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## **Local Tea Party Group Endorses Tax Watch ARNP Policy**

### **Expanding the Scope of Practice for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants Would Generate Fiscal Savings While Enhancing High Quality Medical Care**

**Tallahassee-** Florida Tax Watch issued a policy brief yesterday outlining how Florida taxpayers would save 339 million annually and enhance the quality of healthcare to citizens by changing outdated laws. The brief goes on to explain that every other state in the nation with the exception of Alabama has changed these laws to allow Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants to practice as trained and recommends Florida do the same.

Jim Pruette is president of The Calhoun/Liberty Patriots, a member group of tea party network. After the brief was released yesterday Jim responded "We would like to go on record as being in full and absolute support of this and any other measures that would improve access to as well as bring down the skyrocketing cost of health care" said Pruette. "It seems obvious to us that any sensible and responsible legislation which would accomplish those goals would have overwhelming and unanimous support from our elected representatives. We would appreciate all who are involved in the process to give their full and unwavering support to this legislation" he went on to say.

The brief states "The Florida Legislature should remove the barriers to practice for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants by granting authority for the prescription of controlled substances and direct billing to insurance companies and managed care facilities... the Legislature should amend..., Florida Statutes, to clarify and increase the scope of practice for these medical professionals."

Nurse Practitioners have extensive graduate level education and training in the diagnosis and management of disease. They are educated to prescribe medications, order and interpret tests, and direct the plan of care for patients. While the rest of the country allows them to prescribe all medications, including controlled substances, Florida law does not allow them to prescribe controlled substances often forcing patients to emergency rooms for a prescription.

"It makes no sense that we are wasting money when we are talking about another year of revenue shortfalls and cuts to the disabled and mentally ill." states Susan Lynch ARNP vice chair for public relations of the Florida Council of Advanced Practice Nurses PAC. "Taxpayers in other states are reaping the benefits of Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants, why is Florida dragging its feet on this issue."

The Florida Senate issued a report in 2009 calling for Nurse Practitioners to be able to prescribe controlled substances; and the **Institute of Medicine released a report in 2010 calling for removal of laws that restrict the practice of Nurse Practitioners. The recommendation was based on hundreds of research studies proving ARNPs deliver safe high quality health care. This includes the removal of prescribing barriers here in Florida.**