

Florida mayors take stand to protect local taxpayers

By Florida City Watch
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Photo courtesy of City of Coral Gables

Don Slesnick

With the Florida Legislature set to convene March 2 in Tallahassee, Florida's mayors recently took a strong stance on behalf of local taxpayers.

Tired of the slew of unfunded mandates and budget-busting initiatives coming from the state Capitol, the Florida League of Mayors announced a new initiative to evaluate legislation and its impact on local taxpayers.

"They are doing a number of things that not only cost you money but limit your ability to cover the costs," said Coral Gables Mayor Don Slesnick, president of the Florida League of Mayors. "It has really interfered with local government to the point where the League of Mayors is ready to speak out. We are that concerned -- not for

ourselves, but for our taxpayers."

The mayors stood at Atlantis Country Club in Boca Raton on Thursday, Feb. 18, and announced the initiative to score each bill that becomes law and

release the findings to the public. The scoring system works as follows.

The scoring system is composed of a five-question test to evaluate legislation after it has passed. The questions include:

- Does the legislation pass the cost of state responsibilities to local taxpayers?
- Does it limit local communities' ability to govern themselves?
- Will it cost local taxpayers money?
- Does the legislation respect the principles of home rule for municipalities outlined in the Florida Constitution?

“We hope this new system will encourage lawmakers to respect home rule and avoid their good ideas from being funded on the backs of local taxpayers,” said John Thomas, the League of Mayor’s executive director.

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