



**CARLOS LOPEZ-CANTERA**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

February 18, 2016

Dear Speaker Crisafulli and President Gardiner:

Property & Casualty Insurance rates in Florida are among the highest in the country. Despite ten years without a major storm hitting our state, Florida homeowners continue to face rising premiums and feel the strain of escalating costs of homeownership.

As you may know Assignment of Benefit abuse may be a leading contributor to higher insurance costs, due to the increased incidence of fraud and litigation surrounding these claims. My home county, Miami-Dade, is ground zero for this problem that recent studies indicate contributes as much as 30% of premium costs. The current system allows for bad actors to exploit consumers and encourages excessive litigation, both factors in rising premium costs. The system presently puts too much emphasis on contractors and lawyers at the expense of consumers.

No homeowner should be asked or forced to sign away his or her policy rights while facing an emergency in order to get repairs made to their home. Under the current system this scenario happens far too often and leaves consumers vulnerable to shoddy workmanship with no recourse, allows bad actors to drive up costs by making unneeded repairs or overcharging, and leads to rampant litigation that drives up costs further for everyone.

I know you share my concern, which is why I am writing you today to encourage the Florida House and Senate to make insurance reform a priority this session. Until we do, bad actors will continue to take advantage of a flawed system, costs will continue to skyrocket, and Florida consumers will continue to get stuck with the bill.

Let us continue to make every effort to help improve the marketplace by protecting consumers and seeking to lower the financial burden of the American Dream of homeownership.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carlos Lopez-Cantera".

Carlos Lopez-Cantera  
Lieutenant Governor of Florida