



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Bob Cortes

District 30

Deputy Majority Whip

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March 5, 2018

Mr. Randy Knight
City Manager, City of Winter Park
401 South Park Avenue
Winter Park, Florida 32789-4386

Dear Mr. Knight:

As a State Representative, I always welcome input and feedback from you and the constituents I have the honor to serve. However, the letter you recently wrote to Winter Park residents, **without contacting me to discuss any of your issues**, calling on them to contact me related to legislation regarding home rule is misleading and in need of correction and clarification.

My background is in local government. I served Longwood as both mayor and city commissioner for five years. I understand the proper role of state government in relation to local government, and I am committed to protecting home rule.

The assertions you made about the three bills cited in the letter are misinformed or designed to mislead and create confusion and anger. Your description of the bills as "egregious" is inflammatory and any suggestion that the bills are on the verge of becoming law is simply not true.

As I am sure you are aware, the legislative process is just that: a process. Any legislator may introduce any bill he or she would like. Most bills do not progress through the committee process, but those that do are usually modified on the way to passage. As bills are discussed and legislators gather information, a better product often emerges.

That is the case with the three bills in your letter. HB773 related to Vacation Rentals has not made it past the last committee, which is the Commerce Committee and with only a few days remaining for session, most likely

Committees: Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee *Vice Chair*, Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Transportation & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee, Public Integrity and Ethics Committee, Ways & Means Committee



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will not be considered. In addition, the Senate version has not advanced in committees either. HB 521 related to tree trimming was amended in the last committee to something that is now only related to Water Management districts and flooding issues, which do not affect the local government's ability to regulate. HB 17 did pass out of the House the first week of session, however it has not progressed in the Senate, again with only days left for session most likely will also die. Finally, there was one additional bill that would have a negative effect on local government regarding garbage pickup and the sponsor withdrew this one last week, and I shared with him my concerns and opposition to his bill.

My role as your State Representative is to work with these sponsors to let them know the effect these issues have to my community and look for ways to amend or even "kill" these bills if necessary. To leave out information regarding their status is a disservice to Winter Park residents. I am happy to discuss any bill, including the three you reference in your letter, with constituents at any time, but I felt it necessary to correct the misrepresentations you made.

Winter Park is a well-run city, but, unfortunately that is not always the case with many other cities and counties in Florida. The truth is we are working to protect home rule while insisting upon greater accountability for local government and increased public safety.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and other Winter Park officials to improve the already wonderful quality of life we enjoy in the great City of Winter Park and in Central Florida. In the future, please do not hesitate to contact me to set the record straight before our constituents are needlessly concerned and upset.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature of Bob Cortes.

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State Representative, District 30

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