



Delivering Excellence Every Day

Charter Review Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

10:00 am

Main Library Auditorium

101 W. Flagler Street, 1st Floor

Miami, Florida

AGENDA

(revised)

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Old Business
 - A. Discussion of Issue 1 - Study of Supervisor of Elections and the Property Appraiser being elected
 - B. Discussion of Issue 4 - Study of Board of County Commissioners Composition
 - C. Discussion on Public Feedback and Prioritization of Issues
4. New Business
 - A. Discussion of Issue 5 - Study of Initiative, Referendum, Petition & Recall
5. Reports by Task Force Chairman
 - Report on Public Hearings
 - Report on Media & Charter Review Website/E-mails
 - Report on Input from the Office of Community Relations
6. Adjournment

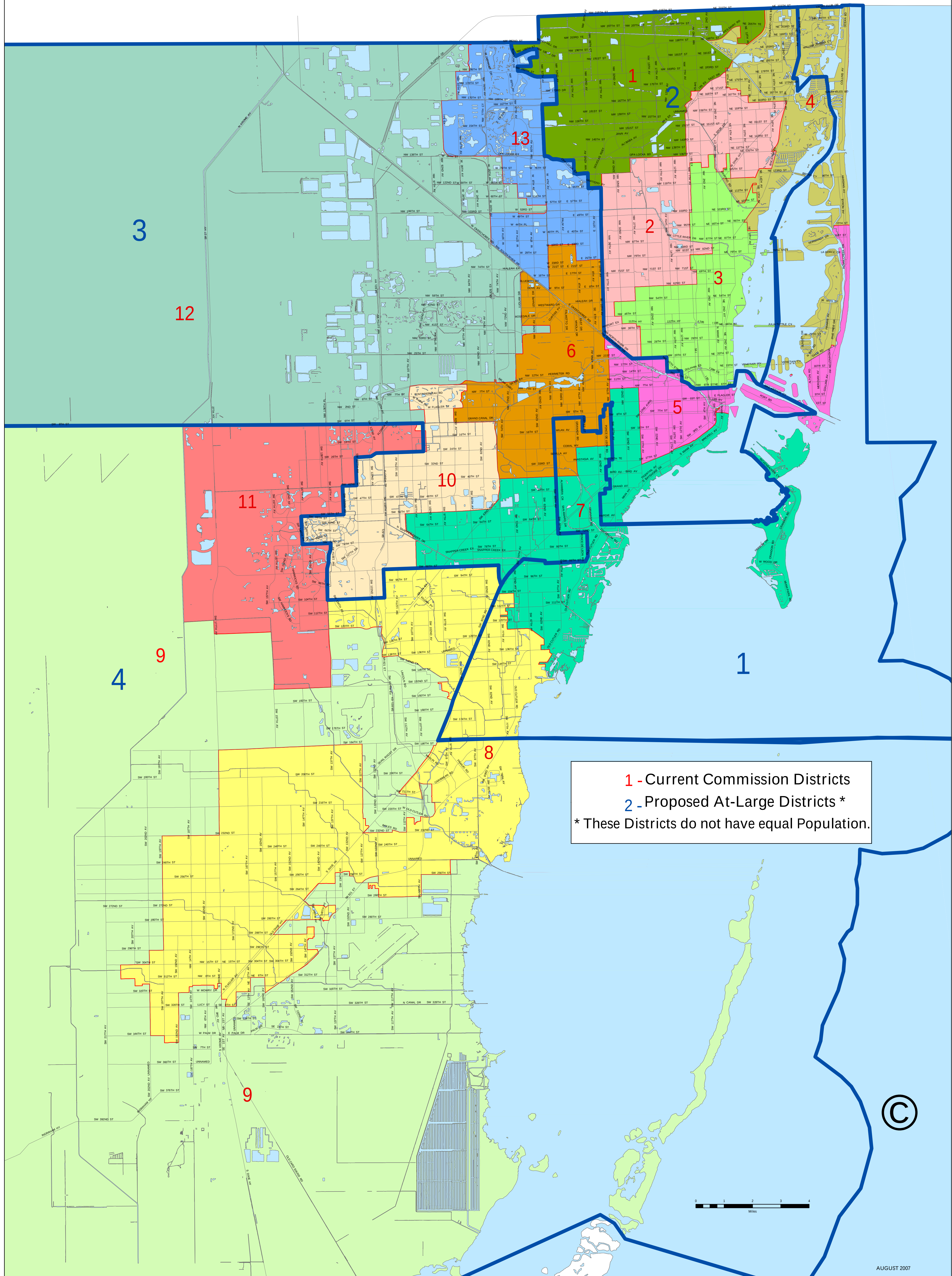
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B

