

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

No. 041-2017

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk 

DATE: January 24, 2017

SUBJECT: MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS AND PUBLIC TRUST RESOLUTION

Please see attached Civility Resolution passed on January 11, 2017 by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust.

RESOLUTION OF THE MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS AND PUBLIC TRUST RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND EVERY MUNICIPALITY WITHIN THE COUNTY OF AN AMENDMENT ADDING AN OATH OF CIVILITY TO THE OATHS OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO ALL ELECTED AND APPOINTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS.

Mr. Joseph Centorino, Executive Director and General Counsel of Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, has requested that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Miami Beach Mayor and Commissioners.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at 305.673.7411.

LC/REG

Attachment

RESOLUTION OF THE MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS
AND PUBLIC TRUST RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY MIAMI-
DADE COUNTY AND EVERY MUNICIPALITY WITHIN THE
COUNTY OF AN AMENDMENT ADDING AN OATH OF CIVILITY
TO THE OATHS OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO ALL ELECTED
AND APPOINTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS

WHEREAS, the establishment of ethics in government and the practice of ethical conduct by public officials requires that those who hold the public trust practice and maintain respect for the human dignity of their peers, subordinates, political allies and adversaries, as well as members of the general public; and

WHEREAS, the level of respect or disrespect for human dignity is most often on display in personal interactions between and among those who engage in public service, as well as those who aspire to public office in political campaigns; and

WHEREAS, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour...a degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution; and

WHEREAS, through our common experience and the observed behavior of public officials, either personally or through the media, it has become apparent that there has occurred a degeneracy in the level of civility shown by too many of those who participate in government, including public servants, those who aspire to be public servants, and those who interact with public servants; and

WHEREAS, it has reached a point where uncivil, rude, and insulting behavior, which demeans both the perpetrators as well as those subjected to such behavior, has become too prevalent and too accepted in government and in political campaigns at all levels; and

WHEREAS, this lack of civility threatens the integrity and proper functioning of government and politics, not only in Miami-Dade County, but throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, the practice of civility in government may be maintained at no cost to the taxpayers and without impeding the free flow of ideas or the vigorous debate of important public issues; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the Florida Supreme Court added language to the Oath of Admission to The Florida Bar, sworn to by every newly-admitted attorney, requiring civility by attorneys to opposing parties and their counsel in court and in all written and oral communications; and

WHEREAS, the same requirement and expectation of civility and integrity ought to apply to all of those sworn to serve in government; and

WHEREAS, a review conducted by the staff of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust has revealed that such a requirement is absent from oaths of office administered to public officials in Miami-Dade County government and in the municipalities with the County,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust recommends the adoption by the Miami-Dade County Commission and by the governing bodies of all municipalities within the County, of the following language, or language of similar import and meaning, in oaths of office administered to all elected and appointed public officials:

"To my colleagues and to all of those I represent and serve, I pledge fairness, integrity and civility, in all actions taken and all communications made by me as a public servant."

- 2) That this RESOLUTION shall be communicated to the Clerks of all County and municipal governing bodies in Miami-Dade County together with a request that this proposed action be placed on the agenda at a forthcoming public meeting of each body.

Adopted this ____ day of 1-11-, 2017

THE MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS AND PUBLIC TRUST


Lawrence Schwartz, Chair