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Senator George S. LeMieux  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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### Comments to the Honorable Jennifer Bradley, Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Community Affairs regarding SB 510 --- State Funds

My name is Dominic M. Calabro and I am President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch, an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit taxpayer research institute & government watchdog which, for over 40 years, has worked to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of Florida government and promote a fair and equitable system of taxation.

As you know, there is an affordable housing crisis in Florida. While it is truly a nationwide problem, it is especially acute in the Sunshine State. **A lack of affordable housing hurts our most vulnerable populations** – including children, the elderly, persons with special needs, and veterans- **and working Floridians** who find it difficult to live in the communities in which they work, including people with critical jobs such as teachers, EMTs, police, and firefighters.

In 1992, acknowledging the importance of affordable housing, the Legislature created a dedicated source of funding for state and local programs. Unfortunately, it has not really been dedicated, as these funds have become more of a pot of money used to balance the budget or fund other initiatives. **In fact, since FY 2009-10, considerably more of these funds have been diverted to other uses than have been appropriated for affordable housing programs.**

As our report “[\*The Legislature Must Stop Diverting Affordable Housing Funding\*](#)” highlights, **Florida TaxWatch supports the enactment of legislation to protect dedicated affordable housing funds from being diverted.** Legislation, such as SB 510, help address this problem.

Our research and policy recommendations have long called for **putting the “trust” back in all trust funds.** The report referenced above has been made available to members and staff of the Committee and is available at [FloridaTaxWatch.org/Research.](http://FloridaTaxWatch.org/Research)

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues as this critical budgetary and taxpayer accountability issue is addressed.