

MDCLC RESOLUTION NO. 2023-2

IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE SALARIES

WHEREAS the member Cities of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) supports the efforts of the Miami-Dade Office of the Public Defender to ensure the right of counsel;

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 Public Defender's Office (Miami PD);

WHEREAS qualified and tenured public servants are critical to the system of justice;

WHEREAS Florida ranks 49th in the nation for public defender 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 23.8% 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 PD employees;

WHEREAS starting Miami PDs 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 PD's ability to recruit and retain attorneys and staff is at an all-time low due to the very high cost of living in Miami;

WHEREAS Miami open felonies are 21% higher than they were prior to the pandemic;

WHEREAS the Miami PD currently has over 40 vacant defender positions (as of March 2023), and this staffing shortfall is hampering the Miami PD's ability to properly to its job;

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 a being true and correct and are made a specific part of this Resolution.

Section 2. Positions. The Miami Dade County League of Cities supports the PD'S financial proposals for stabilizing the Miami PD staffing crisis, and urges the Legislature to adopt them.

The aforementioned proposals are:

1. Increase public defender salaries by \$15,000;
2. Provide an 8.3% cost-of-living adjustment;
3. Provide funding for a locality pay differential for Miami PD 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