

Tampa Limousine Regulator Seeking To Remove Abuse Protection Mechanism From Law

Coming on the heels of upping licensing fees ten-fold, Tampa's taxicab and limousine regulating agency has tapped Florida Representative Michael Scionti to sponsor a bill that would remove requirements for this agency to adopt rules in conformance with state law.

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The Hillsborough County Public Transportation Commission (HCPTC) which is now battling 4 federal lawsuits is seeking to remove from its' enabling legislation, requirements to enact rules in accordance with Florida administrative law and has convinced State Representative Mike Scionti to sponsor this bill.

"The HCPTC has been given carte blanche by the Florida Legislature to control all limousines providing transportation to and from the interstate transportation hubs located in Tampa and includes limousine operations in outlying counties supplying transportation for their local residents", states Walt Kozak of the Florida Intrastate Transportation Alliance (FITA) a passenger transportation advocacy group.

"The HCPTC is attempting to remove from its' law, a safeguard which allows persons aggrieved by administrative actions of this agency to seek redress through a petition with the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings whereas a State Administrative Judge hears and renders decisions on the validity of regulatory actions of the agency".

"The bill is being presented to the Legislature under a false claim that HCPTC regulatory authority is limited to Hillsborough County whereas in reality approximately 65% of motor carriers licensed by this agency are located in other counties and the regulatory rules profoundly affects passenger transportation and travel businesses as well as the traveling consumer up and down Florida's central west coast."

"The passage of this bill into law will result in persons negatively impacted by regulations of the HCPTC being deprived of an important tool to keep government regulators in check and being left with no other options but to seek redress through the expensive and lengthy process of filing lawsuits in the civil courts".

"The HCPTC just raised the business application fees from \$500 per certificate to \$5,000 in a move to discourage new market entrants throughout the state and now this agency wants to eliminate all accountability for its' actions. I don't know what scam this agency ran across Scionti to garner his support for this bill, but he has been contacted with a suggestion that he removes himself as a sponsor of this bill", finishes Kozak.

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Keywords

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