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VISIT FLORIDA

On Tuesday, February 21, the **Florida House Appropriations Committee** **voted, regrettably, to advance HB 7005**, relating to economic incentive programs including VISIT FLORIDA. An amendment was added to HB 7005, crafted by **House Speaker Richard Corcoran**, that would reduce VISIT FLORIDA's annual funding from approximately \$78 million to \$25 million and would place a number of restrictions on the agency. The bill will now likely advance to the House Floor for consideration, once the Legislative Session begins on March 7.

Florida Governor Rick Scott, an advocate for [VISIT FLORIDA](#) and tourism promotion, provided the following response to this proposal:

"The Florida House is proposing a 67 percent cut to

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jobs in our tourism industry and are threatened with this massive cut. Unfortunately, some politicians in the Florida House think fighting for jobs is simply hysteria and don't understand that jobs are not expendable to families who have to put food on the table."

On Wednesday, February 8th, CFHLA President / CEO **Rich Maladecki** traveled to Tallahassee to meet with Tourism Leaders from across the state and encourage legislators to continue investing in VISIT FLORIDA to maintain Florida's status as a top travel destination.

CFHLA will continue to educate lawmakers on the importance of investing in tourism marketing and promotion in an increasingly competitive travel industry. One in every three Central Florida jobs is supported by tourism and state sales tax revenue generated by visitors to our region contributes over **\$436 million annually to the state economy.**

If you have any questions relating to Visit Florida, please contact CFHLA Public Policy Director, Kevin Craig at publicpolicy@cfhla.org

AWARD

At the Thursday, February 23rd CFHLA STR Membership Luncheon, CFHLA recognized **former Orange County Commissioner Scott Boyd as the 2016 CFHLA Public Servant of the Year.**

Former Commissioner Boyd, who was "termed-out" of office in 2016, served as an important partner of Central Florida's Tourism and Hospitality Industry during his eight year tenure on the County Commission. Commissioner Boyd was a strong supporter of making revisions to the *Venues Agreement* to enhance community projects including the [Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts](#), the [Orange County Convention Center](#) and [Camping World Stadium](#). Additionally, Commissioner Boyd served as a regional ambassador on several Visit Orlando trips to promote Central Florida as a world-class destination.



(left to right) CFHLA Board Chairman Dave Bartek of Loews Hotels, CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Peter Kacheris of Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek/Waldorf Astoria Orlando, 2016 CFHLA Public Servant of the Year Scott Boyd, CFHLA-PAC/PC Board Chairman Jay Leonard of the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort Disney Springs Resort Area/Wyndham Garden Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort Area and CFHLA President/CEO Rich Maladecki.

CFHLA will miss Commissioner Boyd's attentiveness to Hospitality Industry priorities, highlighted by his efforts during his final weeks in office to support CFHLA's initiative to amend the County's alcohol ordinance relating to hours of alcohol sale/service. Once approved, this amendment will provide an enhanced customer experience for visitors to the region and Orange County residents.

**CFHLA "salutes" Commissioner Boyd for his
service to the community and to
Central Florida's Hospitality Industry.**

PAC/PC

On Wednesday, February 22nd, the **CFHLA Political Action Committee (PAC) and Political Committee (PC) Boards of Directors** met for the first time in 2017.

Following a brief guest appearance from **Orange County School Board Member Nancy Robinson**, the PAC Board of Directors dove into a number of business items, including the review and approval of the proposed 2017-2018 PAC Budget.



CFHLA Board Secretary and PAC Vice Chairman Keith Wolling of the B Resort and Spa Lake Buena Vista with PAC Board and VIP Member Ruthann DiLauri of Minuteman Press and PAC/PC Chairman and CFHLA Board Member Jay Leonard of the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort Disney Springs Resort Area/Wyndham Garden Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort Area



CFHLA PAC Members met with Orange County School Board Member Nancy Robinson at their February meeting.

