

**Addendum to
July 23 meeting agenda**

ADDITIONAL

MATERIALS

TO: Charter Review Task Force members

DATE: July 18, 2007

FROM: Maurice A. Ferré

The issues that need to be studied, discussed, debated and hopefully concluded by the Miami Dade County Charter Review Task Force (CRTF) can be summarized under two categories:

- I. **Governance issues.**
 - II. **Ethics and money issues.**
-

GOVERNANCE

- I. We are no longer a Council/Manager form of government. Yet, the Miami-Dade County (MDC) HOME RULE in the Florida Constitution creates serious restrictions in reforms of both governance and ethics issues in MDC. On January 23, 2007 the electors of MDC opted for a Strong Mayor format, after the Appellate Court unanimously ruled it legal. What we currently have is a hybrid form of local government. Home Rule permits very broad and very extensive powers to MDC. Many that have never been used.

Public opinion is demanding reforms in governance. The CRTF, and more importantly, the BOCC needs to react to the crises County government is currently in.

My conclusion: Under the “consent of the governed” percept, MDC needs to find a better balance of powers between the executive and the legislative branches in MDC. Broadly, that requires, a completely new relationship, always under Home Rule. MDC should become the central, regional government on major local regional issues. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) should be structured and function as it were a municipal assembly (Jacksonville, San Francisco, Atlanta, New York City, Chicago and many others.) That is, the BOCC, even under Home Rule, should only handle legislative matters and not be involved directly in administrative matters, other than setting the rules and the all important overview function.

ETHICS

- II. No one will argue that, thanks mostly to The Miami Herald, there have been a series of at least 15 to 20 major corruption or wrongful practice

government issues in the past few years that bring to question our governance format, specially pertaining to matters of ethics and corruption in government. Each of these breaches should be discussed by the CRTF with the sole purpose of deciding how to avoid a repeat of these breakdowns: Housing, MIA fuel, WASA cellular telephones and cash flow, MIA-ATT/Bell South debacle, Empowerment Zone/Poinciana, PAC and North Terminal overruns, Public Works low performance (10 years to improve traffic light upgrade), and the many others that need to be discussed, debated and improved.

My conclusion: Complete overhaul of all systems that deal with money or change of value of properties. (Real Estate etc.)

- I will submit specific recommendations that expand on I. and II above.
- I include articles published in The Miami Herald (TMH) and some more extensive original versions.
- I include articles submitted to The Miami Herald (TMH), but not published.
- I include five articles published in El Nuevo Herald (ENH) in Spanish that are longer and more explicit than counterparts in English in TMH.

Articles – MAF

Editorials – TMH

- 1.) “Un Alcalde reformista para Miami Dade”: ENH, 30 de octubre del 2004.
- 2.) “Reforms, structural changes a must”: TMH, March 10, 2005.
- 3.) “Buscando balance”; ENH, 10 de marzo del 2005.
- 4.) “The coming fight over Strong Mayor”; Editorial TMH, April 5, 2005.
- 5.) “What would Madison say about Strong Mayor for MDC”; June 12, 2006, submitted To TMH but not published.
- 6.) “County needs strong-mayor government”: TMH, July 20, 2006.
- 7.) “Where’s the Cavalry?”; August 3, 2006, submitted to TMH but not published.
- 8.) “The line between professional lobbyist and influence peddling”: December 28, 2006, submitted to TMH but not published.
- 9.) “Needed change in Miami-Dade County BOCC”; December 28, 2006, submitted to TMH but not published.
- 10.) “Los cambios necesarios en Miami Dade”: TMH, 17 de enero del 2007.
- 11.) “Good government for Miami-Dade”; TMH, January 19, 2007.
- 12.) “Reformas necesarias en el Condado”; ENH, 17 de febrero del 2007.
- 13.) “Let’s reform the County Charter”; TMH, February 12, 2007.
- 14.) “We need genuine Charter reform”; TMH, April 19, 2007.
- 15.) “Fallos del gobierno en Miami-Dade”; ENH, 19 de abril del 2007.

Un alcalde reformista para Miami-Dade

Tanto Carlos Alvarez como Jimmy Morales pidieron mi apoyo para sus aspiraciones alcaldicias este 2 de noviembre. En la elección primaria, en un campo de ocho quedó tercero y perdí la oportunidad de ir a la segunda vuelta por 2.4% del voto. Alvarez no es político, pero sí fue buen jefe de policía del condado de Miami-Dade por siete años. Morales sí es político y también hizo buen

trabajo como comisionado condal por ocho años. Ahora, y como candidato, mi solo interés es la reforma de nuestro gobierno condal. Hay 15,000 gobiernos municipales y regionales en EEUU. Ninguno se parece en estructura al condado de Miami-Dade. Hoy el poder de este gobierno condal, que rige sobre casi 2,500,000 personas, con un presupuesto anual (incluyendo el hospital Jackson Memorial) de \$8 mil millones, y 43,000 empleados, pone la mayoría del poder en manos de un consejo municipal de trece comisionados. Antes la comisión condal era electa al igual por todos los votantes. Ahora es electa por distrito individual. Hoy, la mayoría de las veces, los comisionados votan con sólo su distrito en mente.

¿Y quién representa la totalidad condal? El único electo por todos es el alcalde. Pero aunque se titula alcalde ejecutivo, de ejecutivo no tiene nada. El alcalde nombra y puede despedir al

administrador, que si es el ejecutivo del condado; ambos actos con el beneplácito de la comisión condal. Es el administrador nombrado, no electo, quien es el verdadero jefe del gobierno condal. Lo peor es que el administrador tiene dos jefes, el alcalde y la comisión. Es imposible respaldar adecuadamente a los dos jefes. De aquí el caos existente en el condado.

Lo otro que requiere reforma en el condado es que la comisión sólo funcione como un cuerpo legislativo. Es decir, que establezca las leyes y las neutras. Hoy es la comisión condal la que otorga todos los contratos. Como aquí se trata de miles de millones de dólares en contratos anualmente, obviamente el enfoque de los grandes intereses económicos, de los oportunistas y de los cabilderos se concentra en los que otorgan los jugosos contratos. Allí está la plaza en los gobiernos federales, estatales y en la gran mayoría de las ciudades grandes de EEUU se elige al ejecutivo y éste tiene separación e independencia del cuerpo legislativo, cuya función es establecer las leyes y los reglamentos. Es decir, los cuerpos legislativos no otorgan contratos en Washington, ni en Tallahassee, ni en la ciudad de Jacksonville. Esta realidad de división



MAURICE FERRE

y balanceo del sector administrativo y legislativo funciona en 25 de las 25 grandes áreas metropolitanas de EEUU como Nueva York, Chicago, San Francisco, Houston y Atlanta; también en Londres, París y Madrid. ¿Por qué no en el condado de Miami-Dade?

En la actualidad el tema de discusión principal en nuestra comunidad es la falta de confianza en nuestro gobierno local debido a la corrupción pública, la preocupación por la transparencia y el saber quién toma responsabilidad por los actos del gobierno. Pero estas preocupaciones son consecuentes y no causas. Las causas de nuestros problemas en el gobierno condal están en la estructura del gobierno actual, que es única en el país y no es eficaz. La fiereza no está en las sábanas. La solución está en la reforma de la carta constitutiva condal. Es ingenuo pensar que la comisión condal ceda su poder voluntariamente. El cambio tiene que venir por la voluntad del pueblo, no por la voluntad de trece políticos. Tanto Jimmy Morales como Carlos Alvarez reconocen esta realidad y quieren estas reformas.

Alvarez, como alcalde condal, no aceptará una reducción del poder alcaldicio. Morales ya ha aceptado esta reducción del poder antes de ser electo. Hace falta un alcalde que no sólo entienda el reto, el dilema y la enervada en la que nos encontramos, sino que tenga el liderazgo, la valentía y la fortaleza para lograr efectivamente el cambio. Juzgando por sus trayectorias públicas, esa persona es Carlos Alvarez. Por esto lo apoyo para alcalde del condado de Miami-Dade, un alcalde reformista.

Ex-alcalde de la ciudad de Miami

EL NUEVO HERALD, MIAMI, 30 OCT 2004

Reforms, structural changes a must

BY MAURICE FERRE

There are two forms of local government in the United States — the original mayor-council, or strong mayor, and the council-manager format that came into vogue the first half of the 20th century. There are hundreds of variations of these two forms in more than 15,000 metropolitan areas. Then there's Miami-Dade County.



FERRE

Of the 25 largest metropolitan areas in this country, 20 are strong-mayor form. In the past 50 years, only one area, not in the top 25, has gone from strong mayor to manager, and that's in El Paso. Yet, in the past 10 years, many larger cities and counties have gone the other way, from manager to strong mayor: Los Angeles, Oakland, and this last November, San Diego; Richmond and Dallas may do the same. There are many others.

In the past years, Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee have mandated that all counties be headed by an elected executive. Why? The answer is: accountability, checks and balance, division of power, fairness of representation in a multiethnic, confrontational, growing community of "new" residents.

Mayor has no vote

Today in Miami-Dade we have a hybrid system, unique to us. We have a strong-commission/weak-mayor form of government. The 13 commissioners are elected by districts only. No commissioner is elected at-large, although the mayor is.

The mayor has no vote, but has veto power. The mayor appoints the manager, with the consent of the commission. But both the mayor and the commission can fire the manager.

This is the second major fault of the system: The man-

ager has two bosses, the commission and the mayor.

Because the commission establishes the budget (including the salaries of the mayor and the manager as well as their office budgets), can fire the manager and, since 2002, chooses the chair and thus the committees, the commission is, with the veto override, all-powerful. He who sets the agenda and controls the gold, rules.

