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via email: [larry.bustle@mymanatee.org](mailto:larry.bustle@mymanatee.org)

Larry Bustle, Chairman  
Manatee County Board of County Commissioners

RE: Gulfcoast Legal Services

Dear Commissioner Bustle:

We proudly represent Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc., a Florida not for profit organization. Gulfcoast Legal Services provides or helps to provide legal services for economically disadvantaged persons and groups in five Florida counties, including Manatee County. We have been asked to respond to a September 20, 2013, letter sent to Manatee County Commissioners from the Bradenton Chief of Police, Michael Radzilowski.

Chief Radzilowski is the husband of a former employee of Gulfcoast Legal Services, Elizabeth Boyle. Ms. Boyle was terminated from Gulfcoast Legal Services in May 2013. Chief Radzilowski's claims about the denial of legal assistance are completely without merit. As an initial matter, we question what jurisdiction the Chief of Police would have in evaluating the acceptance or denial of legal representation. Nevertheless, Gulfcoast Legal Services will briefly explain its decision concerning the individual described in Chief Radzilowski's letter.

Gulfcoast Legal Services is able to provide legal services through the receipt of grants and donations. The majority of the grants received by Gulfcoast Legal Services have very specific purposes, geographic restrictions and designated beneficiaries prohibiting their use for all types of cases. The managing attorney for the Gulfcoast Legal Services' Bradenton office determined there was no coverage for the individual's case based on the available grants in the Bradenton office. There was a grant that provided funding for elderly, but the young woman did not qualify for that grant. Gulfcoast Legal Services' chief of litigation, a Florida licensed attorney with more than thirty (30) years' experience, concurred that Gulfcoast Legal Services did not have funding to assist the individual.

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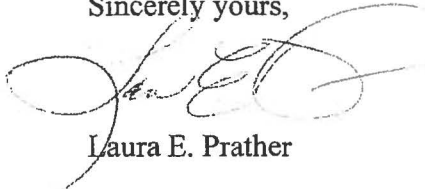
BOCA RATON DALLAS DENVER FORT LAUDERDALE JACKSONVILLE LAS VEGAS LOS ANGELES MADISON MIAMI NAPLES  
NEW YORK ORLANDO PALM BEACH SALT LAKE CITY TALLAHASSEE TAMPA TYSONS CORNER WASHINGTON, D.C.  
WEST PALM BEACH

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Additionally, Chief Radzilowski erroneously and without substantiation alleges that Gulfcoast Legal Services sent a "slanderous and false complaint letter" about him to Mayor Wayne Poston. Gulfcoast Legal Services has never directly, or indirectly sent any communication to Mayor Wayne Poston discussing Chief Radzilowski. Chief Radzilowski posted a comment concerning his wife's termination on his personal Facebook page. A Gulfcoast Legal Services employee, without the knowledge or endorsement of Gulfcoast Legal Services, wrote to Mayor Poston. The employee wrote the communication on her personal time utilizing her personal computer. Gulfcoast Legal Services cannot interfere with their employee's right to free speech when done on their personal time. It is especially puzzling that Chief Radzilowski would condemn someone else's exercise of free speech to comment on his actions while he exercises his own rights to criticize Gulfcoast Legal Services.

Gulfcoast Legal Services employs Bradenton residents and has tirelessly worked for the citizens of Manatee County. Gulfcoast Legal Services is the oldest and only provider of direct legal service to residents Manatee county. With the \$11,000 received from Manatee County each year, Gulfcoast Legal Services provides direct assistance to approximately eight hundred (800) Manatee County residents. Chief Radzilowski's request to terminate funding to this valuable institution will only serve to further harm economically disadvantaged persons and the Bradenton employees of Gulfcoast Legal Services. We are hopeful that the Commissioners view Chief Radzilowski's letter for what it is, a misconceived attempt to punish Gulfcoast Legal Services for an employment dispute regarding Elizabeth Boyle.

Sincerely yours,



Laura E. Prather

LEP/dez

cc: Commissioner Michael Gallen  
Commissioner John R. Chappie  
Commissioner Robin DiSabatino  
Commissioner Vanessa Baugh  
Commissioner Carol Whitmore  
Commissioner Betsy Benac  
Mitchell O. Palmer, County Attorney