The Political Committee also approved the 2017-2018 PC Budget and discussed upcoming 2017 City of Orlando Elections, in which the following three City Council members will be eligible for reelection:

- **Jim Gray (District 1)**
- **Robert Stuart Sr. (District 3)**
- **Regina Hill (District 5)**

The Political Committee also agreed to closely track the votes of Central Florida State House and State Senate Members on items relating to VISIT FLORIDA to **ensure that future PAC or PC funds are given to Hospitality-Friendly candidates.**

GA

On Wednesday, February 8th, the **CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee** met with **Osceola County Commissioner (District 1) Peggy Choudhry** at the **Waldorf Astoria Orlando.**

The host of the February meeting, GA Committee Chairman **Peter Kacheris**, thanked Commissioner Choudhry for her efforts to act quickly following her election to the County Commission in November to address the concerns of the Hospitality Industry on a number of Osceola County items.



(left to right) CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Member Rembert Vonk of Excellent Vacation Homes, CFHLA Board Member Keith Odza of Wyndham Vacation Rentals, Osceola County Commissioner (District 1) Peggy Choudhry, CFHLA Board Member Brian Wong of the Celebration Suites Hotel with CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman and CFHLA Board Member Peter Kacheris of the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek/Waldorf Astoria Orlando.

Commissioner Choudhry, who was a **2016 CFHLA-PAC Endorsed Candidate**, has been a pro-Hospitality leader in Osceola County, thanks to her previous experience operating a lodging establishment and working with regional tourism leaders.

The GA Committee also recommended a small revision to **[CFHLA's 2017 Legislative Priorities](#)** relating to Vacation Rentals that was approved by the CFHLA Executive Committee on Tuesday, February 14th.

JORG

Year 2 of the *CFHLA Board of Directors' Adopt An Elected Official* program is underway and CFHLA Leadership "THANKS" **Jorg Heyer** of the **[Sheraton Vistana Villages](#)** for his active participation in this program, regularly meeting with his "adopted" Elected Official, **State Representative Rene Plasencia**.

At their most recent meeting on February 2nd, Jorg organized a lunch with his property's entire leadership team and provided a PowerPoint presentation to Representative Plasencia on the background of the Vacation Ownership industry and the positive economic impact that Timeshare Resorts have on both Central Florida and the State of Florida as a whole.



CFHLA Board Member Jorg Heyer (left) of the Sheraton Vistana Villages with State Representative Rene Plasencia and CFHLA Public Policy Director, Kevin Craig.

Representative Plasencia followed Jorg's presentation by discussing with the leadership team his role as a State Representative, how Tallahassee politics operate and answered questions relating to specific policies being discussed in the State Capitol.

CFHLA sincerely thanks Jorg Heyer and Representative Plasencia for their **efforts to strengthen the bond between Central Florida's Hospitality Industry and the state legislature.**

MURPHY

On Tuesday, February 21st, CFHLA coordinated a meeting of Central Florida Hospitality Leaders with newly-elected **United States Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy** to *discuss the importance of tourism to the Central Florida economy.*

CFHLA President & CEO **Rich Maladecki**, CFHLA Public Policy Director **Kevin Craig** and CFHLA Board Treasurer **Jesse Martinez** joined [Visit Orlando](#) President/CEO **George Aguel** and [BusinessForce](#) Executive Director **Robert Agrusa** at Martinez's property, the [Alfond Inn at Rollins](#), to discuss a range of tourism issues with Congresswoman Murphy.



(left to right)
BusinessForce Executive Director Robert Agrusa, U.S. Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy, CFHLA Board Treasurer Jesse Martinez of the Alford Inn at Rollins, Visit Orlando President/CEO George Aguel, and CFHLA President/CEO Rich Maladecki.

The Congresswoman, who represents **Florida's 7th Congressional District**, defeated longtime incumbent **Representative John Mica** in 2016. CFHLA, who had a positive relationship with former Congressman Mica, was appreciative of the opportunity to "break bread" with Congresswoman Murphy, who *was eager to learn about Central Florida's Hospitality Industry*.

LINKS

Below please find news articles, relating to the political interests of the Hospitality Industry:

[Richard Corcoran's Offer: Keep Visit Florida, Slash Budget to \\$25 Million, End Bonuses, Freeze Benefits, Cut Travel](#)

[Travel Industry Says De-funding Visit Florida Will Hurt Tourism](#)

[Florida House and Senate on Different Gambling Tracks](#)

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