The mayor today is a bully-pulpit figurehead. We no longer have a true council-manager format. The problem with the current Miami-Dade system is simple: lack of accountability, lack of checks and balances, lack of transparency, an ever growing bureaucracy and a lack of effective cost controls.

Here, at-large commissioners and the true council-manager format are gone.

Proof of the above are myriad county problems. How else to explain two million gallons of fuel-oil stolen from the airport? The Citizens Independent Transportation Trust ongoing disaster? The Performing Arts Center and North Terminal overruns? The shortfalls at Jackson Memorial Hospital? The apparent bait-and-switch proposal to cover the \$64.4 million shortfall in past county transit costs for the past three years? — to name but a few of our problems.

When Dade County was created in 1957, there was hope in the new reforms. Much was accomplished in the 32-year life of Metro. Metro is now gone. At-large commissioners are gone. The true council-manager format is gone.

Shortly after Metro was created, Jacksonville went to a new government format. Today, Jacksonville is considered the best run city/county in Florida. Jacksonville has a

strong mayor.

It's the system that needs change in Miami-Dade County.

Now, about the gold. The Miami-Dade County commissioners spend their overwhelming meeting time in two areas: procurement and zoning. If you include the \$6 billion county budget and capital-improvement expenditures, including MIA, surface transportation, parks, culture and others, one can easily predict that the County Commission will be dealing with from \$20 billion to \$30 billion in contracts the next four years. Add to this a billion here and a billion there of a rezoned and extended urban development boundary (UDB), and soon you are talking about real money.

Follow the money; the lobbyists do.

In Jacksonville, in all of the strong-mayor large U.S. metropolitan areas, the 50 states and in the federal government, the legislative branch does not award contracts; it's done by the executive branch, under the supervision of professionals. Can you imagine what would happen if Congress were to award military contracts or the Florida Legislature award road contracts?

A \$5,000 salary

Add to the Alice in Wonderland quality of Miami-Dade County government the fact that the 13 district commissioners, including the chair, spend full time on county business yet receive an annual salary of \$6,000.

We need reform — now.

Here are some recommended structural changes in the Miami-Dade Charter:

- Hold commissioners to two terms, earning a full-time salary, similar to commissioners in Broward County.
- Put procurement in the hands of the executive branch.
- Require full and transparent disclosure for lobbyists and stricter conflict of interest rules.

• Give more power to the mayor: The mayor should be a true elected chief executive officer.

• Allow changes in the UDB — only with a vote of the electors in presidential-election years.

It is time for Miami-Dade County to join other large American cities and counties in adopting the original American form of government: a strong, separate executive, balanced by a strong independent legislative body, with both district and at-large representation.

Maurice Ferré is a former Miami mayor, former Miami-Dade County commissioner and former state legislator.



Camilo Ricardi, M.D., Scientific Director, Diabetes Research Institute

enables patients to live insulin-free. But despite its promise, a number of challenges remain, such as anti-rejection drugs, and inc

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The Miami Herald - Thursday - March 10, 2005

PER

Jueves
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2005

El Nuevo
Herald

Buscando balance

De las 25 ciudades/condados más grandes de EEUU, 20 tienen un sistema de alcalde fuerte (Alcalde-Consejo.) Las otras 5 se rigen bajo un formato Consejo-Administrador. En los últimos 50 años sólo un área metropolitana ha cambiado de alcalde fuerte a administrador (*manager*), El Paso, Texas, que con 600,000 habitantes no está entre las 25 grandes. Sin embargo, en los últimos 10 años muchas han cambiado de administrador a alcalde fuerte. Entre ellas Los Angeles, Oakland y San Diego. También Richmond y este mes va a votación Dallas, que también quiere cambiar. En los pasados años los estados de Arkansas, Kentucky y Tennessee han exigido que todos sus condados sean gobernados por un alcalde fuerte.

Se explica el cambio a alcalde fuerte por la mejor división de poderes, mayor contabilidad, frenos y contrapesos de responsabilidades, mejor representación de minorías y mejor resolución de conflictos.

Hoy nuestro condado se basa en un sistema híbrido que no existe en ninguna de las 25 áreas metropolitanas grandes, ni en ningún municipio/condado entre los más de 15,000 de EEUU. Aquí tenemos un Consejo fuerte (Comisión). El supuesto alcalde ejecutivo es un cero a la izquierda, sin poder de voto, con sólo el veto.

El alcalde nombra al administrador con el consenti-

rial? ¿Las multiplicaciones de costos de la terminal norte del aeropuerto o el Palacio de Bellas Artes? ¿El desastre del transporte, y tantas promesas no cumplidas en Miami-Dade?

Hialeah en 28 meses ha mejorado el flujo de sus calles y su nuevo sistema de autobuses municipales ya tiene un millón de pasajeros (*boardings*). Mientras el condado sigue con la indecisión y el desastre del Fideicomiso Ciu-

dadano Independiente de Transporte. Y de remate nuestros legisladores en Tallahassee quieren abolir la Autoridad de Autopistas.

La gran mayoría del tiempo de la Comisión condal no se dedica a legislar, como otros cuerpos legislativos, sino a otorgar contratos y rezonificar propiedades. Si uno incluye los recién

aprobados Bonos Para el Progreso, el 1/2 centavo para transporte, mejoras de parques, aeropuerto, puerto, carreteras, conjuntamente a los gastos normales de un presupuesto general anual que pasa de \$6,000 millones, estamos hablando de la otorgación de casi \$30,000 millones de contratos en Miami-Dade en los próximos cuatro años. Añadido a los cuantiosos beneficios de rezonificación de bienes raíces y la posible extensión del área urbanizable (UDB), estamos hablando de sumas billonarias.

En el gobierno federal, en los 50 estados y el 80% de las ciudades grandes de EEUU la concesión de contratos lo hace el Ejecutivo. ¿Qué desastre si el Congreso en Washington decli-



MAURICE FERRE

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La gran mayoría del tiempo de la Comisión condal no se dedica a legislar, como otros cuerpos legislativos, sino a otorgar contratos y rezonificar propiedades

miento del Consejo. Pero —y es un pero inmenso— ambos, el alcalde y el Consejo pueden despedir al administrador (que tiene dos jefes.) El segundo error grave es que los comisionados están elegidos sólo por distrito. Nadie es elegido para representar la totalidad, como antes.

Como el Consejo establece el presupuesto, tiene la potestad de despedir al administrador, escoge al presidente del Consejo y puede invalidar (*override*) el veto del alcalde, no hay balance. El que pone las reglas y el dinero, controla. El alcalde hoy es un figurín. El Consejo condal es casi todopoderoso. El sistema viejo de Metro, que funcionó bien por 32 años, ya al final era obsoleto para una comunidad cambiante, pero tenía balance y transparencia. No podemos regresar al formato de Metro.

El formato de Consejo fuerte viola las normas patentes en los 50 estados de la Unión, la gran mayoría de las ciudades grandes y el propio gobierno federal. Al de Miami-Dade le falta propia contabilidad, balance, transparencia y es una burocracia siempre creciente con falta de control de gastos. ¿De qué otra forma se explican los múltiples problemas condales? ¿Y qué de los 2.000.000 de galones robados en el aeropuerto? ¿El sobregiro gigantesco del Jackson Memo-

diera a qué empresa darle los contratos militares o si la Legislatura de Tallahassee escogiera los contratistas de construcción de carreteras!

En Jacksonville, una de las ciudades/condados más exitosas de las 25 grandes y el condado más eficaz de la Florida, existe un alcalde fuerte. Los contratos no los otorga el Consejo, sino los profesionales bajo el alcalde. En Miami-Dade necesitamos reformar nuestro gobierno local con:

■ Más poder para el alcalde, haciéndolo un ejecutivo como nuestro presidente, un gobernador o los alcaldes de Houston, San Francisco, Boston, New York, Washington D.C., Hialeah, Jacksonville y tantas ciudades más.

■ Que el Consejo sea un cuerpo legislativo, como en los gobiernos grandes. Y que se ocupe más del aeropuerto, el Jackson, el transporte, la eficiencia del gobierno local y el bienestar público.

■ Es inconcebible exigir a los comisionados que trabajen a tiempo completo por \$6,000 anuales. Hay que pagarles como en Broward y otros condados grandes, pero limitarlos a ocho años en el cargo, como a los legisladores estatales y al alcalde condal.

■ Los cabilderos hoy no tienen que hacer públicas sus cuantiosas ganancias. Necesitamos más transparencia y reglas más estrictas.

■ Que sólo puedan crecer las áreas urbanizables por el voto del pueblo cada 4 años.

La razón por la cual tantas de las grandes ciudades/condados de EEUU regresan al sistema federal es precisamente por la eficiencia, la transparencia y el buen balance del sistema de gobierno establecido por Jefferson, Madison, Adams y perfeccionado por Abraham Lincoln. ¡División de poderes y balance!

Ex legislador estatal, ex alcalde de Miami y ex comisionado de Miami-Dade.

El Nuevo Herald

Un diario Knight Ridder

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The Miami Herald | EDITORIALS

The coming fight over strong mayor

**OUR OPINION: COMMISSION SHOULD SAY
YES TO ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT**

Today, the Miami-Dade County Commission will consider putting Mayor Carlos Alvarez's proposals for procurement reform and strong mayor on the November ballot. The Commission's answer is likely to be a resounding No! We regret that because the answer should be Yes for better government and Yes for efficient government.

Let's be clear: the vast majority of people in government are honest. But when a crook decides to act, there is no system of government that is foolproof in catching them. The trick is to structure a government that is as transparent as possible, so that when someone tries to unduly influence or cheat, they can more easily be spotted.

