

For Immediate Release

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SPEAKER-DESIGNATE, RICHARD CORCORAN, PROPOSES BOLD AND TRANSFORMATIVE ETHICS AND LOBBYING REFORMS

*Unprecedented Level of Openness and Transparency – From the Budget Process to
Lobbying – Proposed in the Florida House*

Tallahassee, FL – Speaker-designate of the Florida House Richard Corcoran released the following statement upon introduction of the 2016 – 2018 proposed House Rules.

“It is time that government embodies the very highest of standards and serve citizens and not self. The Florida House, in adopting these rules, will take a transformational leap into a new era of accountability, professionalism, transparency, and fairness. There is something here impacting every player within the political process – Members, lobbyists, AND the public. The Florida House will set the standard for others to emulate. And those who cannot live up to the highest ethical and professional standards will find the Florida House a difficult place to work or visit. Now it is time to live out the trust placed in us by the citizens of our great state. I know the House is up to the challenge.

House leaders from around the state weighed in to support the new rules proposal.

**Representative Jose Oliva
Incoming Rules and Policy Committee Chairman**

“When it comes to a state government citizens can be proud of, the Florida House is leading by example. If we are going to hold agencies and programs accountable, we must ensure that our own House is held to even higher standards. I am proud of the proposed changes and of the spirit with which they will be adopted.”

**Representative Ray Rodrigues
Incoming Majority Leader**

“My constituents are rightfully skeptical of government today. They believe lobbyists have too much power, fundraising is too time consuming, and politicians are more interested in private

enrichment than public service. Our hardworking taxpayers feel like outsiders looking in on a process that only benefits politically connected insiders. Our system is broken and now Florida will lead the way in its repair. These rules that bind all of us are a huge leap forward toward restoring trust and confidence in our system. I'm proud of incoming Speaker Corcoran and incoming Chair Oliva and I look forward to sharing this proposal with citizens of my district."

Representative Chris Sprowls
Tampa Bay

"Transparency – whether in health care pricing or lobbyist disclosures – is a good thing for the taxpayers of Florida. These bold reforms will change the way business is done in the House of Representatives for the better. My neighbors and constituents, and all Floridians, can know that their Representative is not flying on private jets, not being lobbied when they are listening to debate, not slipping millions of dollars into the budget in the dark of night, and so much more. Incoming Speaker Corcoran and incoming Chairman Oliva deserve a ton of credit for offering such a transformative rules package."

Representative Jim Boyd
Sarasota/Manatee

"These proposed rules, when adopted, will represent a seismic shift in the balance of power in Tallahassee and a return to a more open, accountable, and responsive state government. I am honored to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in supporting these changes and look forward to informing my constituents about these reforms."

Representative Jose Felix Diaz
Miami/Ft. Lauderdale

"In a time when corruption and backroom deals seem to dominate our politics, what we will do with these rules will shake the establishment in Tallahassee and at the same time open up the process to unprecedented scrutiny. I thank incoming Speaker Corcoran for these changes and the spirit in which they were created."

Representative Jason Brodeur
Central Florida/Orlando

"Today's proposal strikes at the heart of temptation and corruption, and I'm excited to support it. From online lobbyist disclosures to closing the legislator to lobbyist revolving door, these proposed rules will mean unprecedented openness and accountability. The people of Florida deserve this level of reform, and I hope our friends in the Senate will join us in this endeavor."

Representative Travis Cummings
Northeast Florida/Jacksonville

“The people of Florida – as well as American citizens across the country – are sick and tired of public servants who neither serve nor personify the values of the public they represent. These new rules are truly monumental and are good for Floridians and quite frankly good for America. The Florida House will show the nation how government should work and what public service truly is. I’m excited and look forward to adopting these as soon as possible.”

**Representative Clay Ingram
North Florida/The Panhandle**

“We are at a crossroads in America. Will we accept unending breaches of public integrity as the new normal or will we stand and say enough. Well I’m proud that the Florida House, for its part, is choosing the latter. We are saying enough to insider influence and new jobs for legislators that don’t pass the smell test. And we are saying yes to a level of budget and lobbyist transparency unheard of in most states and definitely in Florida. I commend the Speaker and will proudly fight by his side for this new day.”

