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April 23, 2019

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: VETO REQUEST CS/SB 248 Exemption/Home Addresses

Dear Governor DeSantis:

We are writing to request that you veto CS/SB 248, defining “home address” for the purpose of the home address exemptions provided in s. 119.071(4)(d), F.S., and radically expanding the home address exemptions for a large number of government officials and employees.

The CS/SB 248 broadly defines “home address” to include not only the physical address of a home, but also the mailing address, street address, parcel identification number, plot identification number, legal property description, neighborhood name and lot number, GPS coordinates, and other property descriptive information that may reveal a home address. Despite the bill’s misleading title, the definition would apply to *all* home address exemptions under s. 119.07(4)(d) – currently, there are about three dozen home address exemptions in that specific statutory provision.

This information is of critical importance to the business community, particularly title companies and realtors. In addition, investigative reporting teams, using property descriptions, have discovered that homes owned by public officials are being used for illegal purposes, including drug houses. To say this information is important to the public’s ability to oversee its government and hold it accountable is an understatement. Property records are not only public records; property records are also official records and an exemption of this magnitude is simply unwarranted.

The CS/SB 248 allows those who fall within the protections of the various home address exemptions to submit a written, notarized request for the release of the protected information to the custodial agency, authorizing the release of the information to a party specified in the request. This

provision places an undue and unnecessary burden on records custodian and raises questions of liability for the inadvertent or unauthorized release of the exempt information.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns, Governor. If you or your staff have any questions about our position or concerns regarding CS/SB 248, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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

Barbara A. Petersen, President

Cc: First Amendment Foundation Board of Trustees
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