Having the same commissioners vote on contracts brought by people who helped them get elected is a bad idea. It is a structure that tempts abuse. There's a simple solution: put the contracting power in the hands of civil servants who don't run for office—and make sure an inspector general keeps a close eye on the process. That's "procurement reform" and we think the commission should support it.

The commission also should approve a strong-mayor provision. It is the government structure favored by states, the federal government and most large cities. Our current system features a strong commission with executive powers and a strong, yet unelected county manager. They act as the legislative and executive branches. Yet, when it comes to

accountability, most residents think of the mayor as the head of government. That's where the power should reside so that residents can focus on the person they can hold accountable. A strong mayor government significantly increases the chances for transparency and accountability.

Commissioners complain that Mr. Alvarez is making a power grab. The reality is that commission actually has too much power and, historically, has used it badly. In this system, lobbyists act as the gatekeepers, commissioners' meddling retards economic growth and corruption seems a byproduct of bureaucracy. Indeed, giving the mayor executive powers would act as a counterweight to the commission, which is organized by district and often acts on narrow interests. Empowering the mayor would make our government more accountable by giving the one person elected by a countywide majority vote the ability to actually govern.

Some critics ask: What if a scoundrel wins that office? Kick the bum out; that's what the ballot is for. Others wonder: What is to prevent a strong mayor from hiring his friends and cronies, and generally making a mess of things? Demand that any change comes with rules that proscribe transparency, professionalism and ethical conduct.

Much is on the line. Residents should ignore the bickering and thoughtfully consider these ideas that can help our community realize its potential.

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The Miami Herald
June 12, 2006

What Would Madison say about Strong Mayor for Miami-Dade County

By Maurice A. Ferré

Soon the issue to determine the policy wisdom of Strong Mayor will be before the electorate of Miami-Dade County. The appellate court unanimously reversed the lower court in favor of the petition to strengthen the elected Mayor of MDC by in effect turning over the charter powers of the Manager to the Mayor.

Over the past year, several county commissioners have been railing against a strong mayor, mostly in the Spanish speaking press and radio. In a recent newspaper article one commissioner synthesized the opposition by claiming that a strong mayor would break the current balance of power and would eliminate checks and balance in county government. Too much power would be vested in one person, the mayor, said the critic.

The U.S. invented the form of government that separates powers between the executive and the legislative branches. This system works in the federal government in Washington, all fifty states and all but two of the major cities of the U.S.

After independence our country floundered with indecision, conflicts of interest and growing anarchy under confederation. Fortunately the Founding Fathers adopted our Constitution in 1787. The main author of this majestic document was James Madison, later our fourth president.

Amongst many important and original concepts of government, Madison had three that stood out and are currently applicable to us in Miami-Dade County.

- 1.) The potential for legislative abuse in a democracy are more ominous than arbitrary acts by the executive branch.

- 2.) The real problem with rights is less to protect the governed from those that govern than to protect minorities from fractious majorities that would abuse their powers.
- 3.) The departments and agencies of the Federal Government are less dangerous than the potential despotism of the states and municipalities.

What makes these three premises applicable to Miami-Dade County was the change in 1992 to county district elections. I was one of the authors of this new system, which is more democratic and representative. But district elections were originally coupled with the balance of both a strong executive mayor and county-wide elected commissioners. These last two reforms were never implemented. Thus what we have now is an unbalanced, hybrid republican format. This form of government does not exist anywhere else in America. The current Mayor has taken figurehead powers, limited to the important "bully pulpit" and veto power. The Mayor also appoints the manager, but the commission raises his salary (and continually does so) and can fire or impede his firing, by overriding the Mayor. Obviously the Manager works for the Commission. That is where the checks and balance breaks down locally. Politicians, not the people, select and keep the executive branch of Miami-Dade County.

Going back to Madison, this runaway commission is more concerned about their districts, protecting their turf and power and thus are easier prey to special interests and their lobbyists. In the State of Florida, Tampa, Jacksonville, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco and Houston, to name a few, the at large elected chief administrator (governor or mayor) balances the more parochial power of those elected by districts in the legislative branch. We saw a clear example of that recently in governor Jeb Bush's multiple line item veto of "turkeys" in the legislative proposed budget.

Secondly, the forming of controlling factions have certainly shown their proclivity to abuse powers in multiple occasions at the county commission level. This is why all the polls shown most commissioners having high negative ratings.

Lastly, the lower the hierarchical level of government (Federal, State, local) the harder it is to govern fairly, justly and un-pressured. Our Federal Senators,

Congressmen and State Legislators seldom get in trouble, in contrast to local politicians.

If Madison, was right, then and now, only by reverting to the traditional (Founding Fathers) form of republican government, with division of power, checks and balance, with limitations and proper representation, can we reclaim good county government for the almost 2, 500,000 residents of Miami-Dade County.

The unfinished agenda is simple and clear: a true elected executive vested with traditional powers and a commission that **ONLY** functions as a legislative body. *It requires talent, integrity and fortitude to make local laws, including the all powerful setting of the nearly \$8 Billion yearly budget. In the legislative branch we need county commissioners elected by districts and balanced by a few commissioners elected at large. (If you must cut, cut the part written in italics).*

For our well-being, it is time for Miami-Dade County to adopt the unmatched and traditional American way of government.



MIAMI-DADE

County needs strong-mayor government

BY MAURICE FERRÉ
mafferre2002@aol.com

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Soon the issue of whether to create a strong mayor will be before the electorate of Miami-Dade County. The appellate court unanimously reversed the lower court in favor of the petition to strengthen the elected mayor by, in effect, turning over the charter powers of the manager to the mayor.

Over the past year, several county commissioners have been railing against a strong mayor, mostly in the Spanish-language press and radio. In a recent newspaper article, one commissioner synthesized the opposition by claiming that a strong mayor would break the current balance of power and would eliminate checks and balance in county government. Too much power would be vested in one person, the mayor, said the critic.

The United States invented the form of government that separates powers between the executive and the legislative branches. This system works in the federal government in Washington, D.C., all 50 states and all but two of the nation's major cities.

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confederation. Fortunately, the Founding Fathers adopted our Constitution in 1787. The main author of this majestic document was James Madison, later our fourth president.

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is an unbalanced, hybrid republican format.

This form of government does not exist anywhere else in America. The current mayor has taken figurehead powers, limited to the important "bully pulpit" and veto power. The mayor also appoints the manager, but the commission raises his salary (and continually does so) and can fire or impede his firing, by overriding the mayor. Obviously, the manager works for the commission. That is where the checks-and-balances arrangement breaks down locally. Politicians, not the people, select and keep the executive branch of Miami-Dade.

This runaway commission is more concerned about each member's district and protecting their turf and power — and thus are easier prey to special interests and their lobbyists. In the state of Florida, Tampa, Jacksonville, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco and Houston, to name a few, the at-large elected chief administrator (governor or mayor) balances the more parochial power of those elected by districts in the legislative branch. We saw a clear example of that item veto of "turkeys" in the legislative proposed budget.

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For our well-being, it is time for Miami-Dade to adopt the unmatched and traditional American way of government.

Maurice Ferré is a former Miami mayor, former Miami-Dade County commissioner and former state legislator.

The Miami Herald, July 20, 2006

①
August 3, 2006

Where's the Cavalry?
By Maurice A. Ferré

The recent excellent series in The Miami Herald by Debbie Cenziper, "House of Lies", about the outrageous shortcomings at the Miami Dade County Housing Agency, drives home an important incongruence in our local government.

Former County Manager Merritt Stierheim during his first tenure as our County chief executive (1976-1986) did not have a single taint of scandal, in nine years. Since Stierheim's second tenure as County boss for three years (1998-2000) we have had the beginnings or the continuations of many scandals: the Performing Art Center that went from \$250 million to what will be over \$500 million (they are still hiding costs), the disaster of the American Airline's, North Terminal at MIA, the fuel farm scandal at MIA, to name the more outstanding recent shortcomings at the County Government. Now this Housing Agency outrage hits us.

One thing is for sure: it has nothing to do with Stierheim's integrity or managerial ability. To paraphrase a 1992 presidential campaign slogan "It's the system, stupid!"

In the past (Stierheim I) the County Commission of Metro Dade County was made up of nine (9) persons. The Mayor (Chairman) and the eight (8) commissioners ran for office at large (countywide). This was the classic Commission - Manager form of government. It worked well, except for one detail: it was not representative government, a fundamental of U.S. democracy.

In the eighties, when the Hispanic (Cuban) and Black communities had well over 50% of the total residents of Metro Dade County, there was one Black representative, Barbara Carey and one Hispanic, "Call me George" Valdez. Naturally it could not and did not stand up in court.

Interestingly, Congress recently extended the Federal Voting Rights Act for 25 more years. Representative government is still important to all Americans.

Yes, one-person, one vote is a cornerstone of American democracy. But because of the outrageous and blatant violation of this principle, the judge sixteen years ago, did not accept any at large representation. This, plus the continuation of an appointed Chief Executive (CEO), rather than an elected CEO skewed the resulting government imbalance, still plaguing us today.

To make matters worse, then Commissioner, Alex Penelas passed a Charter reform that was accepted by the voters in a September 1992 election, by less than 8 % of the registered voters. That charter change further distorted the Commission – Manager government format by naming an Executive Mayor, without giving the Mayor any executive functions. Penelas was elected that "Executive Mayor" in 1996. By Penelas's second term, the commission and then the electorate in 2002, stripped the Executive Mayor of most of the powers he had over the County Commission. Our hybrid local government has totally emasculated a second and third premise of American good government: checks and balances and the division of power between the legislative and executive branches. The predictable result is: the current and ongoing implicit and explicit political interference by the Commission of administration functions and departments.

