



December 9, 2025

Via Email Delivery

The Honorable Fiona McFarland
Florida House of Representatives
303 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 145 Suits Against the Government
12/11/2025 agenda, House Judiciary Committee

Dear Representative McFarland:

On behalf of the Florida League of Cities and the municipalities we represent, I respectfully express our opposition to **HB 145**, which would substantially increase sovereign immunity limits for negligence lawsuits against government entities. While we share the desire to ensure fairness for injured parties, HB 145 represents an unsustainable expansion of government liability that would drive up taxpayer costs, increase government expenditures, and directly undermine legislative efforts to reduce property taxes.

A Mandate for Government Spending

HB 145 would raise the current limits from \$200,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident to \$500,000 and \$1 million, respectively, beginning in 2026, with an automatic escalation to \$600,000 and \$1.2 million by 2031. This proposal would more than triple government exposure to lawsuits, forcing cities and counties to dramatically increase reserves or insurance premiums to prepare for higher payouts.

At a time when state leaders are focused on reducing property taxes and cutting government spending, HB 145 would do the opposite, mandating higher local government spending and redirecting millions in taxpayer dollars away from essential community services and infrastructure needs.

The Fiscal Reality: Increased Liability = Higher Local Taxes

Cities must balance their budgets each year. There is no federal backstop or state bailout for local tort claims. When liability costs increase, local governments have only three options: raise property taxes, reduce essential services, or scale back public programs that directly serve residents.

HB 145 would:

- Increase insurance premiums across all government entities, especially small cities already struggling with Florida's volatile insurance market.
- Require cities to budget for potential million-dollar claims, diverting funds from law enforcement, fire protection, infrastructure, and hurricane recovery efforts.
- Force taxpayers to shoulder the cost of increased litigation exposure, contradicting the Legislature's broader effort to lower the cost of living in Florida.



A Balanced and Responsible Alternative

The League supports a **reasonable and data-driven approach** to updating sovereign immunity limits. The last adjustment occurred in 2011, and an inflation-based increase would result in limits of approximately \$288,056 per person and \$432,085 per incident—far below the excessive increases in HB 145. The bill's proposed limits are neither practical nor fiscally sustainable.

Comparing Florida to Other States

Thirty-three states impose sovereign immunity limits. Texas, a frequent benchmark for conservative governance, maintains limits of \$250,000 per person and \$500,000 per incident—half of what HB 145 proposes. If Florida aims to remain a low-tax, business-friendly state, it should follow models that encourage responsible government liability rather than outpacing national trends.

Significant Impact on Insurance Costs

Florida's already volatile insurance market makes it increasingly difficult for cities to obtain and afford liability coverage. The limits proposed in HB 145 will drive up premiums for all government entities, placing a particularly heavy burden on small cities with limited budgets. These municipalities will struggle most to absorb the higher costs, despite having the fewest resources to do so.

Encouraging Litigation, Not Efficiency

Expanding sovereign immunity limits would incentivize more lawsuits and larger settlements against public entities. Cities and counties would face greater legal exposure even when they act responsibly, with trial attorneys—not communities—reaping the benefits. Every dollar spent defending or paying inflated claims is a dollar not spent maintaining roads, police stations, or emergency response capacity.

A More Responsible Path Forward

We encourage the Legislature to pursue a measured, data-driven reform by:

- Instituting reasonable inflation-based increases rather than extreme adjustments.
- Requiring the claims bill process as a safeguard for **contested** claims.
- Allowing insurers of government entities to require claims bill approval for payouts related to **contested** claims.

HB 145 would create a fiscally unsound, litigation-driven expansion of government spending that undermines the Legislature's pro-taxpayer, small-government agenda. Reducing property taxes and growing lawsuit exposure cannot happen at the same time. We urge you to oppose HB 145 and instead support reforms that protect both fairness and fiscal discipline.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



David Cruz
Legislative Counsel
Florida League of Cities, Inc.

cc: Chair Robert Charles "Chuck" Brannan III and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

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