



Tampa

601 South Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606
ph 813-984-3060 fax 813-984-3070 toll free 866-395-7100

South Florida

915 Middle River Drive, Ste. 309, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304
ph 954-703-3416 fax 954-400-5415

www.tlolawfirm.com

Carol Jean LoCicero
Direct Dial: (813) 984-3061
cloucicero@tlolawfirm.com

Reply to: Tampa

December 1, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC AND U.S. MAIL

(lhoshihara@ngnlaw.com)

Florida Courts E-Filing Authority Board
c/o Ms. Lynn Miyamoto Hoshihara,
General Counsel
Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson
1500 Mahan Dr, Ste 200
Tallahassee, FL 32308-5167

Dear Authority Board:

As you might recall, our firm represents Courthouse News Service (“CNS”). We write on CNS’ behalf first to thank the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority board and staff for the swift implementation of the public filings access system and then to more formally request the Board consider the addition of an expanded e-notification feature as mentioned during the public comment portion of the October board meeting.

CNS’ journalists have been using the access system for roughly a month. It has operated well and enabled CNS to provide more timely and fulsome coverage of circuit civil complaints filed throughout Florida to its readers. The system is easy to use and newly-filed circuit civil case submissions seem to flow into the public access queue in virtually real time. CNS also appreciates the swift implementation of the system months before the parties’ agreement required. In many ways, with respect to circuit civil complaints, the public filings access system has restored the Florida judicial branch to being one of the most transparent state judicial branches in the country.

In fact, if the Authority board would implement an e-notification feature for subsequent filings, Florida would become the preeminent transparency jurisdiction in the nation for access to circuit civil (or general jurisdiction) state complaints, bar none. Florida already provides free remote public access to imaged circuit civil complaints in near real time, like the state of New York and individual courts in California. An e-notification feature, similar to what attorneys of record already receive, would facilitate better, more timely reporting on newsworthy subsequent filings and the workings of the Florida judicial branch. It would also help attorneys and members of the public who are following a case to stay abreast of new filings directly. In the October meeting, The Honorable Karen Rushing mentioned that this suggestion could be added for discussion at a future board meeting once the initial implementation phase of the public access system was implemented. Now that the access system has passed this initial phase,

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we ask the board to consider expanding the Portal's e-notification feature to include the public, placing Florida at the forefront of transparency in the circuit civil context.

In addition, as The Honorable Laura Roth mentioned in September, the board should also consider adding county civil complaints to a public access queue.

We appreciate the board's openness to our comments and concerns, as well as its rapid implementation of the current public filings access system. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

THOMAS & LoCICERO PL


Carol Jean LoCicero

CJL/tmg