It is amazing that it only took a seven-month investigation by a Miami Herald reporter, to blow the lid on another County scandal. George Burgess has been Miami Dade County Manager for three and half years. Where was Burgess? Where were the commissioners?

Yes, Manager Burgess six months ago brought in Cynthia Curry, a talented, tough and honest professional, to clean up the Housing Agency mess. We saw Commissioner Katy Sorenson and Cynthia Curry at the press conference next to a justifiably outraged Mayor Carlos Alvarez last Monday, July 24, 2006. Where was Manager Burgess? Burgess knew the Herald

report was coming, yet it took him till last Sunday's Op-Ed page to write a weak letter of explanation.

The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan said it well: "The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself."

It's time for the political system to change Miami Dade's political culture and save it from itself by taking it back to the traditional American government system established 230 years ago by our Founding Fathers: division of powers between legislative and executive branches, for Miami Dade County.

For: The Miami Herald

Date: December 28, 2006 (01.16.07)

(707 words)

The line between professional lobbyist and influence peddling

By: Maurice A. Ferré

The issues of lobbyist, professionalism and improper influence peddling are rampant in Washington, Tallahassee and Miami Dade. The problem is that restraints keep bumping up against 1st Amendment Rights. Nevertheless, we must continue to figure ways of curtailing the few wrongdoers that spoil the image of many "by the book" professionals who lobby.

After the disastrous effects on public policy and on the public's confidence in local government after the cost overruns at MIA, missing jet fuel, missing cell telephones, missing affordable housing, missing millions and missing accountability in so much of current County Hall, change is long overdue. All the letters to The Editors of the Miami Herald are daily proof, as are all polls made public this last year.

On January 23, 2007 we will have an opportunity to correct one major shortcoming: to have the Chief Executive of Miami-Dade county elected by all the voters, rather than selected and kept by 14 politicians, the Mayor and 13 commissioners. Then the voters can decide if they like the elected Chief Executive (Mayor) at the next election. In any case, the Mayor is term

limited to eight years. It's much more difficult to eliminate an incompetent Manager, if he/she is under the protection of a handful of Commissioners.

We also need reform on the Commission, to make it a true legislative body. Legislatures should pass laws, adopt the yearly budget, override the Mayor's vetoes selectively, and have oversight powers and zoning. No awarding of contracts. Contracts are an administrative function at the Federal level, in all fifty States and in most large American cities.

If we get proper Commission checks and balance, then the voters would accept reasonable salaries, along with eight years term limitation for the Commissioners, like the Mayor's current term limits.

Perhaps the most needed reform in Miami-Dade County is clearer understanding of the role legitimately to be played by lobbyists.

Here is a partial list of reforms needed:

- 1.) Full public disclosure of all forms and quantities of payments to registered lobbyist affecting Miami-Dade County.
- 2.) No indirect payment to lobbyist of any kind.
- 3.) No success or contingency fee payments to lobbyist; no percent participation of clients business, direct or indirect; no participation of any deals, currently or promised in the future.

- 4.) Strict rules regulating lobbyists who work for Miami-Dade County from presenting third party issues before staff or the Board of County Commissioners.
- 5.) Prohibition of citizens who serve in Miami-Dade County appointed boards from lobbying staff or the Board of County Commissioners.
- 6.) Prohibition of being a Miami Dade county lobbyist if you represent any other like local government in Florida, either another county or a major city competing with Miami-Dade County for funds.
- 7.) Lobbyist who represents other clients against Miami-Dade County cannot represent Miami-Dade County in other matters for a five-year period.
- 8.) Prohibition of anyone who does business with or for Miami-Dade County to raise funds for any serving or aspiring County politician or any PAC involved in a County election, directly or indirectly, for a one year period before or after that persons election. This should include vendors, professional services, including lobbyists.
- 9.) Strict definition as to who is a lobbyist; to avoid hiding behind professional status, such as; engineer, lawyer, doctor, owners representative, etc.

Properly done, lobbying is an honorable profession. Electorates, everywhere in the U.S.A., more and more, reject influence peddling and self-serving profiteering at the trough of government. Greed is a proper motivation in business, although sometimes harsh and exclusionary. Greed in government leads not only to poor business, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, unfairness, but also sometimes to disenfranchisement and disempowerment of the public and of public interest.

We need reform in lobbying laws at Miami-Dade County that will empower citizens by adding confidence in our local government and thus involvement in the electoral process.

A working democracy depends on the transparency, accountability, clear limitations, rule of law, checks and balance at all levels of government, including lobbyist. It's time we begin demanding better local government rules for our lobbyists. If not, don't expect much for our future in Miami-Dade County, except one scandal after another. It's the system that needs change!

For: The Miami Herald
December 28, 2006

(733 words)

Needed change for the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners

By Maurice A. Ferre

What we have in Miami-Dade County is a hybrid type of government. It did not happen overnight. Nor did it happen by conspiracy or following a plan. It happened circumstantially. First, there was a lawsuit where the judge did not accept at-large representation and he expanded the Board of County Commission from nine to thirteen members in 1990.

Next, then Commissioner Alex Penelas wrote and convinced the 1992 Commission, to put on the ballot a hybrid Executive Mayor format. Two weeks after Hurricane Andrew, the turnaround was less than 15%. The Penelas' Plan barely passed. Four years later Penelas was the first "Executive Mayor". By 2000 there was yet another aberration, a further weakening of the "Executive Mayor's" powers.

In the next four weeks we will hear much talk for and against the wisdom of turning the Managers powers to an elected Mayor. That issue will be on the ballot next January 23, 2007. It will most probably be another 15% turnout. Should Strong Mayor pass, we will be closer to a checks and balance system, but not quite. The still missing ingredients: at-large representation and the necessary change needed to make the Commission into a true representative *legislative* body.

Miami-Dade is larger than 17 states of the Union. With soon to be 2,500,000 residents, we qualify in the top 15 metropolitan areas of the U.S.A. We must be governed accordingly, like most large American metropolitan areas.

In the Council (Commission)/Manager format, the less commissioners, the better. Metro with seven, then nine, worked better than Miami-Dade County with thirteen commissioners.

A legislative body must work with effective, functioning committees. Thirteen is not enough membership to work committees effectively. With nineteen commissioners you can field six Standing Committees of seven members each, so that most commissioners would serve on only two, and a few only on three committees. We could thus expect a better work product from that important government body, The Board of County Commissioners, our local legislative body, with clear-cut demarcation of responsibility, with a quorum of at least four members in each of the six Standing Committees.

The strongest argument against a larger commission would be the additional cost. The existing commission budget is \$17.28 million, for thirteen members. The same budget for 19 members would be almost a million dollars per member, yearly budget. The current budget should be frozen for five years. A new commission would set a reasonable commission budget with most new faces, five years later.

Of the nineteen commissioners, six would be elected at large and thus bring a more countywide perspective to the Board. Further, the at large commissioners would chair the six Standing Committees.

To emphasize the new format, we need to change the name of our local legislative body to Assembly. We would thus have Assemblymen and Assemblywomen. The Commission name and format needs to be a thing of the past.

In the Council/Manager format, less commissioners is better. In the Assembly/Legislature format, more is essential. The price of good government is incalculable for Miami-Dade County. The current system, thirteen district commissioners with a weak Mayor and a subservient manager, is not working effectively today. Miami-Dade has never had a more corrupt, dysfunctional government. We still haven't heard the full story of the stolen jet fuel at Miami International Airport (MIA); the billions of dollars in MIA overruns; a North Terminal that, when finished, will make MIA the most expensive airport in the U.S.; billions for the American Airlines (AA) Terminal without a long term contract (AA can leave tomorrow if they wish); a Performing Art Center whose 100% overruns were unchecked; hundreds of cell phones missing and millions stolen at Miami Dade Water & Sewer (after being called to task by the State of Florida for mishandling our water supply); millions given out at Miami Dade Housing with no accountability; selling of building inspections by the millions; traffic pandemonium, and on and on; so much for professionalism in the Administration at Miami-Dade County. How much more? If this is "professionalism", we need help badly.

The constant low opinion polls of the Board of County Commissioners are a clear indication that change is in the air. Let's make reform complete, so as to have balance, accountability, transparency and efficiency in our local government. It's the *system* that needs change!

PER

Los cambios necesarios en Miami-Dade

En el condado Miami-Dade, hoy tenemos un tipo de gobierno híbrido. No existe un gobierno similar en ninguna otra área metropolitana de EEUU. No llegó a ser un gobierno híbrido de la noche a la mañana. Ni fue por una conspiración siniestra, pasó paulatinamente, circunstancialmente.

Primero, a causa de un pleito por discriminación (sólo había una afroamericana y un cubanoamericano en la Junta de Comisionados), un juez federal dictaminó en 1990 que no había representatividad en el gobierno condal, expandió la Junta de nueve a trece por distritos singulares y negó la petición para retener distritos multilaterales. Luego, el entonces comisionado Alex Penelas propuso el plan híbrido de "Alcalde Ejecutivo", sin darle poderes ejecutivos al nuevo alcalde del condado Miami-Dade. La Junta de Comisionados de 1992 aprobó el Plan Penelas y el electorado, con sólo una participación del 15 por ciento, dos semanas después del huracán Andrew, escasamente aceptó la propuesta de cambio de la alcaldía. Cuatro años después, el propio Alex Penelas juramentó como el primer alcalde ejecutivo del condado Miami-Dade. Ya para



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el año 2000, los pocos poderes del alcalde híbrido fueron severamente tronchados.

