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Via e-mail@flcourts.org and U.S. Mail

Thomas D. Hall, Clerk
The Supreme Court of Florida
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1925

Re: Support for Proposed Rule 20, Florida Registered Paralegal Program

Dear Mr. Hall:

I am writing to express support for Proposed Rule 20, Florida Registered Paralegal Program. This rule is long overdue. Paralegals are a key component in the provision of legal services. In order to maintain and improve the quality of legal services, they should also be subject to training and certification requirements.

I have practiced for twenty six (26) as a business attorney in St. Petersburg, Florida in small firms and currently in a statewide firm. I also teach as an Adjunct Professor at Stetson University School of Law. In these various settings I have worked with many paralegals in different circumstances. The difference in professionalism and skill between a certified paralegal with good training and a person with little technical training and experience is significant. The creation of uniform standards for paralegals has been needed for many years to remove such wide variation. Too often I have observed work of individuals that are identified as paralegals that had not been adequately supervised. More important, the paralegals themselves had not been adequately trained to fully understand the legal issues in order to know when to seek lawyer guidance. The standards that would be established by paralegal regulation are an excellent start in the development of professionalism that needs to be made uniform for all persons performing paralegal services.

Yours truly,

s/ *V. James Dickson*

V. James Dickson

VJD/vjd

cc: John Harkness, Executive Director
The Florida Bar

STP:512279:3

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