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To: BOMA Florida Members
From: Lee Moffitt, BOMA Florida Lobbyist
Re: Legislative Session Recap

BOMA's top priority has been and will continue to be - further reductions in the Business Rent Tax. This session the final tax package further reduced the tax from 5.7% to 5.5% effective January 1, 2020 -- a modest reduction but certainly heading in the right direction. Hopefully as the state continues to grow producing corresponding increase in state revenues, the legislature will see fit to continue reductions in this burdensome tax. BOMA had hoped for a larger reduction in the tax this session but unexpected hurricane costs reduced state revenues - preventing a larger cut.

BOMA's Annual Day in Tallahassee on April 9th was well timed. BOMA members from around the state gathered in the Senate Chambers of the Old Capitol to discuss issues and prepare for visits with legislators and staff. Our morning guest was Rep. Toby Overdorf (R-Stuart). Toby gave us a very informative session overview and answered questions from attendees. We also received a presentation from Ken Rosenfeld, Director of State and Local Affairs, BOMA International. Upon adjournment of the morning meeting, our team visited with Senate President Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) in his Senate office. After the meeting we retreated to the Senate Chamber for a group picture with the President. He was very gracious and pledged to continue efforts to reduce the Business Rent Tax.

BOMA's 2019 legislator of the year Rep. Brian Aliva (R-Miami) had a conflict and could not attend our morning meeting, but in the early afternoon BOMA leaders met with him and presented him with the Legislator of the Year award. He was surprised and expressed great appreciation. After meeting with Rep. Avila, BOMA members fanned out across the Capitol and spent the afternoon meeting with legislators and staff.

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It seems every session a surprise issue emerges. This year Gov. DeSantis in his State of the State message called for a deregulation bill, later titled "The Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act". The bill primarily targeted professions such as labor organizations, geologists, landscape architects, interior designers, etc. However, buried in the bottom of a 70+ page bill there was language reducing the size of the Building Commission from 27 to 17. One of the entities being removed from the commission was a representative of BOMA -- a major shock. The bill was first considered in the House -- sponsored by Rep. Blaze Ingoglia - a homebuilder and former Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida. His stated purpose was to "balance" the representation on the Commission to favor the homebuilders point of view -- to reduce what he called onerous building code requirements on residences that needlessly drive up costs. He refused to agree to reinsert a BOMA representative in his bill in the House. An added obstacle was that in addition to the Governor, DPR Secretary Halsey Beshears also strongly supported the bill. The bill easily passed three committees in the House and was placed on the House calendar.

In the Senate, the companion bill - SB 1640 - was filed by Sen. Ben Albritton (R-Polk County). He also took a hard line and refused efforts to reinsert BOMA on the Commission. After easily clearing the first committee of reference, the bill was scheduled to be considered by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee - chaired by Sen. Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota). Sen. Gruters is Chairman of the Republican Party in Florida and closely aligned with Rep. Ingoglia - the House sponsor. President Mary Lantz arrived in Tallahassee on May 8th - the day before BOMA day. By chance that was the same day the Senate committee on Commerce & Tourism was to consider SB 1640. Mary prepared her testimony and spoke on behalf of BOMA urging for a BOMA Representative to remain on the Building Commission. Her eloquent testimony fell on deaf ears, and the committee voted 5-0 to approve the bill. With time running out in the Session SB 1640 was next scheduled to be considered in the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. BOMA lobbyist Lee Moffitt approached Sen. Linda Stewart (D-Orlando) and requested that she file an amendment to reinsert a BOMA representative on the commission -- she agreed. In addition, Moffitt made one last appeal to Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby) to support the Stewart amendment. Sen. Simpson is President Designate of the Florida Senate and very powerful. He agreed to intervene, and persuaded Sen. Albritton to not object to the Stewart amendment. When SB 1640 came up on the

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Both House and Senate "Deregulation" bills were placed on the Calendar for final hearing on the floor of both houses. SB 1640 contained BOMA's amendment. With few days remaining in the 2019 session, neither HB 27 nor SB 1640 were submitted for a final vote. In spite of last minute desperate efforts by DPR Secretary Halsey Beshears, both bills died on the calendar. BOMA maintained a representative on the Building Commission. It was a major victory.

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Other BOMA issues:

HB 447 by Diamond (R-St. Petersburg) was the companion bill to SB 902 by Perry (R-Gainesville). HB 447 passed May 3rd without objection.

Authorizing counties to provide notice to certain persons under certain circumstances; authorizing counties that issue building permits to charge a person a single search fee for a certain amount under certain circumstances; providing exemptions to certain contracting requirements; authorizing a local enforcement agency to close a permit under certain circumstances; authorizing the Florida Building Commission to approve updates to the Florida Building Code without certain findings under certain circumstances; prohibiting a local government from carrying forward more than a specified amount of unexpended revenue, etc. The 23 page bill can be read in its entirety on the Florida House website: www.myfloridahouse.gov. Just type in Bill # 447. **Effective Date:** July 1, 2019

HB 1139 by Plakon (R-Longwood) did not pass. It requires county or municipality that imposes inspection fees to establish expedited inspection process that provides priority processing for such inspections; authorizes county or municipality to charge additional fee up to specified amount for expedited inspection process; requires such local governments to establish expedited permitting process that provides priority processing for such permits; authorizes local government to charge additional fee for expedited inspection process; provides that local government must require applicant to pay only specified percentage of fees due upon receipt of application; provides for reduction of outstanding fees due; provides for refund of fees; specifies that certain procedures apply to building permit applications for any nonresidential buildings. **Effective Date:** July 1, 2019

Last Event: Indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration on Friday, May 3, 2019 11:59 PM