TASK FORCE CASE STUDY No. 1

FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

(Prepared at the Request of Task Force Chair)



Task Force Case Study No.1
(Prepared at the Request of Task Force Chairman)

Miami-Dade County
Population by Proposed Four At-Large Commission Districts
2000

Commission District	Total Population	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Other	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1	246,209	127,882	51.9%	7,041	2.9%	103,261	41.9%	8,025	3.3%
2	581,319	77,276	13.3%	315,590	54.3%	162,251	27.9%	26,202	4.5%
3	931,387	143,112	15.4%	25,512	2.7%	747,146	80.2%	15,617	1.7%
4	494,447	117,583	23.8%	78,990	16.0%	279,051	56.4%	18,823	3.8%
Total	2,253,362	465,853	20.7%	427,133	19.0%	1,291,709	57.3%	68,667	3.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000.

Miami-Dade County, Department of Planning and Zoning, Research Section 2007.

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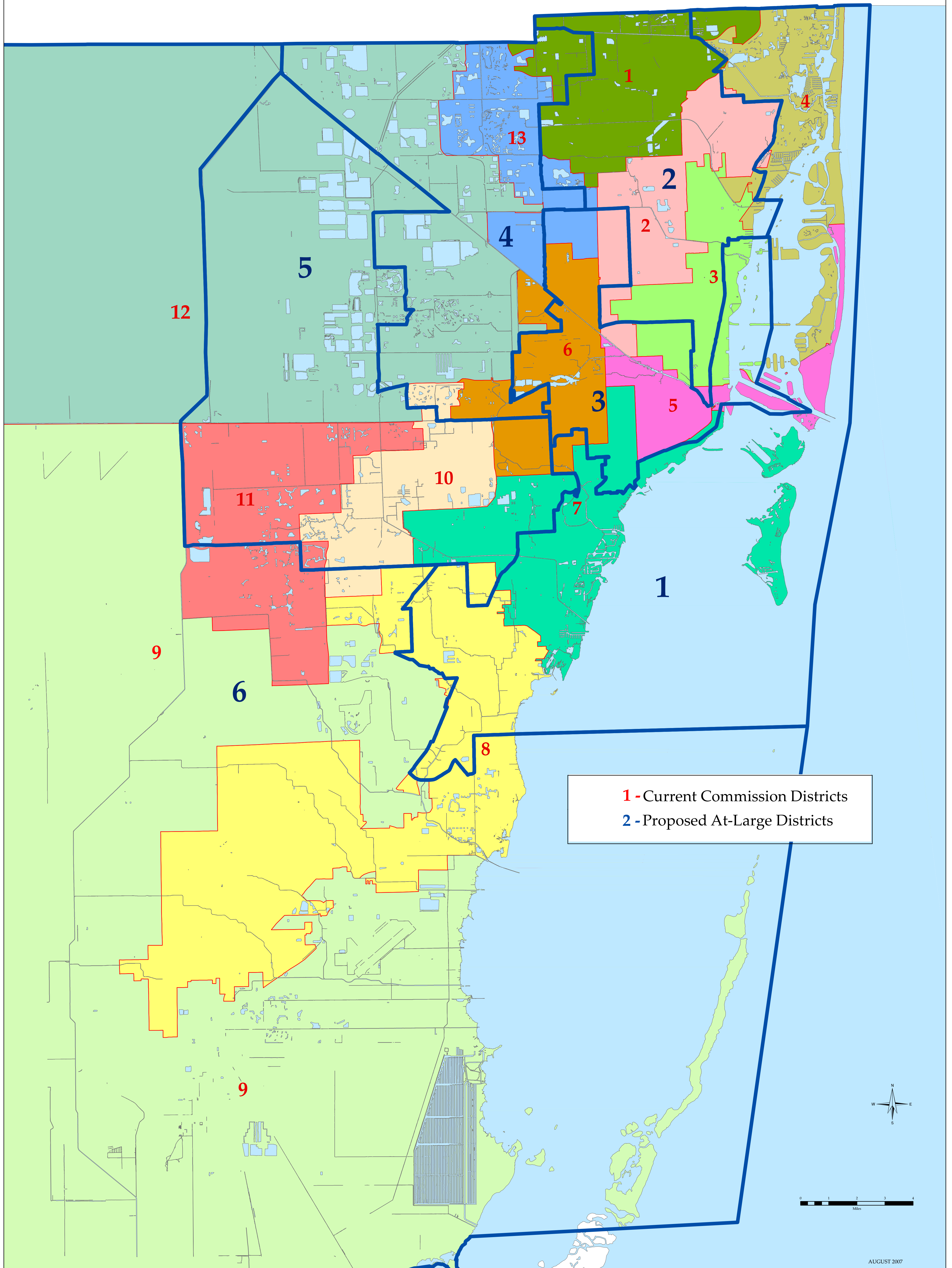
Commission District	Total Population	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Other	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1	253,118	124,567	49.2%	6,461	2.6%	114,274	45.1%	7,816	3.1%
2	600,741	68,014	11.3%	328,880	54.7%	180,787	30.1%	23,060	3.8%
3	1,016,889	131,085	12.9%	28,329	2.8%	843,173	82.9%	14,303	1.4%
4	531,356	115,397	21.7%	80,819	15.2%	316,668	59.6%	18,472	3.5%
Total	2,402,105	439,063	18.3%	444,489	18.5%	1,454,902	60.6%	63,651	2.6%

