

# Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

(CFHLA Board of Directors-Approved: November 16, 2017)

## TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX (TDT)

- In 1977, the Florida Legislature passed the "Tourist Development Tax" (F.S.125.0104) at the request of Florida lodging executives. The purpose of the tax was to create dedicated revenue for tourism promotion and investment.
- CFHLA strongly advocates preserving the integrity of this "bed tax," so that it is utilized for **tourism-promotion** purposes only.
- Our citizens' way of life continues to be enhanced through the investment of TDT dollars in tourism promotion and other efforts that attract record-breaking numbers of visitors to our state, generating hundreds of millions in **sales tax** revenue.
- CFHLA strongly supports efforts to **sunset or repeal** 2016 legislation that allowed Bay, Okaloosa and Walton Counties to expend Tourist Development Tax dollars for public safety purposes relating to tourism.

## VISIT FLORIDA FUNDING

- CFHLA supports **VISIT FLORIDA** and believes that a continued funding level of **\$76 million** will allow the agency to successfully promote Florida as a worldwide destination and serve as a voice for **small businesses** in the Hospitality Industry.
- CFHLA opposes any efforts to replace VISIT FLORIDA funding from the state budget with County-level TDT revenues. Local TDT revenues are committed to vital projects and organizations that generate visitation - providing local economic development and job creation.
- In 2016, Florida welcomed **112.8 million visitors**, including **14.8 million** international travelers, punctuating the growth of the state's Tourism Industry, which **employs more than 1.4 million Floridians**, making hospitality Florida's #1 industry.

## SHARED LODGING PLATFORMS

- CFHLA supports the rights of individuals to rent out their properties, so long as they adhere to **Chapter 509** and meet compliance standards applicable to **professional vacations rentals**, eliminating unregulated or illegal competition for law-abiding lodging operations.
- CFHLA believes that, in fairness to Florida taxpayers, all properties listed on "**Shared Lodging**" sites should be properly registered as a business with the State Department of Revenue, Department of Business and Professional Regulation and with their county Tax Collector.
- CFHLA opposes any legislative efforts that would prevent local governments from regulating **unregistered** and "**illegal**" vacation rental properties listed on "shared lodging" platforms. With visitor safety a priority, unregistered properties are often woefully inadequate in meeting the standards of regulations established based on years of public safety research (fire alarms, health inspections, etc.)

## GAMBLING

- CFHLA remains strongly **opposed to the development of destination resort casinos or the expansion of gambling** in Florida as the vitality of Central Florida's economy depends on its reputation as a "**Family Friendly**" destination.
- CFHLA supports the 2018 "**Voters in Charge**" ballot initiative that would give Florida voters that authority to authorize gambling expansion.

## REGULATION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- CFHLA supported the passage of 2013 legislation that preempted to the state all **regulation of employee benefits**. Maintaining **uniformity** and **predictability** is essential to avoiding compliance "nightmares" for companies conducting business in multiple jurisdictions.
- CFHLA supports the "**Florida Competitive Workforce Act**," legislation that bans discrimination based on sexual orientation & gender identity.

## VACATION RENTALS

- CFHLA opposes efforts to establish "**Minimum Night Stay**" requirements for professionally managed vacation rental properties.
- CFHLA supports the rights of individuals to rent out their properties so long as they are held to the same regulatory standards as professionally managed Vacation Rental companies as it relates to **Section 509** (taxation, safety regulations and insurance requirements).

## SCHOOL START DATE

- CFHLA supports a "Third Monday in August" target for school year openings.
- Benefits of later start dates include **increased tax revenue** from an influx of visitors, additional income/work opportunities for students and the **reduction of non-instructional** costs to school districts.

## NON-HOMESTEAD CAP

- CFHLA supports extending the 10% cap for commercial (non-homestead) property value assessments until 2028.

## MEDICAL MARIJUANA

- CFHLA will continue to monitor the expansion of **Medical Marijuana** and remains dedicated to **protecting Florida's "Family Friendly" brand**.

## VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARDS

- CFHLA will monitor any legislation relating to Value Adjustment Boards (VABs) and the VAB mediation process across the State to ensure that a **fair appeal process** is available as it relates to the assessment of hospitality properties.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- CFHLA has partnered with local law enforcement agencies over the years to educate lodging employees on the important issue of Human Trafficking and the "**warning signs**" of what to look for on lodging properties.
- CFHLA will monitor any legislation relating to Human Trafficking, ensuring that increased awareness and preventative measures are implemented without frightening Florida's visitors and implying a "**non-Family Friendly**" environment.

## BEACHLINE (SR-528) ENHANCEMENT

- CFHLA supports the Central Florida Expressway Authority's efforts to purchase portions of **State Road 528** from the Florida Department of Transportation so that local entities can ensure that visitors and Hospitality employees have **appropriate access to SR-528 Exits 1 & 2**