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March 6, 2014

The Honorable Dane Eagle
The Florida House of Representatives
1302 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 1437 Exemption/Drug Testing of Public Officers

Dear Representative Eagle:

We are writing to express our grave concerns regarding House Bill 1437, creating a public record exemption for records collected pursuant to the proposed Drug-Free Public Officers Act, including drug test results. We believe that this exemption is contrary to the public interest, and as such respectfully suggest that it be withdrawn from further consideration.

While drug test results and information relating to participation in drug treatment programs for government employees are currently exempt from disclosure, our belief is that elected and appointed officials should be held to a higher standard. Additionally, the need for public oversight of appointed and elected officials is a crucial component of our political system. This exemption would hinder this very necessary tool for the public, and would severely impinge the ability to make informed decisions about those who seek public office.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns, Representative Eagle. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen
President

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