



Bill Moore for Orange County Sheriff
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PRESS RELEASE

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BELLE ISLE PAID FOR PROTECTION THE SHERIFF FAILED TO PROVIDE

Recently, Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith highlighted a taxpayer-funded initiative providing \$350,000 to the Belle Isle Police Department for emergency response equipment upgrades. According to the Senator's summary, the funding would replace two aging marine patrol vessels and purchase a side-by-side utility vehicle to enhance emergency response, waterway safety, search-and-rescue operations, and disaster preparedness on the Conway Chain of Lakes.

Bill Moore remarked, ***“While these improvements are welcome, the funding highlights a larger problem that should concern every taxpayer in Belle Isle and across Orange County.”***

The Orange County Sheriff's Office is the agency responsible for law enforcement on Orange County Waterways. Yet despite operating with a proposed FY 2025-26 budget of approximately \$423 million, the Sheriff's Marine Unit consists of only (2) two supervisors and (5) five deputies responsible for hundreds of lakes, rivers, and waterways throughout Orange County.

The result has been limited dedicated patrol coverage on the Conway Chain of Lakes and a *long-standing perception among Belle Isle residents that county resources are stretched too thin to provide the level of service their community deserves.*

This public-safety service gap forced Belle Isle taxpayers to create and fund their own marine patrol program.

Paying Twice for the Same Protection

For a Belle Isle homeowner with a taxable property value of \$191,410, the annual City of Belle Isle property taxes are approximately \$915.80 based on the current city millage rate (at 4.7845 mills). A portion of those taxes funds Belle Isle's police department, including marine patrol salaries, vessels, fuel, maintenance, equipment, and operational expenses.

At the same time, that same homeowner pays approximately \$774.08 annually in Orange County property taxes (at 4.0441 mills) that help fund the Orange County Sheriff's Office, including its Marine Unit.

In other words, Belle Isle residents are paying once for countywide marine law enforcement through the Sheriff's Office and then paying a second time through city taxes to maintain a separate marine patrol program because the county has not provided sufficient dedicated coverage.

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Bill Moore stated, ***“This is not efficiency and Belle Isle residents should be infuriated that this duplication was created because of the current Orange County Sheriff’s failure to provide a level of service taxpayers were already funding.”***

A Costly Workaround

Belle Isle's investment in marine patrol did not happen by accident.

City records show Belle Isle added marine officers to provide additional lake safety, sought increased patrol presence on the Conway Chain, and invested in infrastructure such as a dedicated lakefront patrol dock to improve emergency response times.

The city has also invested significant taxpayer dollars into marine operations, including a recent \$150,000 vessel purchase and the newly announced \$350,000 equipment upgrade.

These expenditures were made because residents wanted the level of protection they believed they were not receiving from the Sheriff's Office despite already paying county taxes to fund those services.

“Belle Isle taxpayers should not have to purchase a second layer of public safety because the first one failed to meet their needs,” said Bill Moore.

The Reset the Tone Solution

As Orange County Sheriff, I would not ask Belle Isle taxpayers to continue paying for two separate marine patrol systems.

Instead, I would work with the City of Belle Isle to create a cooperative public safety partnership that preserves rapid response capabilities on the Conway Chain of Lakes while eliminating unnecessary duplication and reducing long-term costs.

Under my plan, Belle Isle Police Department Marine Patrol Officers would be deputized through the Orange County Sheriff's Office and integrated into countywide marine operations, but available to patrol the same area they were already patrolling.

Their existing vessels, equipment, and strategically located boat ramp facility would remain in service at their current location, ensuring the rapid response times Belle Isle residents have come to expect while expanding coverage for surrounding Orange County waterways.

Bill Moore emphasized that, ***“This approach creates a true win-win for both Belle Isle and Orange County taxpayers.”***

Belle Isle residents would continue receiving fast, local on-water emergency response without the expense and administrative overhead associated with operating a separate marine patrol system. Orange County residents throughout the Conway Chain area would benefit from having additional deputized marine officers available to respond immediately to boating accidents, drownings,

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search-and-rescue operations, medical emergencies, severe weather events, and other public safety incidents.

To ensure professionalism and consistency, Belle Isle officers assigned to marine operations would attend Orange County Sheriff's Office marine patrol training and proficiency programs, maintaining the same operational standards, safety practices, and enforcement capabilities expected of Sheriff's Office personnel.

The Sheriff's Office gains additional trained marine personnel and strategically positioned resources. Belle Isle maintains its rapid response capability. Taxpayers receive greater value for the money they already spend.

"While efficiency and reduction in costs are a goal, the most important aspect here, lives are saved through faster response times and better coordinated public safety services," said Bill Moore.

Better Service. Less Waste.

Government should not force taxpayers to pay twice for the same service.

The answer is not bigger government. The answer is smarter government.

The answer is leadership that identifies inefficiencies, eliminates duplication, and builds partnerships that improve public safety while respecting taxpayers.

For too long, Belle Isle residents have paid for protection the Sheriff's Office failed to provide.

As your next Orange County Sheriff, I will ***Reset the Tone*** by delivering a better solution, one that saves lives, saves money, and finally gives taxpayers the efficient public safety services they deserve.

RESET THE TONE

Saving Lives. Saving Money. Serving Every Community.

About Bill Moore

Bill Moore is a retired Orlando Police Department Detective with 21 years of service, a former Task Force Agent with the Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation, a Florida-licensed real estate sales associate, and a FAA-certified sUAS Remote Pilot (drone pilot). He is running for Orange County Sheriff on the theme "Reset the Tone."

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