



April 8, 2021

House Public Integrity & Elections Committee
317 The Capitol
402 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 1207 – Pub. Rec./Members of the Legislature

The First Amendment Foundations writes to express our opposition to House Bill 1207, which exempts from public record identifying and location information of current members of the legislature.

Last year, after hearing of a similar bill (SB 832), Governor Ron DeSantis told the press: "You elect someone, you kind of need to know where they live if they're going to represent your community." He added, "I'm pretty wary about trying to exempt a lot of things."

Governor DeSantis is right. Under House Bill 1207, the public will have no way to know whether their representative or senator is actually living in the district. In addition, by exempting the names and places of employment of officials' spouse and adult children, the bill will make it nearly impossible for the public to know whether a lawmaker has a conflict of interest exists between officials and a spouse or child who may personally, professionally, or financially benefit by a lawmaker's vote.

Because House Bill 1207 fails to justify the need for the public records exemption and reduces accountability of public officials, FAF opposes this bill. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With best regards,

FIRST AMENDMENT FOUNDATION

Pamela C. Marsh
President

cc: The Honorable Chris Sprowls, Speaker, Florida House
The Honorable Mike Beltran, Representative, Florida House
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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