Rule Topic	Substantive Effect	Why It Is Needed
Appropriations Projects & Recurring Appropriations Rule (Rule 5.14)	All appropriations projects must be filed as stand-alone bills and made as non-recurring appropriations. If a House budget or conference report contains an appropriations project not filed as a House bill and/or is not made as a non-recurring appropriation, the entire bill or conference report is out-of-order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater time and ease of public and press scrutiny ✓ Will save taxpayer money ✓ Will require all new member projects to be justified each year ✓ New forms will provide substantial detail on each project to put all spending in the sunshine ✓ Previously, Members could slip millions of dollars into the budget at the last minute
Ex Officio Members (Rule 7.7)	Allows the Minority Leader to serve as or designate an <i>ex officio</i> member on a committee for an absent minority conference member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gives the minority greater rights and flexibility ✓ Ensures minority is fully represented on committees

Lobbyist Issue Disclosure (Rule 7.20) (Rule 17.1(h))

Before being allowed to lobby the House on a specific issue, a lobbyist would be required to file an electronic notice of appearance that discloses they are lobbying on that specific issue

- ✓ Unprecedented transparency
- ✓ Eliminates the mystery of who is lobbying what issue
- ✓ Gives the public easy and clear access to lobbyist activity

Add a Day to Special Order (Rule 10.11)

During the first 55 days of session there will be an additional day between the expiration of the amendment filing deadline and the bill being heard on Special Order.

- ✓ Adds time for Members to truly research and read the bills for debate/vote
- ✓ Increases the public's ability to scrutinize

Travel Restrictions (Rule 15.3(b))

Members will not fly on private planes owned by lobbyists or principals even if they pay the commercial rate.

- ✓ Ends a practice that creates an unacceptable level of influence
- ✓ Currently, Members may pay the commercial ticket cost to satisfy ethics requirements. That practice ends

Member Employment Disclosure (Rule 154(d))

Members must disclose new employment from any public entity that receives appropriations.

- ✓ Public entities hiring legislators creates a perception of using taxpayer dollars to influence elected officials
- ✓ Disclosure will be public and accessible online

Local Lobbying Ban (Rule 15.4(e))

While in office, House members will be prohibited from lobbying local governments except to the degree that they are engaged in professional

- ✓ Local governments are created and in many ways overseen by the state government. The lobbying of local government by state

work that requires them to register as lobbyists under local rules (i.e. land planning).

legislators creates a potential danger of conflicts or undue influence

- ✓ Legislators employed as lobbyists represent an appearance of impropriety that voters are tired of seeing

Lobbyist/Member Business Deals (Rule 15.5) (Rule 15.6)

Members will be prohibited from entering into business deals or financial relationships with registered lobbyists or principles.

- ✓ A financial relationship with someone tasked with influencing the legislative process is unacceptable
- ✓ Eliminates even the perception of undue influence or unethical financial relationships

Sexual Harassment (Rule 17.1(a))

Conduct of lobbyists will be subject to scrutiny to minimize harassment and discrimination on House premises. They will now be held to the same standard as Members and House employees.

- ✓ An issue of safety, civility, and professionalism
- ✓ The “good old boy” culture will be a thing of the past
- ✓ Zero tolerance for bad behavior will be practiced

Electronic Communications Ban (Rule 17.1(f))

Lobbyists may not lobby a Member via email, text message, or other form of electronic communication when the House is in session or the member is in a committee or subcommittee meeting.

- ✓ Members will be free from undue influence during votes and debate
- ✓ Prohibits a practice that, if widely known to the public would engender justifiable outrage

6-Year Ban (Rule 17.1(g))

Individuals will be prohibited from lobbying in the House if they served in the Legislature in the

- ✓ Eliminates the “looking to lobby” mentality that can manifest in a final term
- ✓ Engenders greater public

prior 6 years; applies to members who serve in the 2016-2018 Legislature or thereafter.

confidence – coupled with other reforms – in the purity of a Members' vote and policy positions

Disclosure for Lobbyists who Represent Public Entities (Rule 17.1(i))

Lobbyists who represent a public or semi-public taxpayer-supported entity, or their DSOs or foundations, will be required to disclose their lobbying contracts.

- ✓ Taxpayer money being used to lobby the Legislature for more taxpayer money is a vicious cycle
- ✓ Taxpayers deserve to see the full contracts lobbyists receive so they can judge the propriety and competence of the elected officials voting on those contracts

Impeachment (Rule 19)

Article III, Section 17 of the Florida Constitution states that, "The house of representatives by two-thirds vote shall have the power to impeach an office." This new rule clarifies that that the constitutional term "misdemeanor in office" includes failure to publicly disclose gifts above a specific dollar threshold.

- ✓ Reasserts a prerogative of the people's House
- ✓ Allows voters – through their Representatives – to hold government accountable
- ✓ Reinforces the truth that no government official is above the law – whether elected or retained

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