptions were reviewed and reenacted during the 2004 session under the OGSR Act.

SB 466 (Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care)

Statewide Guardianship Office - Amends provision of the public records exemption for certain records held by the Statewide Public Guardianship Office; saves exemption from repeal under the OGSR Act; deletes provisions providing for repeal of the exemption.

SB 468 (Health, Aging and Long-Term Care)

Hospital Board Meeting – Amends provision of public meetings exemption for certain portions of hospital board meeting; saves exemption from repeal under OGSR Act; deletes provisions that provide for repeal of exemption.

SB 674 (Health, Aging and Long-Term Care)

Home Medical Equipment Provider - Saves exemption for information concerning patients of home medical equipment provider from repeal under the OGSR Act; deletes provisions that provide for repeal of the exemption.

SB 712/HB 1813 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity)

Business Records - Revises public records exemption for business records submitted in eminent domain negotiations on business damages; provides for confidentiality; prescribes information that is confidential and exempt from disclosure; provides access for employees of an agency; provides penalty for disclosure; specifies that information may be offered in evidence; provides statement of public necessity.

SB 1162 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity)

Wireless 911 Board Information – Amends provision of exemption from public records requirements provided for proprietary confidential business information held by the Wireless 911 Board or State Technology Office; saves exemption from repeal under the OGSR Act; deletes provisions that provide for repeal of the exemption.

The following bills concerning Public Records and Open Meeting laws were enacted during the 2004 legislative session.

SB 204 (Crist, R - Tampa)

Burial Rights - Provides for optional recording of evidence of burial rights; provides for purpose of recordation; provides for recording fees; applies provisions of rerecording burial rights to all cemeteries in Florida.

SB 1678 (Governmental Oversight and Productivity)

Public Records - Authorizes petition for order to make public records pertaining to certain investigations by the Department of Child & Family Studies; provides certain restrictions of electronic recordkeeping systems and proprietary software; provides that reproductions from electronic recordkeeping system of specified documents and records of certain state offices shall be treated as originals for their admissibility in evidence.

SB 1774 (Villalobos, R- Miami)

Sexual Predators and Offenders - Requires that each state or governmental subdivision search records of sexual predators and sexual offenders maintained by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement before appointing or employing a person to work or volunteer at a park, playground, day care center or other place where children regularly gather; allows use of the department's Internet site to conduct search.

SB 1970 (Judiciary)

Mediation Alternatives - Deletes language of disclosure of specified information made during court-ordered mediation; provides immunity from liability for trainees in Supreme Court's mentorship program; provides immunity from liability for persons serving as mediators in specified circumstances; provides for creation of the Mediation Confidentiality and Privilege Act.

The following bills were introduced but not passed during the legislative sessions. Summaries of the bills are available at: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>.

HB 147/SB 2922/SB 3030 - Exemption/H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center
SB 150 - Exemption/Ethics Code Violations

