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**From:** cfhla@memberclicks-mail.net on behalf of Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association  
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## TOURISM DAY

### SUCCESS in Tallahassee!

On Wednesday, January 17th **nearly 30 CFHLA Members** departed from the CFHLA Offices at 5:30 AM for an "all-day" trip to Tallahassee for the annual **Florida Tourism Day** event at the **State Capitol**.

Lobbying on behalf of the Association's **2018 Legislative Priorities**, attendees met with over twelve different **State Senators** and **State Representatives**. CFHLA Members primarily spent these meetings lobbying Elected Officials against two concerning sets of legislation that have been proposed this Legislative Session:

[LINKS OF INTEREST](#)

[Florida Governor Rick Scott](#)

[State of Florida Senate](#)

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1) Legislation that would dangerously expand the allowed uses of the **Tourist Development Tax (TDT)** – **House Bill 585** (Rep. Fine) and **Senate Bill 658** (Sen. Brandes)

2) Legislation that would put onerous regulations on local destination marketing groups such as **Experience Kissimmee**, **Visit Orlando** and **Orlando North, Seminole County Tourism** - **HB 3** (Rep. Grant) and **Senate Bill 1714** (Sen. Perry)

At 4:00PM on Tourism Day, nearly a dozen CFHLA Members sat-in for the **Florida House Ways and Means Committee** meeting, which featured a discussion and vote **in favor** of **House Bill 585**. During this meeting, a number of CFHLA attendees “waived in **opposition**” to the bill and **CFHLA Public Policy Director Kevin Craig** provided testimony in opposition to the concerning legislation.

**President & CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, Ken Lawson**, stated nearly 500 tourism industry partners gathered at the State Capitol for this year’s Tourism Day festivities and meetings with lawmakers.

CFHLA would like to thank **Mears Transportation** for once again providing charter motor coach transportation for this important CFHLA public policy event.

To review the 2018 CFHLA Legislative Priorities on the CFHLA website, please [click here](#).



(left to right) CFHLA VIP Member Mac Cochran of ATMFLA, Inc., CFHLA Board Chairman Fred Sawyers, General Manager of the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, CFHLA Board Member Ron Nagy, General Manager of the Bohemian Hotel Celebration, State Senator David Simmons (Senate District 9), CFHLA Board Member Anthony Lazzara, General Manager of the Crowne Plaza Orlando Universal, CFHLA Board 2nd Vice Chair Keith Wolling, and CFHLA Board Member Craig Leicester, General Manager of the Aloft Orlando Downtown



CFHLA Tourism Day Delegation Members meet with State Representative Kamia Brown (House District 45)



CFHLA Tourism Day Delegation Members meet with State Senator Victor Torres (Senate District 15)



CFHLA Tourism Day Delegation Members with State Representative Bob Cortes (House District 30)



CFHLA Tourism Day Delegation Members with VISIT FLORIDA President/CEO Ken Lawson





(left to right) CFHLA Board 2nd Vice Chair Keith Wolling, CFHLA Board Chairman Fred Sawyers, General Manager of the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, State Senator Keith Perry (Senate District 8) and CFHLA Board Member Ron Nagy, General Manager of the Bohemian Hotel Celebration



CFHLA Tourism Day Delegation Members with State Representative Tom Goodson (House District 51)



(left to right) CFHLA VIP Member Mac Cochran of ATMFLA, Inc., CFHLA Board Member Jon McGavin, General Manager of the Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes, CFHLA Board Chairman Fred Sawyers, General Manager of the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, Senator Jeff Brandes (Senate District 24), CFHLA Board 2nd Vice Chair Keith Wolling, CFHLA Board Treasurer Jesse Martinez, General Manager of The Alford Inn at Rollins, and CFHLA Board Member Jeff Swirsky, General Manager of the Holiday Inn Resort Orlando Lake Buena Vista

## GA MEETING

On Wednesday, January 10th, the CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee met with **City of Orlando Commissioner Robert Stuart Sr.** to discuss short term rentals and related city initiatives. Commissioner Stuart represents District 3 and is a Native Floridian. In addition to serving our community, Commissioner Stuart is the Executive Director of the **Christian Service Center for Central Florida**, working to address local homelessness, poverty, affordable housing, etc.

CFHLA's Governmental Affairs Committee engaged in informative conversation with Commissioner Stuart with the main topic being **short term rentals**. The discussion included mention of amending the City of Orlando's Land Development Code to place regulations on short term rentals in all City residential zoning districts. In conversation, the Commissioner also mentioned that **Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer** is in support of the City's short-term rental proposal.

