



# TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY

*Incorporated November 14, 1955*

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June 1, 2026

Representative William "Will" Robinson, Jr., District 71  
303 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: Property Tax Reform Proposal and Implications for Local Government

Dear Representative Robinson,

The Town of Longboat Key has enjoyed a collaborative and positive relationship with our state delegation, resulting in positive outcomes for our region and our state. In your role as the Chair of the State Affairs Committee, it is of great importance that we have the opportunity to emphasize the significance of potential property tax legislation to be considered.

The Town of Longboat Key has a long and consistent history of aligning outstanding services with community expectations and fiscal responsibility. Our taxpayers understand the framework we have while consistently working hard to minimize property tax impacts and implications.

As we understand the latest property tax reform proposal, it includes a \$250,000 homestead exemption, with the potential for a future \$500,000 homestead exemption consideration, a 5% cap on non-homestead residential properties and commercial properties, and a 5-year threshold for new residents coming into the state before they could take advantage of such exemptions.

It is troubling that the incomplete details of such a massive change to local government funding are shared just a few days before a 3-day special session is to convene to consider these, and potentially other, proposals. For months, there has been ample opportunity to disclose to the public and the local governments impacted the details of any tax reform. That would have provided full transparency and the opportunity for public engagement prior to the special session. Instead, we are treated to political theater and something that's been crafted to achieve the 60% threshold, rather than making Florida and its local governments stronger and more resilient.

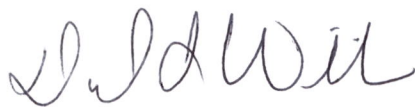
As a reminder, there is in the Florida Constitution a Taxation and Budget Reform Commission (TBRC) that is established every twenty years to consider and recommend changes to the taxing mechanisms at both state and local levels. This would be a thoughtful alternative that would allow all sides of the issue to weigh in before anything is placed on the ballot. The obvious problem with this thoughtful and inclusive approach is that the Commission doesn't meet until 2027, and that is a timing issue for our outgoing Governor.

The Town of Longboat Key is proud to be a premier community, and as an incorporated municipality, the closest level of government to the people, we strive to constantly provide exceptional service. The services we offer are the exact services desired by the community. In a small, efficient, and well-run Town, all services are “core services.” Our businesses on the island appreciate Town services as well, and in fact, enjoy an excellent working and collaborative relationship with the Town.

What has been proposed will cripple or bankrupt a number of cities and counties across the state without thinking as to how critical services (including public safety) will be provided. It will also jeopardize credit ratings and borrowing costs. It is of vital importance that the merits of any tax reform proposal have time to be examined and debated, with the best of whatever is warranted placed on the ballot for the public to decide. The Taxation and Budget Reform Commission is the right vehicle to utilize for this, while a quickly convened three-day special session is clearly not.

Public officials must conduct themselves in ways that maintain public trust and confidence. Public trust is the currency that allows all levels of government to function, and without it, we are bankrupt. What’s been proposed, to the best we understand it, is not just a financial issue but also an ethical one. As local government is the government the people know the best, if we don’t stand up for the ethical principles that serve as the foundation for the greater good, who will?

We respectfully ask that you do not endorse the Governor’s plan, and if you are so inclined, to charge the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission that meets in 7 months to perform the necessary review. Thank you for your service to our State and our region, and please do not hesitate to contact the Town of Longboat Key with any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "W".

Debra Williams, Mayor