



Thomas Philpot

Shareholder

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850.577.9090

Focus

- Administrative and Regulatory
- Restaurant
- Tobacco
- Government Affairs and Lobbying
- Hospitality
- Alcohol Beverage
- Residential, Resort and Club
- Food Law

Informed and insightful former state agency executive and director of Florida's alcohol and tobacco regulatory program. Reputable experience managing regulatory policy development and enforcement in multiple industries.

Thomas Philpot provides experienced and strategic counsel to support market participants in navigating regulatory channels and advancing competitive business plans in Florida and throughout the U.S. In helping clients identify pathways for regulatory compliance and opportunities for improving regulatory policy, Thomas focuses on industry sectors relating to alcoholic beverages, tobacco, food, lodging, and other associated interests intersecting with the broader hospitality marketplace. With more than a decade of public sector experience, including leading Florida's Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) as Chief of Staff and managing Florida's Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco as Director, Thomas maintains a well-informed perspective on occupational licensing and business regulation in Florida and carries a network of established connections with public officials in Florida and throughout the United States.

In 2021, Thomas was elected and served as the National President of the National Conference of State Liquor Administrators, representing the conference's 46 state and local member jurisdictions and leading the organization's annual educational program initiatives oriented toward the advancement of effective alcohol beverage policy and regulation. Through six terms on the conference's executive committee, Thomas established lasting and beneficial relationships with alcoholic beverage regulators throughout the country and supported multi-state collaboration on regulatory policy and related matters involving multiple state jurisdictions.

As Chief of Staff for DBPR, Thomas served as the agency's chief operating officer in leading the regulatory policy objectives and daily operations for an agency administering the licensure and regulation of over 1.4 million businesses and professionals across more than 30 occupational fields. Thomas also managed multiple phases as DBPR's Acting Deputy Secretary for Business Regulation, with

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direct oversight of the state's regulatory programs relating to hotels, restaurants, condominiums, and pari-mutuel wagering. During his tenure, the Department implemented Florida's most comprehensive occupational licensing reform package with the passage of the Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act in 2020.

Previously, as the director of the Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, Thomas led a statewide team of nearly 330 personnel in the licensing, auditing, and enforcement of more than 70,000 licenses that permit the manufacturing, distribution, or retail sale of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. At the Division, Thomas directed the development of proposed legislation and administrative rules to enhance Florida's regulatory framework. He also exercised final agency authority on administrative actions relating to license applications, declaratory statements, and compliance and enforcement cases. During his tenure, the Division improved overall licensing performance and processing times, enhanced stakeholder resources and industry outreach, and completed a multi-million dollar project to upgrade Florida's alcoholic beverage and tobacco tax and surcharge reporting system for manufacturers and distributors.

Prior to his public sector work, Thomas served as a private practice attorney, counseling clients across a broad portfolio of local, state, and federal regulatory legal subjects, including representing parties in licensure and compliance matters before administrative agencies.

Insights

- "Automated & Virtual Wait Staff," National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA) 30th Annual Legal Symposium, March 13, 2023
- "Changes in Florida Alcohol Laws Reflect America's Evolving Alcohol Industry," *SpecialtyRetailer*, February 27, 2023

Media

- "Bottoms up: Florida liquor license drawing to be held," *City & State Florida*, September 25, 2023
- "The lottery for a valuable alcohol license is now open," *WLRN 91.3 FM*, September 22, 2023
- "GrayRobinson Adds a Dynamic Trio," *INFLUENCE Magazine*, April 16, 2023
- "Florida Legislation to Watch in 2023," *Law360*, January 2, 2023
- "On The Move," *The Florida Bar*, January 1, 2023
- "FSU Law Focus," FSU Law School Alumni Newsletter, December 8, 2022

Affiliations

- Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation
 - Chief of Staff, 2019-2022
 - Acting Deputy Secretary for Business Regulation, 2018-2019
 - Director, Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, 2015-2019
 - Deputy Director, Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, 2014-2015
- National Conference of State Liquor Administrators
 - President, 2021-2022
 - Executive Committee Officer, 2016-2022
 - State Member Representative, Florida, 2014-2022

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- The Florida Bar
 - Administrative Law Section
 - Government Lawyer Section
- Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute - Chief Executive Seminar, Class 51
- Leadership Florida Connect, Class 3
- Florida Gubernatorial Fellows, Class V
- Leon County Teen Court, Volunteer Judge, 2012-2019
- Knight Creative Communities Institute, Tallahassee Catalyst Class, 2011-2012

Credentials

- J.D., Florida State University College of Law
 - President, Moot Court Team
 - Finalist, J. Braxton Craven, Jr. Memorial Moot Court Competition
 - Finalist, Charleston Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition
 - Member, Mock Trial
 - Champion, The Honorable E. Earle Zehmer Memorial Trial Competition
- B.S., University of Florida, Public Relations

Admissions

- Florida