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February 21, 2011

The Honorable Charles T. Canady
Chief Justice, Florida Supreme Court

The Honorable Ricky Polston
Chair, Judicial Branch Governance Study Group

The Honorable Joseph P. Farina
Vice-Chair, Judicial Branch Governance Study Group

RE: Judicial Branch Governance Study Group Report to the Florida
Supreme Court

Dear Justices Canady and Polston and Judge Farina:

The Florida Council of 100 has had a vital, ongoing interest in improving Florida's judicial system, fervently believing that Florida needs a best-in-class judicial system if we want our economy to function at best-in-class levels. We greatly appreciate your reaching out to us in June 2010, seeking our input regarding the work of the Judicial Branch Governance Study Group.

At that time, we recommended the reassessment of policies relating to the term structure for the Chief Justice position; the development of a long-range planning capacity relating to performance affecting economic development efforts; and a continued focus on the application of technology within the judicial system. After reviewing the Study Group's recent report to the Florida Supreme Court and the underlying consultant's analysis, the Council of 100 commends the Study Group for its diligence and thoroughness. More specifically, we are pleased to see that the Study Group has recommended that:

- The chief justice be chosen by majority vote of the justices for a term of four years commencing on July 1, 2012 (removable by a vote of five justices); that the selection of the chief justice should be based on managerial, administrative and leadership abilities, without regard to seniority; and that a chief justice may serve successive terms. The Council of 100 believes that such changes will better enable the chief justice to drive long-term change and to invest in long-term administrative strategies that ultimately benefit the judicial system and build intergovernmental relationships with other governmental leaders whose actions affect the courts.
- The Judicial Management Council be restructured and refocused on (1) identifying and evaluating information that would assist in improving the performance and effectiveness of the judicial branch, including in such areas affecting the expeditious resolution of



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business matters (e.g., case disposition and clearance rates); and (2) developing, and monitoring progress relating to, long range planning for the judicial branch. The Council of 100 appreciates the recommendation to renew its role on the Judicial Management Council and looks forward to providing continued assistance to the JMC as it moves forward.

Additionally, we are heartened to see the importance both the Study Group and the consultant's report placed on utilizing and strengthening the Florida Courts Technology Commission. Our research has affirmed that systemic technological changes are both vital and necessary if the courts system is to achieve optimal levels of access, coordination, and performance.

Although we've enumerated certain recommendations above, the Council of 100 encourages the Florida Supreme Court to strongly consider all of the Study Group's findings, as well as the foundational research of the National Center for State Courts. As always, the Council of 100 pledges its continued support for efforts to improve Florida's judicial system and create a high quality of life for all Floridians. Please do not hesitate to contact the Council if we can be of further assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Halverson
Chair, Florida Council of 100

Susan Pareigis
President & CEO, Florida Council of 100

cc: The Honorable Barbara J. Pariente, Justice, Florida Supreme Court
The Honorable R. Fred Lewis, Justice, Florida Supreme Court
The Honorable Peggy A. Quince, Justice, Florida Supreme Court
The Honorable Jorge Labarga, Justice, Florida Supreme Court
The Honorable James E.C. Perry, Justice, Florida Supreme Court
The Honorable Ronald Ficarrota, Judge, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit
Court of Florida
The Honorable Rick Scott, Governor, State of Florida



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The Honorable Jeff Atwater, Chief Financial Officer, State of Florida

The Honorable Pam Bondi, Attorney General, State of Florida

The Honorable Adam Putnam, Commissioner of Agriculture, State of Florida

The Honorable Dean Cannon, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Haridopolos, President, Florida Senate

Mike Prendergast, Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the Governor

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