

**A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE UNDERSIGNED
MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
PANAMA CITY BEACH URGING THE DEFEAT OF HB
425 & SB 188.**

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, tourism is a major industry in Florida, and

WHEREAS, it has been reported by economists that the economy of Bay County, Florida, is more dependent upon tourism than all or almost all of the counties in the State; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming majority of the tourist economy in Bay County is located on Panama City Beach, and tourism is the most significant industry in the City of Panama City Beach; and

WHEREAS, as a result of these facts, the members of the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach are uniquely qualified to express opinions upon matters relating to tourism; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature is considering HB 425 and SB 188 which restricts the ability of local government to regulate vacation rentals by owners and the similar, shared lodging industry (here for convenience collectively "VRBO"); and

WHEREAS, the undersigned members of the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach desire to take this opportunity to individually express their opinion on the pending legislation at this critical moment.

NOW THEREFORE, each of the undersigned members of the City Council of the City of Panama City individually and separately state:

1. That they agree with the forgoing recitals.
2. That VRBO is an outgrowth of the internet revolution and is a valuable and desirable component of the modern vacation and tourist driven economy, but as such it is far more anonymous and involves far less personal contact between the modern, digital "inn-keeper" and the vacationing tourist than did traditional, transient accommodations.
3. That the lack of the property owner's control over the rental and the resulting independence of the VRBO customer frequently lead to activities and situations which disturb not only residents but also other visitors.
4. That these disturbances are typically minor, but are varied, frequent and recurring, and over time will diminish the reputation of an area as a vacation destination.
5. That the VRBO properties are often located in neighborhoods and condominium buildings populated by permanent residents not engaged daily in the recreation and frivolity enjoyed by vacationers.

6. That they appreciate and respect the private property rights of the VRBO owner but also find, through personal experience, that the independent nature of the VRBO rental relationship and often the very location of the VRBO property, especially when located in a condominium building, generates localized activities and issues which are unique not just to the City but most often unique to a single neighborhood or condominium building due to such localized physical and economic issues as parking, traffic circulation, proximity to restaurants and bars, frequency and timing of garbage collection, and especially with respect to condominium buildings, rental by a distant owner who has little or no regard for the surrounding neighbors or units in the building.

7. That it is utterly impossible for the legislature to anticipate or react to the myriad and constantly recurring local issues created by VRBO and that HB 425 and SB 188 are abject capitulations to the VRBO industry at the expense of not just local residents but the tourist industry itself. The undersigned would respectfully ask the legislature to remember that during much of the year in Panama City Beach there are more tourists than residents.

8. That this plea is not simply to protect local residents or to preserve the sanctity of home rule, but as importantly it is to preserve the ability of the City and the county to protect the tourism industry in Bay County, the lifeblood of Panama City Beach, from the unique, local and ever evolving excesses of the VRBO industry which Tallahassee cannot predict, observe or address.

9. That they would also respectfully ask the legislators to be mindful that regulations enacted by local governments must be enforced by those same governments and, if excessive or burdensome, the peoples' local elected representatives are quickly made aware of those burdens and any un-intended consequences.

10. That the City and County's authority to regulate the potential excess activities generated by VRBO is more important than their ability to regulate the location of VRBO properties or impose life safety requirement upon the physical homes or units placed into the industry (which reportedly some communities have imposed as a barrier to the industry).

11. That the legislature is urged to defeat HB 425 and SB 188.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, *separately and not assembled*, have set their hands.

By:  Date Mar 30-17 By:  Date 3-30-17
Mike Thomas, Mayor Josie Strange, Vice Mayor

By:  Date 3/30/17 By:  Date 3-30-17
John Reichard, Council Member Phil Chester, Council Member

By: _____ Date _____
Hector Solis, Council Member