

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEYS EMPLOYED AT THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, AND THE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDERS EMPLOYED AT THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE, INCLUDING A SALARY INCREASE, A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT, AND A LOCALITY PAY DIFFERENTIAL IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE HIRING AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS, TO COMPENSATE FOR THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY RELATIVE TO THE REST OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA; AND ADDING THIS ITEM TO THE CITY'S 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES; AND FURTHER, DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO SEND A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE FLORIDA SENATE, THE SPEAKER OF THE FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND MEMBERS OF THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION.**

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

**WHEREAS**, the roles of Assistant State Attorneys ("ASAs") and Assistant Public Defenders ("APDs") are essential to maintaining an effective justice system, reducing crime, and preserving public trust; and

**WHEREAS**, despite raises over the last few years, ASAs and APDs in Miami-Dade County continue to leave public service (typically due to unacceptably low salaries) as quickly as they can be trained and replaced; and

**WHEREAS**, the Miami-Dade SAO lost 156 prosecutors from 2021 – 2023 and faced a vacancy rate of over 32% this past Summer, limiting its ability to recruit and retain qualified attorneys; and

**WHEREAS**, ASAs and APDs are, unquestionably, the primary voices speaking for crime victims, witnesses, criminal defendants and the community at-large in all felony and misdemeanor cases and courts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Miami-Dade County SAO currently faces intense competition for retention of its trial-experienced lawyers who may be lured away by much higher salaries offered by other public agencies and civil law firms; and

**WHEREAS**, a decline in staffing threatens to undermine long-term public safety strategies; and

**WHEREAS**, the starting salary for ASAs and APDs is approximately \$68,000, which is well below the area median income of \$79,400, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for public housing pricing; and

**WHEREAS**, these salaries are inadequate to cover Miami-Dade's high housing costs, and the burden is compounded by substantial student debt, which averages \$160,000 for new attorneys; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent study released by U.S. News & World Report found that, for 2024-2025, Miami is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> most expensive city in which to live in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, additionally, many high-level and complex cases in Miami-Dade County are being thrust upon prosecutors who have less experience than necessary to effectively prosecute these cases, and a significant number of prosecutors handling attempted murder, rape, kidnapping, and armed robbery cases have less than three (3) years' experience and have tried fewer than ten (10) felony cases; and

**WHEREAS**, this on-going crisis, in which criminal defendants may not be appropriately prosecuted and/or defended, creates a serious impediment in the administration of justice in Miami-Dade County with a ripple effect that can easily extend throughout the State of Florida and beyond; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal government recognizes that jurisdictions like Miami have unusually high costs of living and provides their employees with a 24.67% locality adjustment, which means that Federal employees in the Miami locality area are paid 24.67% above the General Schedule Base Pay Table; and

**WHEREAS**, immediately increasing salaries for ASAs and APDs will enable the Miami-Dade SAO and Miami-Dade Public Defender to improve recruitment, retention, and performance within Miami-Dade County's legal system, ensuring the protection of public safety and upholding justice in our City and the broader community; and

**WHEREAS**, supporting the individuals who truly make the criminal justice system run should be a priority budget appropriation for the Florida Legislature, the Governor and civic leadership throughout the State of Florida.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DULY RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA**, that the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach, Florida, hereby urge the Florida Legislature to increase funding for the Assistant State Attorneys employed at the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office, and the Assistant Public Defenders employed at the Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office, including a salary increase, a cost of living adjustment, and a locality pay differential in order to support the hiring and retention of qualified and experienced attorneys, to compensate for the high cost of living in Miami-Dade County relative to the rest of the State of Florida; and adding this item to the City's 2025 legislative priorities; and further, directing the City Clerk to send a copy of this Resolution to the President of the Florida Senate, the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and members of the Miami-Dade County state legislative delegation.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Steven Meiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk

(Sponsored by Commissioner David Suarez and Mayor Steven Meiner)

APPROVED AS TO  
FORM & LANGUAGE  
& FOR EXECUTION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

1/27/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

MAF