



12 January 2016

The Honorable Tom Goodson  
Florida House of Representatives  
Room 218, House Office Building  
402 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 647 Exemption/Voter Registration Records

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Dear Representative Goodson:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding your bill, HB 647, expanding the public record exemption for certain information contained in voter registration and voter application records. As currently drafted, HB 647 would exempt the legal residential address, date of birth, telephone number and email address of a voter registration applicant or voter.

While we understand the rationale for the proposed exemption, much of the information the bill purports to protect in a voter record is currently available from a variety of publicly accessible sources. Of specific concern is the exemption for a voter or voter applicants address and date of birth – if I know a voter's name, for example, such information is readily and easily accessible. There is insufficient justification for providing a statutory exemption for information easily obtained from publicly available sources. Additionally, researchers and statisticians in compiling information about voters and specific elections commonly use this information, and to close access to important historical information is contrary to the public interest.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns, Representative Goodson. If you have any questions or if we can provide you with any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen, President

Cc: The Honorable Andy Gardiner, President, The Florida Senate  
Jon Kaney, General Counsel, First Amendment Foundation  
Sam Morley, General Counsel, Florida Press Association