Después de una petición formal por más del 10 por ciento del electorado de Miami-Dade y luego de una serie de maniobras legales por la Comisión para negar el justo derecho a los electores peticionarios, según la Carta Constitutiva del Condado, la Junta de Comisionados puso en la boleta para el último día posible el tema del Alcalde Fuerte.

El 23 de enero del 2007, los electores tendremos la responsabilidad de decidir si queremos seguir con este sistema de gobierno híbrido, donde el administrador del condado, con más de 30,000 empleados y un presupuesto de casi \$8,000 millones anuales y cientos de escándalos de corrupción e ineptitud burocrática, va a continuar siendo seleccionado y protegido por 14 políticos (el alcalde y 13 comisionados) o por el pueblo (hoy casi 1,100,000 electores). Luego los votantes podrán decidir si aceptan al primer magistrado (el alcalde) en las próximas elecciones. El alcalde sólo se queda ocho años, pues hay limitación de dos términos alcaldicios en la Carta Constitutiva.

Además de alcalde fuerte, necesitamos a gritos reformas en la Junta de Comisionados, para que éstos se conviertan en un verdadero cuerpo legislativo. Los cuerpos legislativos en EEUU tienen cuatro funciones básicas: aprobar leyes, adoptar un presupuesto anual, poderes de supervisión, y el poder de anular el veto del alcalde. Además, la

Junta de Comisionados del Condado tiene el poder de cambiar la zonificación de propiedades.

En el sistema federal (Washington) los 50 estados y la gran mayoría de las grandes ciudades norteamericanas,

la administración otorga contratos. En Miami-Dade, ese poder lo tiene hoy la Junta de Comisionados. De esto emanan muchos problemas del condado.

Si los comisionados no otorgan contratos tendrían más tiempo para supervisar los departamentos condales y de estudiar y mejorar el

presupuesto y eliminar la burocracia inepta.

El sistema de gobierno norteamericano está basado en la transparencia, la contabilidad, los frenos y límites y la adhesión a un sistema de leyes. Si sólo se reforma la alcaldía y no el cuerpo legislativo, seguiremos con problemas.

En el formato de gobierno actual, mientras menos comisionados, mejor. Sin embargo, un cuerpo legislativo no puede funcionar eficazmente con 13 miembros. Esto se debe a la necesidad imperante en una legislatura de funcionar con comités. Con 19 comisionados se puede mantener eficazmente seis comités de siete miembros cada uno. De esta manera los comisionados servirían en sólo dos comités (varios, en tres comités).

El argumento más fuerte en contra de más comisionados sería el costo adicional. El presupuesto actual de la Junta de Comisionados pasa de los \$19 millones anuales, más del doble de lo que era hace 10 años. Si se utiliza esa misma cifra para los 19 comisionados, cada uno tendría un presupuesto de \$1 millón anuales, más que suficiente. El presupuesto de la Junta de Comisionados se congelaría con la cifra actual por cinco años.

De los 19 comisionados, seis serían electos por distritos multilaterales, elegidos por todo el electorado (igual que el alcalde). Estos comisionados, por definición, tendrían una

visión menos parroquial. Los seis comisionados multilaterales serían los presidentes de los seis comités de la Junta de Comisionados.

Un buen gobierno en Miami-Dade no tiene precio. El sistema actual de 13 comisionados electos en distritos, con casi todos los poderes, con un alcalde débil y un administrador servil, no está funcionando eficazmente.

Avancemos con reformas balanceadas y completas, la del alcalde fuerte y luego la de una Comisión con mayor representación, para que nuestro gobierno condal sea transparente, limitado y eficiente. Es el sistema de gobierno el que hay que cambiar.

Ex alcalde de Miami

El sistema actual de 13 comisionados electos en distritos, con casi todos los poderes, con un alcalde débil, no está funcionando eficazmente

STRONG MAYOR

Good government for Miami-Dade

TMH
FRIDAY,
JAN. 19, 2007

BY MAURICE A. FERRE
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In Miami-Dade County today, we have a hybrid type of government. No similar government exists in any other metropolitan area of the United States. It didn't become a hybrid government overnight. And it wasn't because of a sinister conspiracy; it happened gradually, circumstantially.

First, because of a discrimination suit in 1990 (there was only one African-American woman and one Cuban-American man on the County Commission), a federal judge ruled that county government was not truly representative. He then expanded the commission from nine to 13 by means of single districts and denied a petition to retain multilateral districts.

Later, then-Commissioner Alex Penelas proposed the hybrid plan of "Executive Mayor," without giving executive powers to the new mayor of Miami-Dade County. In 1992, the County Commission approved the Penelas Plan and the electorate — with a participation of only 15 percent, two weeks after Hurricane Andrew — barely accepted the proposal for a change in mayoral status.

Four years later, Alex Penelas himself was sworn in as the first executive mayor of Miami-Dade County. By the year 2000, the hybrid mayor's few powers were severely reduced.

Hybrid system

After a formal petition by more than 10 percent of the Miami-Dade electorate, and after a series of legal maneuvers by the commission to deny the petitioners their just rights endowed by the county's charter, the County Commission postponed the issue of a strong mayor until the last possible day.

On Tuesday, we voters will have the responsibility to decide if we want to keep this hybrid system of government, where the county manager, with more than 30,000 employees and a budget of almost \$8 billion a year — and hundreds of scandals involving corruption and bureaucratic ineptitude — will continue to be selected and protected by 14 politicians (the mayor and 13 commissioners) or by the people (almost 1.1 million voters today).

Later, the voters can decide if they will accept the first magistrate (the mayor) in the next election. The mayor will be in place eight years, because the charter has a limit of two mayoral terms. In addition to a strong mayor, we badly need reforms in the County Commission, so it may become a true legislative body.

Legislative bodies in the United States have four basic functions: to approve laws, to adopt an annual budget, to supervise and to override the mayor's veto when necessary. In

addition, the County Commission has the power to change the zoning of property.

In the federal system, the 50 states and a big majority of the large U.S. cities, the administration grants contracts. In Miami-Dade, that power is held today by the commission. Many of the county's problems emanate from that. If the commissioners don't grant contracts, they would have more time to supervise the county departments and to study and improve the budget and to eliminate inept bureaucracy.

The U.S. system of government is based on transparency, accountability, checks and balances, and compliance with a system of laws. If only the mayor's function is reformed, not the legislative body's, we shall continue having problems.

In the current government format, the fewer commissioners the better. However, a legislative body cannot function efficiently with 13 members. This is because of the imperative need in a legislature to function with committees. With 19 commissioners, a legislature can efficiently maintain six committees with seven members each. That way, the commissioners would serve on only two committees (several of them in three committees.)

The strongest argument against more commissioners would be the additional cost. The current County Commission budget exceeds \$9 million a year, more than twice the amount 10 years ago. If the same figure is utilized for the 19 commissioners, each of them would have a budget of \$1 million a year — more than enough. The budget would be frozen with the current figure for five years.

Move forward

Six of the 19 commissioners would be elected by multilateral districts elected by the entire electorate (same as the mayor). By definition, these commissioners would have a less-parochial vision. The six multilateral commissioners would preside over the six committees of the County Commission.

A good government for Miami-Dade is priceless. The current system of 13 commissioners elected in districts, who hold almost all powers, with a weak mayor and a servile manager, is not working effectively. Never before has Miami-Dade County had a more corrupt and more dysfunctional government.

Let us move forward with balanced and complete reforms — providing a strong mayor first and a commission with greater representation later — so our county government can be transparent, limited and efficient. It is the system of government that needs changing.

Maurice A. Ferre is a former Miami mayor, former Miami-Dade County commissioner and former state legislator.



FERRE

el Nuevo Herald

Reformas necesarias en el condado

Ya que el electorado votó a favor del alcalde fuerte, es imperativo reformar más la Carta Constitutiva del condado Miami-Dade. El cambio es necesario no sólo para fortalecer a la Comisión, sino para asegurar balance, frenos, transparencia y contabilidad a un gobierno responsable y que responda a las necesidades del pueblo y no a los intereses económicos creados.

Al no existir el formato de gobierno de administrador-consejo municipal, ya no debería existir una Comisión. Con un gobierno con más de 30,000 empleados, un presupuesto de cerca de \$8,000 millones y responsabilidades por vivienda, salubridad, agua y alcantarillado, tránsito, parques regionales, artes y tantos otros servicios, Miami-Dade está entre las diez áreas metropolitanas mayores de Estados Unidos y es mayor que 17 estados. Ya es tiempo de que Miami-Dade funcione como lo que es, un gobierno importante. El cuerpo legislativo tiene que funcionar como una asamblea legislativa y no como un consejo municipal.

Hacia ese fin tenemos que:

- Aumentar el tamaño de la asamblea legislativa para que funcione eficientemente la piedra angular de toda legislatura, los comités de trabajo (*standing committees*). Así funcionan el Congreso, la legislatura estatal y la asamblea municipal de Nueva York, de Jacksonville y de la mayoría de las ciudades importantes de EEUU. Debemos aumentar

los comités legislativos que llevarían los asuntos de la Asamblea, simplificando las deliberaciones del pleno. Los seis comisionados generales serían los presidentes de los seis comités legislativos.

La Asamblea de 19 elegiría por mayoría a su presidente/a, que a su vez designaría a los presidentes/as de cada uno de los seis comités legislativos. Toda materia pasaría por uno de los seis comités, claramente definidos y cuyos presupuestos serían autodefinidos, con la aprobación del pleno, con el posible veto del alcalde y, de ser necesario, invalidado (el veto) por dos tercios de la asamblea legislativa.

