Talking Points on Affordable and Attainable Housing

On: The Florida Chamber Foundation’s Florida 2030 Research Project

Prepared for: Florida Senate Community Affairs Committee

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Thank you chair, Senators

My name is Tony Carvajal, Executive Vice President of the Florida Chamber Foundation, a non-partisan, business-led research organization focused on securing Florida’s future.

Members, I am not here today to lobby you, but instead provide valuable research from the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Florida 2030 research project.

The *Florida 2030* study is a once-a-decade benchmarking report* looking at the fundamentals of the state and planning for future changes and disruptions.

As part of our analysis, we *visited all 67 counties* over the past year and a half and *engaged more than 10,000 Floridians in town hall conversations*, where we asked about capacity to compete, ability to ensure prosperity, and ways to secure vibrant and sustainable communities, today and tomorrow.

We heard a number of interesting things about talent, infrastructure, prosperity and quality of life. You can find a *summary of findings on our website, Florida2030.org*.

Most notably, though, the one issue that was *universally identified as crisis* across the state, was the *availability of attainable housing, particularly for critical workers.*

***Three key messages*** came up often:

- The *hangover from the recession* lingers for those seeking affordable housing;
• It is particularly **impacting three key populations** prevalent and critical to Florida’s future, **young families, retirees and critical workers** such as teachers, first responders, nurses, construction workers and professionals in mid-skills jobs.
• Builders finding it hard to focus on attainable/affordable market because of the uncertainties tied to these critical residents. **We are stuck in a vicious cycle thanks to this uncertainty, where we can’t build more of the homes until we know that these residents are able to move into them.**

We heard another critical message last week at the Florida Chamber Foundation’s annual Economic Outlook Summit where our own Chief Economist, **Dr. Jerry Parrish**, identified **affordable housing** as one of Florida’s constraining variables.

Economists across the state are optimistic about the potential for growth, and Florida job creators believe they could do more than current workforce projections suggest, except for **two constraining variables: availability of skilled talent and availability of affordable housing.** Hard to help businesses/communities recover and grow if they find workers but they still never start employment because they can’t find a place to live.

One emerging and unique opportunity we have now as many young professionals with families, the **30-50 year olds poised to leave their high tax states thanks to the recent tax package, are considering Florida.** But we can lose them if we remain mired in a world with limited or no good housing option.

The funds and programs associated with the Sadowski Trust Fund are important not only as **a means of addressing the current critical needs of affordable and attainable housing** our communities are dealing with but also to overcome a critical choke point on Florida’s future economy.

Thank you allowing me the time today to share some preliminary findings of our **Florida 2030** report.