



Palm Beach County LEAGUE of CITIES, Inc.

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

Dear Brevard Charter Review Commission members;

Good afternoon to you and thank you for all of your earnest work to make your county a better place! If you'll recall, I spoke with you at your meeting in January about the possibility of expanding municipal home rule through an amendment to the county charter.

The reason I was invited to speak with your commission is because the Palm Beach County Charter was amended in 2008 with a similar proposal. In November 2008, our residents were asked to vote on whether our charter should be amended to:

REQUIRE BOTH COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL APPROVAL OF CHARTER AMENDMENTS AFFECTING MUNICIPAL POWER OR FUNCTION

Shall the Palm Beach County Charter be amended to have charter amendments that are approved by a majority of Palm Beach County voters take effect in a municipality only if the amendment is also approved by a majority of voters in that municipality, when the proposed amendment transfers or limits a municipal service, function, power or authority?

Well, the voters approved this idea by an impressive 73.8%. It was supported by both municipal and unincorporated residents. I think in large part because the voters understood that fair is fair. Municipal voters should have a strong say in what happens in their communities, especially when those decisions may be preempted through a transfer of jurisdictional power.

The Palm Beach County League of Cities and I supported this proposal for a number of reasons. First, "Home Rule" is a fundamental right we have long supported as a basic tenement of our mission. Secondly, the cities and the county had a history of not working together that well from time to time. As a matter of fact, many of our cities had sued the county in order to protect municipal home rule and the rights of municipal citizens. Hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars were spent in these legal fights. It was believed that having a clearly codified way that disputes were to be settled would help prevent these kinds of legal battles.

I am happy to say that the Dual-Vote "Home Rule" charter change has worked very well for Palm Beach County residents in both the unincorporated and municipal areas. To date, the county is more willing to sit down and create solutions with cities for all our residents. As a matter of fact we've worked very closely together for the new county-wide Ethics Charter

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Amendment proposal going on the ballot this November and we are planning on our first Dual Vote Home Rule election November on this issue. Our cooperative approach I believe will result in wide margin passage of these good local government ethics initiatives, Inspector General and Ethics Commission offices that will be established under the amendment.

In addition, we helped the county postpone a proposed county-wide Fire Rescue 1 Cent Sales Surtax from the November ballot so that multiple questions, calculations and legislative clarifications can be properly addressed preventing unintended consequences in Ad valorem, CRA and other concerns to be cooperatively addressed for all concerned. Let there be no mistake, these cooperative solutions were not so easy just a few short years ago. The Home Rule proposal has increased cooperation and understanding between the County and Palm Beach's municipalities to everyone's benefit, especially our communities' constituents. Do we always agree on issues affecting county versus municipal interests, of course not, but we do enjoy some of the most cooperative and productive dialog and interaction in years.

All residents of Palm Beach County and its 38 municipalities have been well served by the passage of the Home Rule provision in our county's charter. I would again recommend that you consider giving your residents a similar equitable and productive tool.

Thank you for your fine work!



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