

March 9, 2021



The Senate Agriculture Committee
335 Knott Building
404 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: Open Government Bills before the Senate Agriculture Committee

The First Amendment Foundation writes to express our opposition to Senate Bills 1594 and 7058.

Senate Bill 1594 would exempt the home addresses and photographs of current and former inspectors of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The exemption is based on the unsupported speculation that such information may place in the danger of physical or emotional harm. The bill fails to state with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption, as required by the Florida Constitution.

Home address and photograph exemptions create unequal privacy protections for only certain professions in this state, and place additional burdens on state employees who must redact thousands of documents. Accordingly, FAF objects to Senate Bill 1594.

FAF also opposes Senate Bill 7058. This legislation is among the dozens of trade secret bills subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act this year. The current patchwork approach results in different divisions and departments having different processes and rules for trade secrets. Now is an opportune time to let the myriad of trade secret exemptions sunset and enact a uniform definition and process to exclude trade secrets from public view.

Please let us know whether we can provide any further information.

With best regards,

FIRST AMENDMENT FOUNDATION

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela C. Marsh".

Pamela C. Marsh
President

cc: The Honorable Wilton Simpson, President, Florida Senate
Jim Baltzelle, Associated Press, Chair, First Amendment Foundation
Samuel Morley, General Counsel, Florida Press Association
Lisa Nellesen Savage, Chair, Florida Society of News Editors

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