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June 11, 2008

Ms. Barbara Petersen, Chairperson
Florida Commission on Open Government
State Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Ms. Petersen:

Thank you for taking the time to hear my suggestions to improve the quality of life there in Florida through this Commission.

For the past several months Florida has been the butt of several rather rude jokes stemming from the tabloid coverage of the situation involving Hulk Hogan, and his Son who is a juvenile being detained at the Hillsborough County Jail in Tampa, Florida. Now that is the only thing that I know about the case, and because of some rather narrowly written statute, non-privileged conversations are recorded and are for some reason a public record accessible by the Media.

Having served with the United States Marshals Service, the process of monitoring and recording non-privileged conversations for the purpose of detecting criminal activity, or to insure the safety and security of the Jail and the public in my opinion, in the opinion of the Sheriff there and the Florida State Sheriffs Association is perfectly acceptable. Making this information available to the Media for tabloid exploitation and profit in my opinion is worse than stupid! The media is a group of predators that make sport at destroying the lives of people who are for some reason under the glare of the moment. For Florida to assist them in this cause is irresponsible.

Here in California as elsewhere, there are reporters who work for publications that will pay a tremendous amount of money for information, especially confidential medical records on celebrities or public figures. Recently here in California, a Tabloid paid a Medical Records Clerk at the UCLA Medical Center a total of \$210,500.00 Dollars. In order access this information, they have to make an entry into the database, and in my mind this should be no different than if you broke into someone's home, or business. Know one that is paying that much money for this information is going to take just anyone's word that some thing happened! They are going to need to have in their possession documentation that can be reviewed by an editor to approve payment.

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Because there is a transfer of the illegally obtained data combined with a payment, which is the main motivating factor for this type of crime, the laws in Florida (if they do not already exist) should make the reporting of this information not unlike the receiving of stolen property. There should be an environment where any reporter would not traffic in this information because its use is illegal. Now if a reporter on their own develops through an investigative process certain information that is one thing, but to create a network of people who access or obtain data by unlawful means has to cease.

Thank you for your interest, and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

ROBERT A. DANFORD



June 16, 2008

TO: Governor Charlie Crist

FROM: Mayor Gary Bruhn

Dear Governor Crist,

As you are aware, Florida recently celebrated "A Week of Sunshine" urging citizens to celebrate the State of Florida's dedication to making state and local government more accessible to the public. As you stated, "The role of Florida's government is to serve the people of Florida and open government gives the people the tools they need to hold their elected officials accountable." Unfortunately, the Florida Sunshine Law does not include our state legislators. We have seen the positive effects that open government provides to local governments. With that in mind, I have asked the Florida League of Cities to explore a constitutional amendment to require our state legislators to be governed by the same laws that our municipal elected officials live by. I am also asking the Florida Association of Counties and the League of Women Voters and other advocates of open and transparent government to join. I believe this is an issue that the voters of Florida will support overwhelmingly. In fact, I believe that most Florida voters do not know that there are two standards for elected officials in Florida. Of course, through your leadership and the support of our state legislators, this effort could be accomplished without a constitutional amendment. It is my hope that you will join me and open government advocates across the state of Florida to truly make "Florida In The Sunshine For All".

Respectfully,

Gary Bruhn

Gary Bruhn

Mayor - Town of Windermere

2nd Vice President – Tri-County League of Cities

Chairman – Orange County Council of Mayors

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