In regards to the Tourist Development Tax legislation proposal being discussed in Tallahassee, Commissioner Stuart stated he remains against TDT expansion for non-tourism development purposes.



Adrianna Sekula of the Walt Disney World Company, City of Orlando Commissioner Robert Stuart Sr., and CFHLA Board Chairman Fred Sawyers, General Manager of the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort

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## COFFEE CLUB

On Friday, January 5th, members of the **CFHLA Board of Directors** and **PAC Board of Directors** met with **Orange County Mayoral Candidate** and local businessman, **Rob Panepinto**. As many members had not met Mr. Panepinto previously, this experience allowed for attendees to educate the candidate on Orange County Tourism Industry priorities and learn about Mr. Panepinto's

Mr. Panepinto shared with CFHLA Members that his priorities as Mayor would center on local business growth and aiming to ensure a world class infrastructure in Orange County. Mr. Panepinto indicated that he currently plays a strategic role in the **Orlando Economic Partnership**, allowing the community to secure quality jobs, economic growth, and a sustainable quality of life.

CFHLA will be conducting the first ever **CFHLA Orange County Mayoral Candidate Forum** on **Thursday, March 29** at the **Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort**. Event details will be released in the coming weeks, but the following “leading” Mayoral candidates have confirmed their participation:

**Orange County Commissioner Pete Clarke**

**Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings**

**Mr. Rob Panepinto**

**Orange County School Board Chairman Bill Sublette**



CFHLA-PAC Board Secretary Mark Politte, General Manager of the DoubleTree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal Orlando, Orange County Mayoral Candidate Rob Panepinto, and CFHLA-PAC Chairman Jay Leonard, General Manager of the Wyndham and Wyndham Garden Lake Buena Vista Resorts Disney Springs Resort Area

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## **MAYOR JACOBS**

CFHLA recently announced that **Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs** will be recognized as the Association’s **2017 Public Servant of the Year** at the **February 21 CFHLA STR Luncheon**.

term limits, will be recognized for her efforts to **enhance Central Florida's Hospitality Industry** through her support of the Orange County Convention Center, Downtown Venues, sports tourism initiatives, development of the Orange County Tourist Development Tax Grant Application Review Committee and support of CFHLA efforts that expanded Orange County's hours of alcohol sales and service as added customer service to our region's 68 million-plus annual visitors.



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## TALLAHASSEE UPDATE

**House Bill 3 / Senate Bill 1714** regarding **Tourist Development Accountability** is up for discussion in Tallahassee. The House **passed** this bill on Wednesday, January 24th but the Senate has yet to add the bill to a Committee meeting agenda. CFHLA does not support this piece of proposed legislation, as it currently requires Destination Marketing Organizations such as Visit Orlando to **publish contracts at least 14 days prior to execution**. This reveals valuable marketing details early enough for competing destinations to undercut Florida's tourism marketing efforts.

The language currently provided also requires private citizens serving on Destination Marketing Organization Boards to **publicly disclose all personal financial dealings**, which CFHLA considers to be an overreach. This superfluous requirement may lead to a decline of qualified business and community leaders serving as Board Members. Such decline would directly and negatively affect the Tourism Industry.

**House Bill 585 / Senate Bill 658** aims to expand the allowed uses of Florida's Tourist Development Tax dollars. The expansion would surpass the current use for **tourist development** related spending and allow the dollars to go to

sewage infrastructure, transportation, solid waste, and pedestrian facilities. CFHLA strongly opposes this proposed legislation, as it would take crucial funding away from Florida's tourism marketing efforts.

CFHLA argues that tourists already fund these types of non-tourism promotion expenditures such as infrastructure, transportation, etc. through sales tax collections. **20% of ALL Florida sales tax revenue** is collected by out of state visitors and over 50% of Orange County sales tax generation comes from visitors. County TDT funds should be preserved for tourism purposes **only**, especially with Florida visitation **exceeding 112 million annually**. Any additional expansion of Florida's Tourist Development Tax would undoubtedly jeopardize Florida's tourism industry.

House Bill 585 was passed through the Ways & Means Committee on Wednesday, January 17th with a vote of 14-4. It is to be heard next in the Commerce Committee. If you are interested in seeing the progression of this bill, or any other bills, please visit [myfloridahouse.gov](http://myfloridahouse.gov).

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## LINKS

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

[Brevard legislators Fine, Goodson spar over bill to change how tourist tax can be spent](#)

[Corcoran's anti-tourism marketing agenda takes hold in the Florida House](#)

[Anti-gambling measure will go on November ballot in Florida](#)

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