- Derogar la actual estructura de otorgar contratos por la Comisión. Es decir, que la Comisión establecerá los parámetros, límites y especificaciones de los contratos, pero no haría la selección de los ganadores.

- Transferir el poder de decidir en primera instancia los casos de rezonificación a jueces administrativos, con experiencia judicial, nombrados por cuatro años. La apelación de segunda instancia sería a los comisionados, como cuerpo cuasi-jurídico, pero con formato limitado a apelación, sin nueva evidencia y de ahí con apelación a las cortes locales. Este sistema funciona en otras ciudades. En Orlando, por ejemplo, con rezonificación por jueces administrativos no ha habido una apelación en más de dos años.



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- Los 13 comisionados hoy electos por distritos, añadiendo 6 más, estos últimos electos por todos los votantes de Miami-Dade. Cada uno de estos 6 comisionados generales aspiraría por uno de los 6 distritos, divididos por igual, pero electo cada uno por todos los votantes del condado. Esto aseguraría representación proporcional y regional al condado. De hecho, la asamblea municipal de la ciudad/condado de Jacksonville tiene 19 miembros, siendo Jacksonville una tercera parte de Miami-Dade.

- Limitar todos los términos de cargos electos en el condado. Los comisionados por distrito se limitarían a dos términos, de cuatro años. Los seis comisionados generales se limitarían a un término de seis años. Una persona podría ser electa por distrito dos veces y luego aspirar como comisionado general una vez, es decir, seis años adicionales, o viceversa.

- Pagar a los comisionados un sueldo proporcional a lo que ganan los legisladores en toda la nación. La fórmula sería la del estado de la Florida, que ahora se usa en nuestro vecino condado Broward. Los futuros comisionados por distrito podrían escoger entre trabajar a tiempo completo o a tiempo parcial, permitiendo así que ciudadanos que ejercen profesiones o tienen trabajo o negocios participen en la política condal. A los de tiempo parcial se les pagaría un sueldo que sería una tercera parte de la compensación de a los de tiempo completo. Para no aumentar el gasto, congelaría el costo de la Comisión a \$20 millones anuales (el costo actual) por cinco años. Los seis comisionados generales tendrían que trabajar a tiempo completo.

- Crear seis comités legis-

- Reformar las débiles regulaciones actuales de cabilderos, con transparencia y contabilidad completa. Prohibición de conflictos de cabilderos, en la actualidad ignorados. Por último, que a los cabilderos y entidades que representen a, o tengan negocios con, o rindan servicios al condado, se les prohíba recaudar fondos políticos para campañas electorales en el gobierno de Miami-Dade.

Al eliminar el otorgamiento de contratos, limitar los poderes de rezonificación de bienes raíces y apaciguar los extraordinarios poderes de los cabilderos, especialmente la recaudación de fondos, se esfumaría el dinero de los intereses económicos creados, y consiguientemente la mayoría de las bases de corrupción en Miami-Dade.

La Comisión reformada (la propuesta Asamblea) tendría más tiempo para fungir en sus campos de competencias legítimos: crear las leyes, aprobar el presupuesto anual (si fuera necesario), anular los vetos del alcalde y, algo muy importante y hoy casi ignorado, supervisar todos los departamentos.

Para reformar los poderes legislativos de la Comisión de Miami-Dade sólo hay que seguir los preceptos bien concebidos y bien experimentados del sistema de gobierno de Estados Unidos, inventado hace 230 años por los padres de esta gran república.

Miami-Dade y su gobierno necesitan una clara distinción entre los poderes del ejecutivo (ahora alcalde fuerte) y la legislatura local (ahora Comisión Condal). Necesitamos reformar la Carta Constitutiva para crear una Asamblea Municipal en sustitución de la disfuncional Comisión actual.

Ex alcalde de Miami.



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Opinion

Posted on Mon, Feb. 12, 2007

MIAMI-DADE **Let's reform the county charter**

BY MAURICE FERRE
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Now that strong mayor commission is the county government format, we must further reform the Miami-Dade County Charter to obtain a government that is balanced, responsive, transparent, limited and accountable.

We must continue the reform begun by strengthening the mayor's powers (administration) with the reform needed to strengthen the local legislative powers (County Commission). And that's the first issue: It can no longer be a commission; the commission format must also be gone, along with the manager. The County Commission must cease to be a commission and become a true legislative body. In other words, get the commission to stop interfering with administrative functions.

Here are a few suggested improvements to morph the commission into a true legislative assembly:

- **Increase the size of the proposed assembly** so that standing committees can have better attendance and become the powerful entities that they are in places like Washington, D.C., Tallahassee and Jacksonville. Create six additional at-large positions in addition to the 13 district commissioners. Each at-large commissioner would run from one of six equally divided districts but be elected by all county voters. This would improve regional representation and create a countywide obligation and approach to issues. Also, the six-district residency requirement would ensure proportionality for minority and regional representation.

- **Limit the district commissioners to two four-year terms** and limit the at-large commissioners to one six-year term to decrease the propensity to nurture career politicians. In that way Miami-Dade County would have two new, at-large commissioners every two years. A person could serve two terms as a district commissioner and then run to serve one term as an at-large commissioner or vice versa.

- **Pay commissioners adequate salaries** based on a state formula. Further, district

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commissioners could choose to work as commissioners full-time or part-time, thus allowing broader participation of "citizen-politicians." Those working part-time would be paid one-third of what full-time commissioners earn. All at-large commissioners would be full-time. Currently, per the state formula, part-time commissioners would receive \$28,000 a year and full-time commissioners \$84,000.

In addition, all commissioners would receive approximately \$40,000 of yearly benefits (car, insurance and expenses). This would be a reasonable compensation in today's world for legislators overseeing a government with a yearly budget of almost \$8 billion. Full-time commissioners would adhere to outside income limits in terms similar to those serving in the U.S. Congress.

- Create six standing committees to run the legislative body. The committees would be chaired by the six at-large commissioners. The 19-member assembly would elect its chair. The chair would make committee assignments. All matters would flow through the six clearly defined standing committees, whose yearly budgets would be proposed by each committee and approved by the majority of all 19 commissioners, with line-item veto power by the mayor and override provisions for the assembly.

- Remove the authority to approve contracts from the assembly, but allow it to set the standards and specifications of contracts.

- Transfer decision power for all zoning matters to administrative judges appointed by the mayor with the consent of the assembly. Judges' terms would be four years. Appeals would be decided by the assembly sitting as a quasi-judicial board – but only according to strict appellate rules, no new evidence, like our appellate court system. The next appeals level would be circuit court. This system works in Orlando, where there has not been an appeal to a commission decision in two years.

- Reform the lobbying system by implementing full client and fee disclosure and prohibiting conflicts of lobbyists with the governments they lobby. Limit fund raising for all those who do business with the county, similar to Miami Beach's lobbying rules. With these charter changes, Miami-Dade voters would empower the County Commission and also ensure more countywide government, transparency, accountability, checks and balances, limitations and a better rule of law. The county assembly could concentrate more on countywide issues and perform within a legislature's natural competence: lawmaking, approving the yearly budget, overriding the mayor's veto – when appropriate – and the all-important, and under-utilized, *overview* powers.

The commission, and especially the mayor, must keep reform alive. We don't need to reinvent the wheel, only to apply the well-tested American democratic way of the divided-powers form of government. Miami-Dade County needs a clear demarcation between executive and legislative powers.

Maurice Ferré is a former Miami mayor, former Miami-Dade County commissioner and former state legislator.



MiamiHerald.com

Posted on Thu, Apr. 19, 2007

We need genuine charter reform

BY MAURICE FERRE

For those who hoped for a major breakthrough in solving recurring Miami-Dade County government disasters, recent events are disheartening.

- The Carnival Center for the Performing Arts -- with its doubling of the original cost to more than \$500 million -- promises to have yearly budget overruns, with 40 percent less patronage than projected.
- Miami International Airport's expansion has another \$1 billion overrun with more sure to come. Our \$15 per-person landing fees, paid by passengers, will skyrocket to more than \$65 to pay for the rising construction budget. This could force passengers to Latin America to fly through Orlando, Atlanta and Houston. (Foreign commerce, passengers and cargo are more than 70 percent of MIA's income.)
- The Miami-Dade Housing Agency's disasters continue, with the feds trying to take over the local agency.
- The county remains unable to work out a proper solution to build a baseball stadium for the Marlins.
- The county's ad valorem tax income has increased 178 percent since 2000, while services have not increased proportionately.
- More bureaucracy. The county budget for the 13 commissioners has risen to \$20 million today from less than \$5 million 10 years ago.

Why the continuation of cascading county problems?

Yes, the "strong mayor" vote -- where less than 15 percent of the electors turned out and voted Yes on Jan. 23 -- was a step in the right direction. But not enough.

The question remains. Who governs Miami-Dade County? The answer, sadly, is the County Commission.

Although the manager now works for the mayor, the commission is still governing. This is why commissioners did not legally challenge the strong-mayor vote. It's not only that they would have lost in court, it's that they realize the commission is still the decision-maker. Miami-Dade remains a commission-manager form of government. The new real manager -- the mayor -- is now elected and not appointed, and the mayor appoints staff. What needs to change is the format of government from a council format to an assembly format on the legislative side.

The second round of county-commission combat resumed with severe limitations on how the people

can reform "their" charter. Now, with the new conditions, petitions by the people are all but dead. And yet no one has legally challenged the usurpation of power by commissioners or their subjugation of people's power to reform by petition.

Then there was a move to take police powers away from the mayor. There is still talk of electing a sheriff (no more appointed police director) -- as well as a tax assessor and elections supervisor. All moves to weaken the new administrator, the strong mayor.

