



**CITY OF
BELLEAIR BLUFFS**
2747 Sunset Boulevard
Belleair Bluffs, Florida 33770
Tel. (727) 584-2151
Fax: (727) 584-6175
www.belleairbluffs-fl.gov

Mayor:
Chris Arbutine Sr.

Commissioners:
Joseph A. Barkley, III
Jack Nazario
Taylour Shimkus
Suzy Sofer

City Clerk
Debra S. Sullivan

City Attorney
Thomas J. Trask, Esq.

Director of Public Works
Robert David

June 29, 2010

Brevard County Charter Review Commission
Brevard County Government Center
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, Florida 32940

Dear Brevard Charter Review Commission Members:

I spoke with you in January as your commission considered a proposal to protect municipal home rule by amending the Brevard charter. I am both a Mayor and a citizen in Pinellas County, which has operated with this provision since 1998. The idea was originally placed there by the Legislature and then approved by the voters.

The Pinellas County Charter requires that any Charter changes which alter a City's power, service, function or regulatory authority must pass both countywide and within each affected municipality. If the Charter change passes countywide but not within the City, that change does not apply within the City, but does apply everywhere else.

Since 1998 this provision has not been used in an election in Pinellas. The County and the Cities have been able to accomplish everything through other tools, like interlocal agreements. I know that some people will ask if it's never been used, why do you need it?

In 2006, the Pinellas Charter Review Commission had exactly that thought and put a question on the ballot that would have revoked this right. It was rejected by the voters countywide. The interesting point here is that not only did city voters reject removal of Home Rule, but unincorporated voters refused to make city voters give it up as well (unincorporated voters rejected the change 55.3%, while municipal voters rejected it 59% for a countywide vote of 56.9%).

I believe Home Rule Dual Vote was retained for a couple of reasons. First, it is a right that our residents enjoy and don't want to give up. They like having a say in how their city will be run, what it will look like, how services are provided and the million other things that make a community a community. Secondly and maybe more importantly, under the current system all jurisdictions are equal and they work together to find solutions.

Pinellas County works well with this provision in our Charter. The County and the Municipalities know how to settle disputes and work together for the best interests of all citizens.

I believe our governments want to do the right thing, but we simply cannot know all the nuances of local jurisdictions. We get the best results when we work together. The Dual Vote Home Rule provision in the Pinellas Charter makes everyone work together and consider all viewpoints.

I recommend that you consider giving your residents a similar tool.

Thank you.

Chris Arbutine
Mayor of Belleair Bluffs