

ORIGINAL

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

Case No. SC00-1410

FILED
THOMAS D. HALL

DEC 01 2000

IN RE: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee

CLERK, SUPREME COURT
BY 

**COMMENTS OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FAMILY COURTS
STEERING COMMITTEE FOR A
MODEL FAMILY COURT FOR FLORIDA**

The Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida hereby respectfully submits this comment concerning the Recommendations of the Family Court Steering Committee for a Model Family Court for Florida. We commend the Steering Committee for its thoughtful work, its efforts, and its vision for the families of Florida.

We are concerned about implementation of Recommendation #5 for our Circuit, in light of the fact that our Juvenile (dependency and delinquency) Division (including all of its staff and files) is presently situated in a facility located several miles from the facility that houses our Domestic Violence and Family Divisions. Because of this geographic obstacle, it is important that our Chief Judge retain the discretion to appoint separate Administrative Judges for these Divisions. Of course we recognize the importance of coordinating the work of the Divisions to minimize fragmented decision making and inconvenience to families, and to maximize availability of court and community resources to our community's families. In short, we support the "one family, one team" concept, and continue to work to implement it in our Circuit. In the Eleventh Circuit there currently exist both formal and informal procedures whereby the Family, Domestic Violence and Juvenile/Dependency Divisions are attempting to coordinate multi-division cases. In order to better coordinate the divisions, we are working on a circuit-wide written procedure to formalize this process.

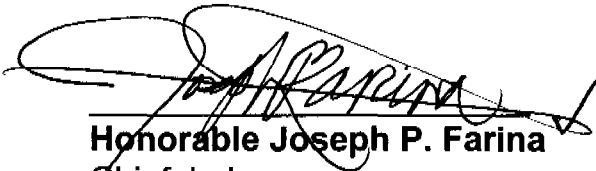
We believe the Supreme Court should leave to the discretion of the Chief Judges whether to include or segregate the criminal misdemeanor component of the Domestic Violence Court in accordance with the best interest of each individual circuit. The experience of the Domestic Violence Court in the Eleventh Circuit has demonstrated the necessity of including criminal misdemeanor cases within the Domestic Violence Court.

The Eleventh Judicial Circuit recommends the Model Family Court proposal include language that provides each Chief Judge with the discretion to determine the administrative structure and coordination procedures necessary to implement the spirit and the goals of the Model Family Court.


We thank you for your consideration.

Dated this 29th day of November, 2000.

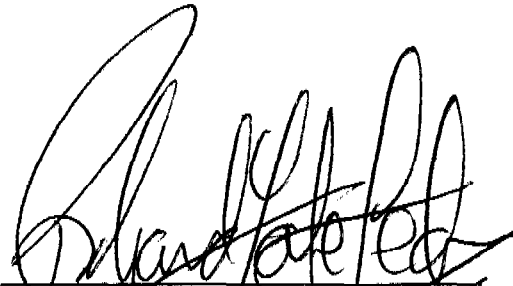
Very truly yours,



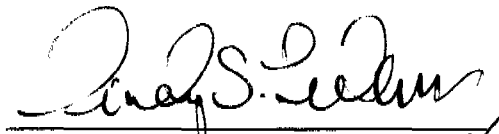
Honorable Joseph P. Farina
Chief Judge



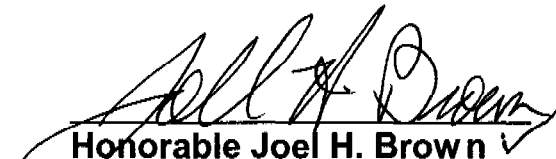
Honorable Amy Karan
Administrative Judge
Domestic Violence Division




Honorable Richard Feder
Administrative Judge
Family Division



Honorable Cindy Lederman
Administrative Judge
Juvenile Division



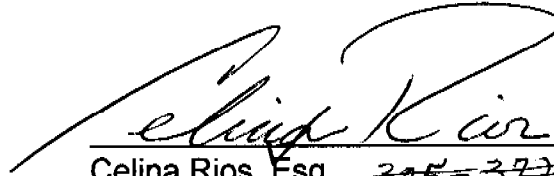
Honorable Joel H. Brown
Associate Administrative Judge
Family Division



Honorable Lester Langer
Associate Administrative Judge
Juvenile Division

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the Comments of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida Concerning Recommendations of the Family Courts Steering Committee for a Model Family Court for Florida was mailed to the Honorable Raymond T. McNeal, Fifth Judicial Circuit, 110 Northwest 1st Avenue, Third Floor, Ocala, FL 34475, on this 30 day of November, 2000.



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Director 305-349-5934
Family Division
Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida