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PRESS RELEASE

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TALLAHASSEE—March 9, 2018— The Florida Commission on Ethics in public session today expressed deep concern regarding an amendment to CS/CS/HB 883.

The Commission has consistently interpreted the conflicts of interest law as saying that neither a member of a governing body (such as a city or county commission) nor his or her law firm, can represent clients before that board. The Commission feels so strongly about the importance of this public protection that in its 2018 legislative recommendations it specifically requested that this precedent not be relaxed in any way. Amendment 408153, adopted on the House floor on March 7, reversed this long-standing Commission precedent.

The Commission is equally concerned about the manner in which the amendment was adopted, which was through a floor amendment two days before the scheduled end of session. In the Commission's view, a policy change of this significance should be subject to the open and rigorous scrutiny afforded by the committee process. CS/CS/HB 883 passed the House and is in Senate messages. The Commission urges the Senate not to allow this language to pass in this bill, or to be amended onto any other bill pending in the Senate.