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10 March 2015

The Honorable Dane Eagle  
Florida House of Representatives  
Room 303 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Eagle:

Thank you so much for your reply to our letter addressing our concerns regarding HB 179, creating a public record exemption for email addresses held by county tax collectors. We don't dispute that email addresses can be used for nefarious and illegal purposes. The same can be said, however, of telephone numbers and home addresses. For example, local law enforcement agencies around the state are warning of a widespread telephone scam – people are told that their utilities will be shut off unless they provide a credit card number over the phone. Even a quick review of the website scam-detector.com is frightening -- auto scams (85), face-to-face scams (93), social networking scams (162), travel scams (138). According to the website, the utility scam is one of 101 telephone scams.

Our point is this: Creating a public record exemption for email addresses held by a county tax collector will not protect people from those intent on defrauding them. The only way to truly protect taxpayers and consumers from those who would cause them harm is through increased consumer education and we applaud Commissioner Putnam in his efforts in this regard. We believe the focus should be on the crime committed – punish those who commit fraud rather than denying access to public record information.

We have a constitutional right of access to public records and every exemption created by the Legislature is an exception to that right. Email is arguably the most common form of communication in today's technology-centric world, and people routinely provide their email addresses willingly and voluntarily through a wide variety of publicly-available sources. In requiring tax collectors to redact email addresses in response to a public record request will create an unwarranted barrier to the public's ability to

obtain public record emails in a timely and cost effective manner, and will hamper our ability to oversee government and hold it accountable.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns, Representative Eagle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B.A.', with a stylized flourish above the letters.

Barbara A. Petersen  
President

Cc: The Honorable Steve Crisafulli, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives  
Jon Kaney, FAF General Counsel, Kaney & Olivari  
Sam Morley, General Counsel, Florida Press Association  
Gil Thelen, Executive Director, Florida Society of News Editors