

Building Officials Association of Florida
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Position Statement

February 26, 2016

STOP THE ATTACK ON A SAFE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN FLORIDA

The human race has the unique ability to learn from things that go wrong. We observe, learn and make adjustment in the way we do things. After hurricane Andrew we observed in a study by the Building Code Study Commission, appointed by Governor Chiles, that the safety of our built environment in Florida was not what we expected it to be. The hurricane inflicted devastating damage and loss of life because of weak building codes and a corrupt, inexperienced, and unskilled building inspector workforce.

In response to these observations the legislature took two important responsible actions. One was the establishment of the Florida Building Commission to create and maintain a statewide building code that protects lives and property. The other action was to create a Licensing Board to license and discipline building code compliance professionals.

Research following the multiple hurricanes in 2004 and 2005 has proven that both the Florida Building Code and a licensed building inspection workforce, accountable to the state licensing board (DBPR), has vastly improved the safety of the built environment in Florida.

Now these protections are under attack by special interest groups whose primary motivations are economic benefits for themselves, not the health safety and welfare of Floridians.

House Bill 535, Senate Bill 704, and other bills, contain proposed changes to multiple provisions in the Florida Building Code, and may propose to extend the Florida Building Code development cycle from the current 3 year cycle to a 6 year cycle. It seems to be Ok for the legislature to change code provisions every year by statute and turn around and say that updating the code every three years to keep up with new technologies is not Ok.

BOAF requests that the legislature refrain from writing building code provisions into statute and instead refer issues or concerns to the Florida Building Commission where technical experts can investigate, research and appropriately respond.

DBPR licensing requirements for building inspectors are based on a proven formula that includes a combination of education, experience and examination. **Senate Bill 704** contains proposed changes that would lead to unskilled and inexperienced inspectors that can pass the national examination, being hired by local government to inspect single family dwellings. The proposal also exempts these inspectors from accountability to DBPR.

With the construction industry experiencing a shortage of skilled tradesmen, it is not a good time to lessen the qualifications of building inspectors and plans examiners that are verifying building code compliance.

Adoption of a licensing policy that does not value education and experience, and that does not hold these public servants accountable to one statewide standard, will lead to the eventual return to the unacceptable conditions that existed before Hurricane Andrew.

Other provisions of this bill would allow unlicensed maintenance employees of apartment building owners to do work which currently requires a state contractor’s license.

The Building Officials Association of Florida is a professional association representing Building Code Compliance Professionals across the state. We believe that for the reasons stated above SB 704 and HB 535 should be modified to maintain the protections the legislature has put into place following Hurricane Andrew.

Please contact the legislators below and let them know our position before Monday afternoon. For your convenience, just cut the information below and paste it in the body of your email. Use **BOAF Position Statement** in the subject line.

Senate Fiscal Policy Committee

<u>Senator Anitere Flores (R)</u>	Chair:	Miami	(850) 487-5037
<u>Senator Rob Bradley (R)</u>	Vice Chair:	Orange Park	(850) 487-5007
<u>Senator Joseph Abruzzo (D)</u>		Wellington	(850) 487-5025
<u>Senator Aaron Bean (R)</u>		Jacksonville	(850) 487-5004
<u>Senator Jeff Clemens (D)</u>		Lake Worth	(850) 487-5027
<u>Senator Alan Hays (R)</u>		Umatilla	(850) 487-5011
<u>Senator Dorothy L. Hukill (R)</u>		Port Orange	(850) 487-5008
<u>Senator John Legg (R)</u>		Lutz	(850) 487-5017
<u>Senator Gwen Margolis (D)</u>		Miami	(850) 487-5035
<u>Senator Maria Lorts Sachs (D)</u>		Delray Beach	(850) 487-5034
<u>Senator Kelli Stargel (R)</u>		Lakeland	(850) 487-5015

BOAF supports a reasonable certification process that includes education, experience and examination. Allowing inexperienced, untrained inspectors to inspect 1 & 2 family dwellings without the same accountability as the rest of us are subjected to. What BOAF would prefer to see implemented is the internship program that BOAF has proposed to develop a competent building code compliance workforce.

BOAF supports letting the FBC process building code changes and recommends that the legislature refrain from writing code provisions and refer concerns or issues to the FBC.

BOAF also supports retaining the current 3 year code update cycle to allow new technologies and lessons learned to be used.