The County Commission is still deep into administering the county. That's what needs to be changed.

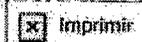
What we desperately need is genuine charter reform. We must review from the ground up how we are governed. Everything should be on the table for analysis: The commission, strong mayor, district elections, influence peddling, ethics, accountability, transparency, checks and balances.

Great democracy

The problem is that a Charter Review Committee -- as it has been constituted in the past, with appointments by each commissioner, thus 13 appointments -- ends up being a protectionist group whose main function has been preserving the status quo. For that reason, Commissioner Katy Sorenson's proposal -- that a different, grounded, knowledgeable, people's Charter Review Committee be selected; one that would be representative and appointed at arms length from politics - makes sense. The alternative is the now almost impossible petition format.

Let's keep our faith in the corrective power alive in our great democracy and in this cutting-edge metropolitan area of tomorrow's America. This time, when the commission appoints the required Charter Review Committee, let it be in good faith, to bring much needed reform to local governance.

Maurice Ferré is a former Miami mayor, former Miami-Dade County commissioner and former state legislator.



Publicado el jueves 19 de abril del 2007

Fallos del gobierno en Miami-Dade

By MAURICE A. FERRE

Hay una gran desilusión después del voto positivo a favor de Alcalde Fuerte entre aquellos que creían que iba a resolverse repentinamente el desastre burocrático de nuestro gobierno condal. No ha sido así. Siguen las malas noticias de burocracia, ineptitud y despilfarro en el condado Miami-Dade (MDC):

- El Centro de Artes Escénicas (Carnival Center) no solamente dobló el costo originalmente estimado, sino que ahora nos dicen que va a tener un déficit operacional millonario, en parte debido al bajo uso de los teatros. La participación está 44% debajo de lo proyectado. Más futuros subsidios por los contribuyentes.
- En el Aeropuerto Internacional de Miami (MIA) los gastos de construcción subieron \$1,000 millones más. Probablemente continúe el costo por encima de \$7,000 millones en total. El problema es que esto lo tiene que pagar el usuario. Esto subirá el costo de cada salida o llegada por pasajero de \$15 actualmente a \$65 proyectado. Como Orlando, Atlanta y Houston tendrán costos por debajo de \$20 por pasajero, las consecuencias probables será que los pasajeros futuros para América Latina evitarán a Miami. Hoy más del 70% del ingreso de MIA es por movimiento de pasajeros y carga de y a América Latina y el Caribe.
- La saga desastrosa del Departamento de Vivienda de MDC continúa. A tal magnitud fue el despilfarro que los federales (HUD) quieren tomar cargo de la administración local.
- La incapacidad de buscar una solución propia para construir un nuevo estadio de pelota para los Marlins, tiene a todos perplejos. La última sugerencia de George Burgess (el *manager*) para construir un estadio en el *downtown* fue rechazada fuertemente por la Comisión Condal.
- Los ingresos a MDC por impuestos impositivos sobre bienes raíces (nuestras casas y negocios) han aumentado 178% desde el 2000 hasta hoy. Pero nuestros servicios locales no han aumentado 178%. Más burocracia.
- En diez años el presupuesto de los comisionados ha subido de menos de \$5 millones anuales a casi \$20 millones. Y solo había y hay 13 comisionados.

Y muchos, muchos más problemas embotellados, escondidos e ignorados, pero que están a punto de caramelo. ¿Por qué continúan surgiendo tantos problemas en el gobierno condal? La respuesta no es por causa de los comisionados, ni por el alcalde. Ni un solo titular local ha perdido una elección en los últimos 12 años (desde que Katy Sorenson le ganó a Larry Hawkins en el 1994). Los comisionados, a pesar de tener una opinión colectiva negativa de 60% en contra, son individualmente buenas personas dedicadas al bienestar público.

La falla esta en la estructura de la Comisión.

Sí, la votación a favor del Alcalde Fuerte fue un paso positivo en la dirección correcta. Pero falta mucho. (Se cumplirán 100 días de Alcalde Fuerte el 3 de mayo y Carlos Alvarez esta haciendo un buen trabajo).

La pregunta clave es: ¿quién gobierna al condado Miami Dade? La respuesta, tristemente, es la Junta de Comisionados de Miami-Dade. Y digo tristemente, porque aunque el administrador George Burgess ahora reporta solo al alcalde Alvarez, el cuerpo de gobierno viejo sigue gobernando. Es por esta razón que la Comisión no llevó el voto a favor de Alcalde Fuerte a los tribunales, como advirtieron algunos comisionados antes del voto. No lo apelaron, no sólo porque hubieran perdido ante los tribunales, sino, más importante, porque saben que aún la Comisión Condal es el cuerpo de gobierno de MDC, los que deciden. El Condado sigue siendo un formato de gobierno Consejo-Administrador. Sólo que ahora se elige al administrador (Alcalde Fuerte). Lo que necesita cambio es la estructura para que la Comisión sirva solo como un cuerpo legislativo.

Ya comenzó la segunda ronda de acusaciones y pleitos de la Comisión Condal. Ya cualquier petición de reforma a la Carta Constitutiva por las nuevas reglas impuestas por la Comisión, llegará natimuerta. La Comisión Condal, en su gran mayoría, ha dicho que quieren trincar cualquier petición de reforma abierta por cualquier grupo de ciudadanos.

Otro atentado en contra del Alcalde Fuerte, en esta guerra de la Comisión, fue el tratar de mermar las facultades operacionales de la Policía de MDC. Esta agresión aun vive, ahora con la posibilidad de llevar al electorado la posición de Director del Departamento de Policía para elección (*sheriff*), conjuntamente con los Directores de Elecciones y Tasador (*tax appraiser*), propuestos también para ser electos. Todo para debilitar la posición de Alcalde Fuerte.

En contraste al formato de gobierno Consejo-Administrador está la clara y tradicional función de una Asamblea Legislativa (Municipal), con su división de poderes, pesos y contrapesos, límites, transparencia y contabilidad.

La Comisión de MDC sigue profundamente inmiscuida en la administración condal. Esto tiene que parar.

Lo que necesitamos a gritos es reforma de nuestra Carta Constitutiva. Por estar fuera de balance, tenemos que revisar y reconstruir nuestro gobierno local.

En el pasado los Comités de Revisión Constitutiva, que por ley hay que crear cada diez años, nombrados por los propios comisionados, con un nombramiento por comisionado, terminan protegiendo a los intereses de los comisionados que los nombran. Como no han sido cuerpos independientes, no se han logrado reformas importantes por esta vía.

Por esto la propuesta de la comisionada Katy Sorenson tiene tanto sentido. Sorenson propone un Comité de Revisión Constitutiva seleccionados por gremios (sindicatos, Cámara de Comercio, entidades cívicas respetadas), con nombramientos objetivos, sin predisposiciones, ni representaciones mezquinas. La alternativa es más ineptitud, más corrupción, más burocracia y más conflicto de poderes.

PER

Los cambios necesarios en Miami-Dade

En el condado Miami-Dade, hoy tenemos un tipo de gobierno híbrido. No existe un gobierno similar en ninguna otra área metropolitana de EEUU. No llegó a ser un gobierno híbrido de la noche a la mañana. Ni fue por una conspiración siniestra, pasó paulatinamente, circunstancialmente.

Primero, a causa de un pleito por discriminación (sólo había una afroamericana y un cubano-americano en la Junta de Comisionados), un juez federal dictaminó en 1990 que no había representatividad en el gobierno condal, expandió la Junta de nueve a trece por distritos singulares y negó la petición para retener distritos multilaterales. Luego, el entonces comisionado Alex Penelas propuso el plan híbrido de "Alcalde Ejecutivo", sin darle poderes ejecutivos al nuevo alcalde del condado Miami-Dade. La Junta de Comisionados de 1992 aprobó el Plan Penelas y el electorado, con sólo una participación del 15 por ciento, dos semanas después del huracán Andrew, escasamente aceptó la propuesta de cambio de la alcaldía. Cuatro años después, el propio Alex Penelas juramentó como el primer alcalde ejecutivo del condado Miami-Dade. Ya para



MAURICE FERRE

el año 2000, los pocos poderes del alcalde híbrido fueron severamente tronchados.

Después de una petición formal por más del 10 por ciento del electorado de Miami-Dade y luego de una serie de maniobras legales por la Comisión para negar el justo derecho a los electores peticionarios, según la Carta Constitutiva del Condado, la Junta de Comisionados puso en la boleta para el último día posible el tema del Alcalde Fuerte.

El 23 de enero del 2007, los electores tendremos la responsabilidad de decidir si queremos seguir con este sistema de gobierno híbrido, donde el administrador del condado, con más de 30,000 empleados y un presupuesto de casi \$6,000 millones anuales y cientos de escándalos de corrupción e ineptitud burocrática, va a continuar siendo seleccionado y protegido por 14 políticos (el alcalde y 13 comisionados) o por el pueblo (hoy casi 1,100,000 electores). Luego los votantes podrán decidir si aceptan al primer magistrado (el alcalde) en las próximas elecciones. El alcalde sólo se queda ocho años, pues hay limitación de dos términos alcaldicios en la Carta Constitutiva.

Además de alcalde fuerte, necesitamos a gritos reformas en la Junta de Comisionados, para que éstos se conviertan en un verdadero cuerpo legislativo. Los cuerpos legislativos en EEUU tienen cuatro funciones básicas: aprobar leyes, adoptar un presupuesto anualmente, poderes de supervisión, y el poder de anular el veto del alcalde. Además, la

Junta de Comisionados del Condado tiene el poder de cambiar la zonificación de propiedades.

