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ENDORSEMENTS

On Wednesday, March 16th, the **CFHLA Political Committee** announced its first **candidate endorsements** of the **2016 Election Season**, voting unanimously to endorse the re-election campaigns of **Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings** and **Osceola County Property Appraiser Katrina Scarborough**.

"Both Sheriff Demings and Ms. Scarborough are well-respected public officials who have served the community and Hospitality Industry well," said CFHLA Political Committee Chairman **Jay Leonard** of the [Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort Area](#). "These individuals have regularly met with CFHLA Members and Leadership to discuss Hospitality Industry concerns and continually offer their support to the Industry that employs one in three Central Florida residents."

LINKS OF INTEREST

Florida Governor Rick Scott

State of Florida Senate

State of Florida House of Representatives

Orange County

Osceola County

Seminole County

City of Orlando

City of Kissimmee

City of Sanford

election bid in 2012.



Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings



Osceola County Property Appraiser Katrina Scarborough

CHANGE

Meetings, PAC/PC Committee Members voted to appoint **Keith Wolling** of the [B Resort & Spa Lake Buena Vista](#) as the **PAC/PC Vice-Chairman**, effective immediately through December 31, 2016.



Keith Wolling of the B Resort
and Spa Lake Buena Vista

Additionally, the PAC/PC Committee Members voted **Mark Politte** of the [DoubleTree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal Orlando](#) as the new **PAC/PC Boards Secretary**, previously held by Keith Wolling.



Mark Politte of the DoubleTree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal

Furthermore, **Ross Burke** of the [Blue Heron Beach Resort](#) was appointed to fill a PAC/PC Board Member Vacancy.



Ross Burke of the Blue Heron Beach Resort

CONGRATULATIONS KEITH, MARK, AND ROSS!

NELSON

The CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee met on Wednesday, March 9th at the [Walt Disney World Contemporary Resort](#) (*Thank you Sharon Smoley*) with **Orange County Commissioner Bryan Nelson** to discuss a number of **Orange County Hospitality Industry priorities**.

Commissioner Nelson, whose 2014 campaign for County Commission was endorsed by CFHLA, discussed a range of Orange County topics with the CFHLA GA Committee. Similar to the February Committee Meeting with Commissioner Scott Boyd, GA Members were eager to discuss potentially amending the **Orange County alcohol ordinance** to allow alcohol service to begin at lodging properties as early as 7 AM, compared to the existing starting time of 11 AM.

Orange County properties are currently at a "competitive disadvantage" to neighboring counties that allow alcohol service prior to 11 AM, which accommodate weekend brunch opportunities and other special events where Orange County visitors would expect alcohol service.

Commissioner Nelson also provided updates on **Orange County Charter Review** proposals relating to the **Tourist Development Tax and Initiative Petition Drives**.

The GA Committee also received a Legislative Session recap from CFHLA Lobbying Partner [GrayRobinson](#), which included updates relating to the expansion of the Tourist Development Tax and the Seminole Tribe Gaming Compact negotiations.



Former Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Scott Tripoli, Orange County Commissioner Bryan Nelson, and CFHLA Treasurer Jetse Pottinga of the Melia Orlando Suite Hotel

Committee Meeting Sponsor:



COFFEE

On Friday, March 11th members of the **CFHLA Political Action Committee** held "coffee meetings" with two **Osceola County candidates** for office - **Property Appraiser Katrina Scarborough** and **County Commission District 1 Candidate Peggy Choudhry** - to build relationships and to educate these individuals on Central Florida hospitality priorities.

Property Appraiser Scarborough and Mrs. Choudhry were provided full background to CFHLA including the Association's **philanthropic initiatives** such as the [Adopt-A-School program](#) and CFHLA Cares, a description of CFHLA's public policy priorities, and CFHLA's Osceola County programs - including the State of Osceola County and CFHLA's quarterly Osceola County Lodging meetings featuring Elected Officials.



Chuck Simikian of the Nickelodeon Suites Resort, CFHLA Historian Laura Sherman of the CLC Regal Oaks, Osceola County Property Appraiser Katrina Scarborough, CFHLA PAC/PC Chairman Jay Leonard of the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort Area, and CFHLA Board Brian Wong of the Celebration Suite Hotel



Chuck Simikian of the Nickelodeon Suites Resort, CFHLA Historian Laura Sherman of the CLC Regal Oaks, Osceola County Commission Candidate Peggy Choudhury, CFHLA PAC/PC Chairman Jay Leonard of the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort Area, and CFHLA Board Brian Wong of the Celebration Suite Hotel

HB 7099

During the **Legislative Session**, CFHLA was actively engaged with State Representatives and State Senators relating to **HB 7099 - the House Tax Cut Package** - which included language pushed by State **Rep. Matt Gaetz** that would expand the permitted uses of the **Tourist Development Tax (TDT)** to allow coastal counties to use up to 10% of their TDT dollars towards **law enforcement funding**.

On Tuesday, March 1st, this bill was heard in the **Senate Appropriations Committee** and a contentious debate ensued.

Senator Dorothy Hukill proposed a strike-all amendment that removed all of the proposed changes to the Tourist Development Tax, which was adopted. However, former-Senate President Don Gaetz then proposed an amendment similar to Rep. Matt Gaetz's original language that would allow three coastal counties (Bay, Okaloosa, and Walton) to use 10% of their TDT dollars for law enforcement funding purposes.

Senator Alan Hays, from the Central Florida delegation, vocally opposed the amendment, emphasizing that **TDT money should be protected and utilized for tourism promotion purposes only**. Regrettably, the **amendment passed** on an 11-8 vote (all Central Florida Senators on the Committee opposed this TDT-expansion proposal) and the **bill subsequently passed** both the House and Senate in conferencing.

ALCOHOL

As discussed at the March CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting, CFHLA has recently established an **Orange County Alcohol Ordinance Subcommittee** to discuss and ultimately amend the current Orange County

establishments **prior to 11 AM.**

This Subcommittee is composed of Hospitality Leaders - including Lodging General Managers, Lodging Food & Beverage Directors, and Allied Member representatives.

The first meeting of this Subcommittee will be in the coming weeks with **Orange County Commissioner Scott Boyd.**

FUNDRAISER

Save the Date: June 1...

On **Wednesday, June 1st**, the **CFHLA Political Action Committee** will produce its annual **PAC Reception** fundraising event at the [B Resort & Spa Lake Buena Vista](#), (**Thank you Keith Wolling**), for the third consecutive year.

Each year, this entertaining networking event features over a dozen prominent **Central Florida Elected Officials** who, wearing aprons and white gloves, serve hors d'oeuvres to over **100 CFHLA Members**. This fundraiser also includes a **live auction** which features premier lodging stays and golf packages.

If you are interested in serving as a **2016 PAC Reception sponsor**, please contact CFHLA Staff Member Lisa Harley at sponsorships@cfhla.org.

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LINKS

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


[TOURIST TAX COLLECTIONS ON](#)

TRADITIONAL HOTELS IN OSCEOLA

**STARWOOD SIGNS FIRST U.S.-CUBA
HOTEL DEAL SINCE 1959 REVOLUTION**

**SEN. MCCASKILL INTRODUCES BILL
AGAINST HIDDEN RESORT FEES**


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