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January 27, 2020

The Honorable Jason Pizzo
The Florida Senate
404 South Monroe Street, Room 224 SOB
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: SB 1802 Pub. Meetings/Urban Core Gun Violence Task Force

Dear Senator Pizzo:

I am writing on behalf of the First Amendment Foundation to express our concerns regarding Senate Bill 1802, which would create a public meeting exemption for the Urban Core Gun Violence Task Force.

While we do not object to the proposed exemption, we do suggest that the bill be amended to provide some sort of record, such as a recording, of those portions of meetings that would be closed under the exemption. Records of closed meetings are vitally important, allowing for oversight of the task force in the event that questions are raised about whether private discussions were limited to those allowed under the exemption. We would suggest an amendment modeled on the language in SB 1170, lines 278-292.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if we can be of assistance in drafting the suggested amendment, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Pamela C. Marsh

Cc: The Honorable Bill Galvano, President, Florida Senate
Mr. Jim Baltzelle, Associated Press, Chair, First Amendment Foundation
Mr. Samuel Morley, General Counsel, Florida Press Association
Ms. Lisa Nellesen Savage, Chair, Florida Society of News Editors