

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEYS EMPLOYED AT THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, AND THE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDERS EMPLOYED AT THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE, INCLUDING A SALARY INCREASE, A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT, AND A LOCALITY PAY DIFFERENTIAL IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE HIRING AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS, TO COMPENSATE FOR THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY RELATIVE TO THE REST OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA; AND DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO SEND A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE FLORIDA SENATE, THE SPEAKER OF THE FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND MEMBERS OF THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION.

WHEREAS, a community's well-being depends on the proper functioning and staffing of all pillars of the criminal justice system, including the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office and the Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office; and

WHEREAS, typically due to unacceptably low salaries, Assistant State Attorneys ("ASAs") and Assistant Public Defenders ("APDs") in Miami-Dade County continue to leave public service faster than they can be trained and replaced; and

WHEREAS, the mass exodus and inability to adequately fill the vacancies has created serious staffing problems which impact the criminal justice system and adversely affect the residents of Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, ASAs and APDs are, unquestionably, the primary voices speaking for crime victims, witnesses, criminal defendants and the community at-large in all felony and misdemeanor courts; and

WHEREAS, the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office consistently has a significant number of vacant prosecutor positions, and these numbers increase as potential hires and trial-experienced lawyers are lured away by much higher salaries offered by other public agencies and civil law firms; and

WHEREAS, a recent study released by U.S. News & World Report found that, for 2023-2024, Miami is now the fourth most expensive city in which to live in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Miami-Dade County single-family home median prices increased 14.9% year-over-year in December 2023, increasing from \$530,900 to \$610,000, now having risen for 145 consecutive months (12+ years), the longest running-streak on record; and

WHEREAS, existing condominium median prices increased 9.48% year-over-year from \$374,500 to \$410,000, while the average price for the rental of a one-bedroom apartment in Miami is upward of \$2,046 per month with an average one-bedroom apartment size being 696 sq.ft.; and

WHEREAS, the average law student graduates with approximately \$160,000 in student debt; and

WHEREAS, ASAs and APDs are being tasked to manage overwhelming caseloads exacerbated by the pandemic-caused backlog while dealing with the stress of making financial ends meet; and

WHEREAS, many high-level and complex cases in Miami-Dade County are being thrust upon prosecutors who have less experience than necessary to effectively prosecute these cases, and a significant number of prosecutors handling attempted murder, rape, kidnapping, and armed robbery cases have less than three years' experience and have tried fewer than 10 felony cases; and

WHEREAS, this on-going crisis, in which criminal defendants may not be appropriately prosecuted and/or defended, creates a serious impediment in the administration of justice in Miami-Dade County with a ripple effect that can easily reach throughout the State of Florida and beyond; and

WHEREAS, although the Florida Legislature, as part of the General Appropriations Act for FY 2022-2023, provided all ASAs and APDs in the State with a \$5,000 - \$10,000 pay increase, the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office and Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office continue to struggle recruiting and retaining both attorneys and staff; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature recently recognized Miami-Dade County's extremely high cost of living and provided employees of other state agencies, including Florida Highway Patrol ("FHP") troopers and Florida Department of Law Enforcement ("FDLE") agents, with a \$5,000 area pay adjustment; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government recognizes that jurisdictions like Miami have unusually high costs of living and provides their employees with a 24.2% locality adjustment; and

WHEREAS, supporting the individuals who truly make the criminal justice system run should be a priority budget appropriation for the Florida Legislature, the Governor and civic leadership throughout the State of Florida.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DULY RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, that the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach, Florida, hereby urge the Florida Legislature to provide funding for the Assistant State Attorneys employed at the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office, and the Assistant Public Defenders employed at the Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office, including a salary increase, a cost of living adjustment, and a locality pay differential in order to support the hiring and retention of qualified and experienced attorneys, to compensate for the high cost of living in Miami-Dade County relative to the rest of the State of Florida; and directing the City Clerk to send a copy of this Resolution to the President of the Florida Senate, the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and members of the Miami-Dade County State Legislative Delegation.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

Mayor Steven Meiner

Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk

(Sponsored by Mayor Steven Meiner)

**APPROVED AS TO
FORM & LANGUAGE
& FOR EXECUTION**

City Attorney

Date

2-14-24

MAF