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Protecting Your Right to Know for 30 Years!

March 22, 2017

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The Honorable Carlos Smith
Florida House of Representatives
402 South Monroe Street, Room 1402 CAP
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 1409 Exemption/Personal Identifying Information – Assault Weapons

Dear Representative Smith:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding HB 1409, creating a public records exemption for personal identifying information of those persons issued a certificate of possession for assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines. It is our position that the exemption, as currently drafted, is overly broad. We respectfully suggest the language be amended to narrow the exemption, or, alternatively, that HB 1409 be withdrawn from further consideration.

Of particular concern is the breadth of the proposed exemption, which would exempt, without limit, any type of information that relates to the identity of those issued a certificate of possession. Withholding all identifying information, however, would render it impossible to verify whether those issued a certificate of possession are, in fact, qualified to possess assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines. The inability to access any identifying information runs contrary to the public interest and undermines general public safety.

To better accomplish the stated purpose of this legislation, we suggest that HB 1409 be amended to narrowly define the phrase “personal identifying information. Such an amendment would preserve the public interest at stake.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns, Representative Smith. If we may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen, President

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