



First Amendment Foundation

Protecting Your Right to Know for 30 Years!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DAVE WILSON, CHAIRMAN

Senior Editor/Administration

The Miami Herald

BOB SHAW, VICE CHAIRMAN

Retired Editor

MIKE VASILINDA, SECRETARY

& TREASURER

President

Capitol News Service

JON KANEY, GENERAL COUNSEL

Kaney & Olivari

DICK BATCHELOR

Founder and President

Dick Batchelor Management Group, Inc.

BRIAN CROWLEY

Principal

Immediacy Public Relations

MIKE DEESON

Senior Reporter

WTSP-TV

FRANK DENTON

Editor

Florida Times-Union

DEREK DUNN-RANKIN

Chairman & CEO

Suncoast Media Group

CAROL JEAN LOCICERO

Thomas & LoCicero

TIM NICKENS

Editor of Editorials

Tampa Bay Times

PATSY PALMER

D'Alemberte & Palmer, PLLC

PATRICK RICE

Editor

Daytona Beach News-Journal

DEAN RIDINGS

President & CEO

Intersect Media Solutions

LYNDA RUSSELL

Public Policy Advocate

Florida Education Association

APRIL SALTER

President & Chief Operating Officer

Salter Mitchell

CRAIG SANDLER

General Manager

Affiliated News Services

MATT WALSH

Publisher

The Sarasota Observer

PETE WEITZEL

Director Emeritus

January 31, 2014

The Honorable Janet Cruz
The Florida House of Representatives
402 South Monroe Street, Room 218 HOB
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 481, Exemption/Dates of Birth

Dear Representative Cruz:

We have carefully reviewed HB 481, which, in part, creates a public records exemption dates of birth provided by voter registration applicants and registered voters. We have spoken with numerous journalists who have expressed their concerns regarding the proposed exemption, Representative Cruz. Dates of birth are regularly used to verify the identity of registered voters when there are multiple voters with the same name; currently, the date of birth is the only way identity verification can be assured.

This is a serious and real concern, and we must oppose the proposed expansion of the exemption in s. 97.0585, F.S., to include dates of birth. We strongly suggest that the bill be amended to delete the exemption for dates of birth. If the bill is amended, we would support HB 481, which would then limit the exemptions in s. 97.0585, F.S., to only that information obtained for the purpose of voter registration.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns, Representative Cruz. Should you need any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen, President

Cc: The Honorable Will Weatherford, Speaker of the House
Jon Kaney, General Counsel, First Amendment Foundation
Sam Morley, General Counsel, Florida Press Association