En el sistema federal (Washington) los 50 estados y la gran mayoría de las grandes ciudades norteamericanas, la administración otorga contratos. En Miami-Dade, ese poder lo tiene hoy la Junta de Comisionados. De esto emanan muchos problemas del condado.

Si los comisionados no otorgan contratos tendrían más tiempo para supervisar los departamentos condales y de estudiar y mejorar el

presupuesto y eliminar la burocracia inepta.

El sistema de gobierno norteamericano está basado en la transparencia, la contabilidad, los frenos y límites y la adhesión a un sistema de leyes. Si sólo se reforma la alcaldía y no el cuerpo legislativo, seguiremos con problemas.

En el formato de gobierno actual, mientras menos comisionados, mejor. Sin embargo, un cuerpo legislativo no puede funcionar eficazmente con 13 miembros. Esto se debe a la necesidad imperante en una legislatura de funcionar con comités. Con 19 comisionados se puede mantener eficazmente seis comités de siete miembros cada uno. De esta manera los comisionados servirían en sólo dos comités (varios, en tres comités).

El argumento más fuerte en contra de más comisionados sería el costo adicional. El presupuesto actual de la Junta de Comisionados pasa de los \$19 millones anuales, más del doble de lo que era hace 10 años. Si se utiliza esa misma cifra para los 19 comisionados, cada uno tendría un presupuesto de \$1 millón anuales, más que suficiente. El presupuesto de la Junta de Comisionados se congelaría con la cifra actual por cinco años.

De los 19 comisionados, seis serían electos por distritos multilaterales, elegidos por todo el electorado (igual que el alcalde). Estos comisionados, por definición, tendrían una

visión menos parroquial. Los seis comisionados multilaterales serían los presidentes de los seis comités de la Junta de Comisionados.

Un buen gobierno en Miami-Dade no tiene precio. El sistema actual de 13 comisionados electos en distritos, con casi todos los poderes, con un alcalde débil y un administrador servil, no está funcionando eficazmente.

Avancemos con reformas balanceadas y completas, la del alcalde fuerte y luego la de una Comisión con mayor representación, para que nuestro gobierno condal sea transparente, limitado y eficiente. Es el sistema de gobierno el que hay que cambiar.

Ex alcalde de Miami

El sistema actual de 13 comisionados electos en distritos, con casi todos los poderes, con un alcalde débil, no está funcionando eficazmente

Memorandum

To: Susanne M. Torriente, Assistant County Manager
CC: Chair and Members of the Charter Review Task Force
From: Francois Illas
Date: 08/06/2007
Re: Charter Review Task Force - Follow up E-mail Dated July 11th, 2007

In response to your e-mail dated July 11th, 2007 I would propose the following concerning the several questions posed:

- ❖ **Which day(s) of the week work best for you to hold meetings:** Wednesday
- ❖ **Which knowledgeable members of the community you would like to provide input to the Task Force, either written or in person presentations:**

Written/Oral Presentation

- ◆ Mayors representing a range of Miami-Dade County cities (i.e. Large Cities and Small Cities). Specifically I would ask that the following Mayors be considered Miami, Miami Gardens, Hialeah, Miami Beach, Doral, Palmetto Bay, and Miami Lakes.
- ◆ Two senior non-elected administrators from one large and one small municipality. I would recommend either Miami or North Miami for the large city and either Coral Gables, Homestead or West Miami for the smaller city.

Written Presentation

- ◆ Christopher Warren, Associate Professor (D.A., Lehigh University); Urban Politics, American Government, American Political Economy, Florida International University.
- ◆ Dario Moreno, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Southern California); International Relations, U.S. Foreign Policy, Miami Politics, Cuban Politics & Director of the Metropolitan Center at Florida International University.

❖ **List of issues that you would like the Task Force to consider:**

- ◆ Separation of Powers or Responsibilities between Miami-Dade County and the municipalities in an effort to better define the roll of the Regional and municipal governments and create greater accountability through a clear division of responsibility similar to what is found in the US Constitution when it address the Federal and state governments powers/responsibilities.
- ◆ Annexation/Incorporation in an effort to eliminate the existence of the Unincorporated Metropolitan Service Area.
- ◆ Review and develop rules to further enhance the balance of power or checks and balances that need to exist between the Executive and Legislative bodies of County Government.
- ◆ Composition of the Legislative body of the County Government in an effort to achieve a more balanced Legislative body that can be entrusted to represent the interest of both municipal and the county wide interest when it comes to managing or decision that impact the citizenry at either the Regional or the local governments.
- ◆ Term Limits on members of the Legislative body and all other Countywide offices, such as Clerk of the County Courts, State Attorney and Public Defender
- ◆ Move compensation language from the Charter section to the ordinance and code areas of the County.
- ◆ Taxation Structure and Special Revenue fees charged by either the Regional or municipal governments in order to further protect our citizens' against duplicating taxes and fees.

❖ **Meeting agenda topics:**

- ◆ Separation of Responsibility between Regional and municipal governments
- ◆ Annexation/Incorporation
- ◆ Election of the other County wide offices (i.e. Property Appraiser, Elections Supervisor and Sheriff
- ◆ Checks and Balances for the Executive and Legislative.
- ◆ Legislative Composition
- ◆ Term Limits
- ◆ Taxation protection and reform

I would recommend that we take the agenda topics in the order presented above. In concluding I look forward to our work together and realizing a work product we can all be proud about. If I can be of further assistance please feel free to call or e-mail me at (305) 476-2946 or fillas@quntumresults.net.

Charter Review Task Force

Proposed Meeting Dates *(revised calendar attached)*

- ***Wednesday - August 1***
- ***Wednesday - August 15***
- ***Wednesday - August 29***
- ***Wednesday - September 5***
- ***Wednesday - September 19***
- ***Wednesday - October 3***
- ***Wednesday - October 17***
- ***Wednesday - October 31***

CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE

Proposed Calendar (revised)

Important Dates:

Miami-Dade County Presidential Preference Primary

- Ballot Questions – Board Approval (60-120 days)
- Requires Committee Approval, at latest
- Requires Board Approval, at latest

January 29, 2008

October 1 - November 30, 2007
 October 2007
 November 8, 2007

Miami-Dade County Primary Election

- Ballot Questions – Board Approval (60-120 days)
- Requires Committee Approval, at latest
- Requires Board Approval, at latest

August 26, 2008

April 28 - June 27, 2008
 May 2008
 June 2008

Miami-Dade County General Election

- Ballot Questions – Board Approval (60-120 days)
- Requires Committee Approval, at latest
- Requires Board Approval, at latest

November 4, 2008

July 7 - September 5, 2008
 June 2008
 July 2008

April	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24 Charter Review Task Force Created by BCC	25	26	27	28
	29	30					

2007

May

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 CMO/CAO Task Force Staff Meeting	14	15 BCC/Mayor Appointments deadline	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 BCC Meeting	27	28 BCC Carryover	29	30

July

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Independence Day Holiday	5	6	7
8	9 <i>CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING</i>	10 BCC Meeting	11	12 BCC Carryover	13	14
15	16 COMMITTEE WEEK Begins	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 <i>CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING</i>	24 BCC Meeting	25	26 BCC Carryover	27	28
29	30	31				

August

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING</i>	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 <i>CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING</i>	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 <i>CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING</i>	30	31	

September

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Labor Day Holiday	4 BCC Meeting	5 CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING	6 BCC Carryover & First Budget Hearing	7	8
9	10 COMMITTEE WEEK Begins	11	12	13 Rosh Hashanah	14	15
16	17	18 BCC Meeting	19 CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING	20 BCC Carryover & Second Budget Hearing	21	22 Yom Kippur (begins at sunset the night before)
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 BCC Meeting	3 CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING	4 BCC Carryover	5	6
7	8 Columbus Day Holiday	9 COMMITTEE WEEK Begins	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 BCC Meeting	17 CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING	18 BCC Carryover	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING	31 Task Force Report DUE (180 days)		

November

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 BCC Meeting	7	8 BCC Carryover	9	10
11	12 Veteran's Day Holiday	13 COMMITTEE WEEK Begins	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving Holiday	23 Thanksgiving Holiday	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Ballot Questions approved by BCC (60-120 days prior to January 29 election)	** Approval Required no later than Oct Committee and Nov Board

December

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 BCC Meeting Hanukkah Begins at Sundown	5	6 BCC Carryover	7	8
9	10 COMMITTEE WEEK Begins	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 BCC Meeting	19	20 BCC Carryover	21	22
23	24	25 Christmas Holiday	26	27	28	29
30	31					

From: Citizen_Email
nt: Thursday, July 19, 2007 10:45 AM
o: Charter (CMO)
Subject: Charter Review Task Force

Comments: I think it is a terrible idea to have those positions as elected ones. Some people may say that the individuals will be more responsive but that is not the case. It is much easier to remove someone if they are appointed versus elected. If someone is doing a bad job or is doing something illegally, they are terminated immediately. Removal of an elected official needs the governor's approval. Will these officials have term limits to protect the public or are they going to be able to be in there forever? The best process is to leave them as appointed positions.

From: Citizen_Email
ent: Friday, July 20, 2007 9:03 AM
o: Charter (CMO)
Subject: Charter Review Task Force

Comments: Not to have Miami Gardens (100,000) or Miami Lakes, or Cutler Bay (40,000) represent recently formed cities on the commission is inexcusable.

The County Commissioners created these new cities by thier vote of approval to go to vote are now leaving them voiceless in the very process that was part of the people's wish to secede from the rule of county government.

Shame!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!