

MDCLC RESOLUTION NO. 2023-1

IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED STATE ATTORNEYS' OFFICE SALARIES

WHEREAS, the member Cities of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) through its police departments work collaboratively with the SAO to ensure the community's safety;

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

WHEREAS, our community is entitled to be secure in their homes, businesses and on the streets;

WHEREAS, qualified and tenured public servants are critical to the public safety mission;

WHEREAS, Florida ranks 48th lowest in the nation for prosecutor pay, and funds each judicial circuit according to a formula that does not reflect the high costs of living in the Miami Metropolitan Area (Miami);

WHEREAS, Miami is the most expensive major urban housing market in the nation as of February 2022;

WHEREAS, core inflation, and the shelter index in Miami (10.4% and 17.2%, respectively) is significantly higher than the national rate (5.7% and 7.5%);

WHEREAS, the Federal government recognizes that jurisdictions like Miami have unusually high costs of living and provides their employees with a 24% locality adjustment;

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature recognizes Miami's extremely high cost of living and provides Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) Troopers and Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Agents with a \$5,000 area pay adjustment;

WHEREAS, the Legislature has not provided any locality adjustment for Miami SAO employees;

WHEREAS, starting Miami SAO prosecutors earn about half as much as their counterparts in the private sector, and significantly less than they can earn at many other governmental agencies;

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

WHEREAS, the Miami SAO's ability to recruit and retain prosecutors and staff is at an all-time low due to the very high cost of living in Miami;

WHEREAS, the Miami SAO's felony caseload remains approximately 30% higher than it was prior to the pandemic;

WHEREAS, the Miami SAO currently has over 100 vacant prosecutor positions and nearly 250 vacant staff positions (as of March 2023), and this staffing shortfall is hampering the Miami SAO’s ability to properly staff the Felony Division and specialized units, such as the Gun Violence Reduction Initiative (GVRI), Career Criminal, Narcotics, and Insurance Fraud units;

WHEREAS, many high-level and complex cases at the Miami SAO are being thrust upon prosecutors who have less experience than necessary to effectively prosecute these cases –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;

WHEREAS, the Miami SAO’s current inability to recruit skilled prosecutors and staff has caused a staffing crisis that is undermining the community’s safety;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

Section 1. Recitals. The foregoing “WHEREAS” clauses are ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are made a specific part of this Resolution.

Section 2. Positions. The Miami Dade County League of Cities supports State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle’s financial proposals for stabilizing the Miami SAO staffing crisis, and urges the Legislature to adopt them.

The aforementioned proposals are:

- a. Increase prosecutor salaries by \$15,000 to help offset high inflation;
- b. Provide an 8.3% cost-of-living adjustment;
- c. Provide funding for a locality pay differential for Miami SAO employees, in the same manner as done for other State agencies, to account for the Miami’s high cost of living and housing

Section 3. Transmittal. The MDCLC hereby transmits a copy of this Resolution to Governor Ron DeSantis, Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, and House Speaker Paul Renner.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 13th DAY OF APRIL 2023.

ATTEST:



KARYN CUNNINGHAM
SECRETARY



JUAN CARLOS "JC" BERMUDEZ
PRESIDENT