

HB 1 Litigation: Letter of Support

8/3/2021

Mayor Lauren Poe
Commissioner Reina Saco (At Large, Seat A)
Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Gail Johnson (At Large, Seat B)
Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker (District 1)
Commissioner Harvey Ward (District 2)
Commissioner David Arreola (District 3)
Commissioner Adrian Hayes-Santos (District 4)

Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

As local leaders and community organizations representing residents in Gainesville and across Florida, we are writing to voice our strong support for authorizing litigation to challenge the Combating Violence, Disorder, and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act, also known as HB 1.

HB 1 permits the governor and his cabinet to essentially take control of local budgets whenever a reduction to the law enforcement budget is challenged by the state attorney, a member of the City Commission, or possibly a county sheriff. HB 1, which also includes increased penalties related to protests, seeks to suppress the power of people that was on full display last year after George Floyd's murder. Beyond the clear violation of Floridians' First Amendment rights to free speech and peaceful assembly, the law is an attack on local democracy.

Local governments and our residents have every right to allocate our budgets to reflect the needs and values of our communities, this right to self-governance is enshrined in the Florida Constitution through its Home Rule Amendment. We echo those on the Commission who have called out the total and complete overreach of state power. HB 1 is a clear effort to silence communities and undermine local governance.

Our budgets are moral documents. Investing resources into community resources and services is how we reflect our needs. It is how we declare and move forward in creating communities where everyone has what they need to thrive.

As we draw closer to the next legislative session, we cannot stand idly by and let HB 1 go unchallenged with respect to its impact on local control and local democracy. Doing so will open the floodgates for further attacks on local governance and our communities.

As community members and advocates, we are proud to be represented by a Commission that is considering taking legal action to challenge HB 1. We are ready for Gainesville to stand up for racial

justice, protect home rule, and fulfill the will of its community. We urge the Commission to vote in favor of filing this complaint. We need your leadership, now more than ever.

With respect,

Agricultural Justice Project- Leah Cohen, General Coordinator
Alachua County Branch NAACP-Evelyn Foxx, President
Alachua County Democratic Executive Counsel-James Maggio, Chair of ACDEC
Alachua County Labor Coalition-Sheila Payne, Co-Chair
Atkins Warren Chapter of NOBLE (National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers)Alena
Lawson, Board President
Bailey Learning And Arts Collective, Inc.-TerriBailey ,Founder/Executive Director
Baker Interfaith Friends -Joan Anderson
Civic Media Center-JoJo Sacks,Coordinator
Community Spring-Lindsay Kallman, Executive Director
Cultural Arts Coalition -Nkwanda Jah, Executive Director
Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida - Alachua County Sara Toussaint, President
Education Equity Advocates of Alachua County -Group Admins Cassandra Tucci, Admin
Emmanuel Mennonite Church- Eve MacMaster, Reverend
Florida House of Representatives -Yvonne Hinson, State Representative
Florida Prisoner Solidarity-Niko Segal-Wright, Member
Gainesville Vineyard-Michael Raburn, Pastor
Gainesville Word of Mouth: The Black Edition,Travis Smith, Founder/Moderator
Gator Chapter- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)-
Mackintosh Joachim, Former Co-Chair
GoDDsville Dream Defenders-Kiara Laurent, Chapter Lead
Human Rights Coalition of Alachua County-Larry Green, Executive Director
Indivisible Gainesville -Shanna Johnson, Founder
Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice-Richard MacMaster, Coordinator
League of Women Voters of Alachua County (LWVAC)-Lynn Frazier President, LWVAC
North Central Florida Indivisible- Jyoti Parmar, Executive Director
Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida-Laura Goodhue, VP Public Affairs
Rural Women's Health Project- Robin Lewy, Founder/Director of Programming
Saint Peter Saint Paul Community Council- GerieCrawford,President
Sierra Club Suwannee-St Johns Group Executive Committee-Sarah Younger,Member of Executive
Committee
Sierra Club Suwannee-St. Johns Group- CharlesCollins, Executive Committee Member
Suwannee St Johns Sierra Club - Maryvonne Devensky
UF Graduate Student Council- Paul Wassel, President
United Faculty of Florida, UF- PaulOrtiz,President