HB 337/SB 432 - Notaries Public

HB 393/SB 482 - Consumer Protection/Personal Information

HB 399/SB 578 - Exemption/Controlled Substance

HB 433/SB 652 - Exemption/Law Enforcement Officers

SB 462 - OGSR/Child Abuse Death Review Committee

HB 565/SB 2122 - Exemption/Florida Self-Insurers Guaranty Association

HB 619/SB 1880 - Exemption/Home Addresses of EMTs

HB 621/SB 2416 - Exemption/Office of Financial Regulation Investigations

SB 660 - Government Publications

HB 701 - Health Care Consumer's Right to Know Act

HB 703/SB 1592 - FCAT/Parent's Right to Know

HB 717/SB 1216 - Campaign Finance Disclosure Reports

HB 741/SB 1261 - Identity Theft

HB 969/SB 2476 - Expunction/Non-Judicial Arrest Records

HB 1041/SB 2290 - Exemption/Financial Services Department

HB 1075/SB 1154 - Health Practitioner Workforce Data

SB 1084 - Unsolicited SPAM

HB 1281/SB 2180 - Exemption/Home Addresses of Local Government Attorneys

SB 1460/HB 1925 - Exemption/Home Addresses of Lab Personnel

SB 1648 - DEP Reports/Aquifer Storage

SB 1660 - Exemption/Stroke Treatment Center

HB 1689/SB 2638 - Unemployment Compensation Records

SB 1972 - Exemption/Mediation Proceedings

SB 2036 - Exemption/Investigative Incident Reports

SB 2062 - Records of Child Abuse

SB 2116 - Exemption/Child Development Programs

SB 2146 - Records and Meetings/Pre-kindergarten Education

SB 2190 - Exemption/Florida

Alternative Energy Technology Center

SB 2206 - Electronic Medical Records

The 2004 State Legislative Session Wraps-Up

Did you predict that legislators would be so busy solving the significant problems of this state, not to mention preparing for the November elections, that they wouldn't have time to deal with a slew of open government bills? If so, guess again. At least 110 bills were filed during the 2004 Session covering more than 60 separate open-government issues. At least 37 bills created new exemptions limiting the public's right of access to government records or meetings.



Karen Comechis

whether the legislation is sufficiently narrow in scope." Gov. Jeb Bush approved the bill on May 13, despite similar concerns expressed by the First Amendment Foundation.

CS/SB 348 began as a narrow exemption for specified personal information of U.S. Attorneys and Judges. Bypassing the committee process, the bill was amended in the final days of session to include an exemption for Social Security numbers of all current and former government employees if requested in writing by the employee, regardless of which agency possesses the

number. The bill does, however, permit commercial entities to obtain the last four digits of an employees' number; interestingly, the bill continues to permit disclosure of other citizens' complete Social Security numbers, not just the last four digits, to commercial entities if the numbers are in the possession of the state. A House summary of the bill indicates that the exemption may further complicate existing public records requirements and may result in a fiscal impact associated with recordkeeping costs.

Another bill, CS/SB 702, also began as a narrowly crafted exemption applicable to information identifying a patient and the person or entity reporting patient safety data. In the final frantic days, legislators significantly expanded the exemption, also without committee input, to shield information identifying a health care practitioner or health care facility contained in patient safety data. A public meetings exemption was also included for discussions of exempt information.

To close on a positive note, a few of the more questionable bills that failed to pass include: CS/HB 147, which provided sweeping new public records exemptions for the Johnnie B. Byrd Sr. Alzheimer's Center & Research Institute in Tampa, and SB 2476, which permitted the destruction of non-judicial arrest records.

If you're interested in a complete description of all the open government bills that passed during the 2004 Session, please visit our Web site at www.floridafaf.org.

The Back Page

By Karen Comechis

By the close of this year's session, 15 new exemptions or restrictions had been enacted, several of which significantly curtail access to public records. This is considerably more exemptions than have been passed in the past few sessions. The legislature also passed CS/SB 1678, which doesn't create any new exemptions but streamlines the Public Records Act by eliminating redundancies and reorganizing Chapter 119. In addition, six current public records exemptions were reenacted – two were actually narrowed – under the Open Government Sunset Review Act of 1995.

Perhaps the most troubling new exemption is contained in CS/HB 155, which prohibits government agencies and private persons, with limited exceptions, from compiling or keeping any list, record or registry of privately-owned firearms. The bill also requires the destruction of "any list or registry" by July 12. Worth noting is that the list destruction requirement applies to every list or registry in the state, regardless of content, not just lists of gun owners. The bill requires state attorneys to investigate complaints alleging violations, requires prosecution if a violation "may" have occurred and makes violations a third-degree felony. If a list is created or maintained with the knowledge or complicity of a governmental entity, the entity or its designee may be fined up to \$5 million.

As if that's not enough, the bill doesn't comply with the constitutional requirements applicable to legislation limiting the public's right of access. In the explanation of his "no" vote on the bill, Representative John P. "Jack" Seiler, D-Pompano Beach, summarized the bill's deficiencies by saying, "This bill violates the single subject requirement and does not contain the constitutionally-required statement of public necessity. Because the bill lacks a necessity statement, it's difficult to determine

Karen Comechis was recently appointed to the First Amendment Foundation's Director position. Prior to this position, she worked for the Florida House of Representatives as a staff attorney for the House Committee on Natural Resources.