



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

June 11, 2018

The Honorable Joe Negron
President, The Florida Senate
Office of the President
The Capitol
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear President Negron:

The recent acknowledgement by that the Department of Agriculture that it had wrongly issued hundreds of concealed weapons permits to non-eligible individuals over a period of approximately one year, and subsequently failed to promptly disclose that failure for at least one year after, has deeply shaken our trust in the agency's ability to safeguard the people of Florida.

And, as more details have emerged since news broke of the potential scandal late Friday, questions have mounted as to the degree of knowledge within the agency, namely who knew what, and when? Questions are also mounting as to the number of ineligible individuals who were actually issued permits, whether all of those ineligible permits were captured during a subsequent review, and if the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which was on notice about the employees login failure and was subsequently interviewed in the course of the 2017 internal investigation, failed to notify the governor and his office about the massive breach.

We are also extremely concerned about the move by the Department to include a provision tucked into a huge piece of legislation it was pushing this year to give blanket approval to any concealed weapons permit which had not been issued within 90 days of application if no disqualifying information had been received. Was this in any way tied to the Department's delay in issuing permits due to its

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JOE NEGRON
President of the Senate

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President Pro Tempore

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discovery of the security breach? In other words, was the intent of the obscure provision to cover up its failure?

And, while the Department of Agriculture's Inspector General may have done an adequate internal investigation under parameters it may have been given, we remain skeptical of just how far and how deeply it probed in uncovering all of the pertinent facts and players in this security failure.

In order to put these and other questions to rest, and to provide the measure of full transparency the public demands from their elected officials, we request that you exercise your power under Florida Senate Rule 1.5 to convene a Senate Select Committee tasked with investigating this epic breakdown.

To underscore the need for this request, please remember we both represent districts racked by mass shootings in just the past two years – the same period of time in which the Department of Agriculture was asleep at the wheel and issuing concealed weapons' permits to people who never should have received them. To merely accept the word of an agency head that the problem has been fully rectified without a full and independent investigation would be not only dereliction of our duty, but an affront to all those families still suffering from these wounds who look to us to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

We strongly urge you to consent to our request and convene the select committee so that the people of Florida get the critical answers they deserve.

Sincerely,



Senator Linda Stewart, District 13



Senator Kevin Rader, District 29

CC: Honorable Bill Galvano