Source: Miami-Dade County, Department of Planning and Zoning, Research Section 2007.

TASK FORCE CASE STUDY No. 2

FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

(Prepared at the Request of Task Force Chair)



Task Force Case Study No.2
(Prepared at the Request of Task Force Chairman)

Miami-Dade County
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin Proposed Six At-Large Districts
2000

Commissioner District	Total Population	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Other	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1	374,551	189,583	50.6%	28,907	7.7%	140,646	37.6%	15,415	4.1%
2	376,797	28,916	7.7%	262,633	69.7%	67,517	17.9%	17,731	4.7%
3	375,877	41,892	11.1%	27,987	7.4%	301,209	80.1%	4,789	1.3%
4	376,705	47,912	12.7%	29,193	7.7%	298,146	79.1%	1,454	0.4%
5	373,431	69,979	18.7%	9,995	2.7%	285,957	76.6%	7,500	2.0%
6	376,019	87,490	23.3%	74,425	19.8%	198,262	52.7%	15,842	4.2%
Total	2,253,380	465,772	20.7%	433,140	19.2%	1,291,737	57.3%	62,731	2.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000.

Miami-Dade County, Department of Planning and Zoning, Research Section 2007.

Task Force Case Study No.2
(Prepared at the Request of Task Force Chairman)

Miami-Dade County
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin Proposed Six At-Large Districts
2005

Commission District	Total Population	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Other	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1	387,723	183,371	47.3%	31,713	8.2%	157,729	40.7%	14,910	3.8%
2	388,771	24,016	6.2%	272,647	70.1%	77,382	19.9%	14,726	3.8%
3	384,538	37,704	9.8%	27,221	7.1%	315,302	82.0%	4,310	1.1%
4	413,062	41,426	10.0%	31,396	7.6%	338,983	82.1%	1,257	0.3%
5	415,267	65,777	15.8%	10,735	2.6%	331,705	79.9%	7,050	1.7%
6	412,744	87,254	21.1%	79,272	19.2%	230,419	55.8%	15,799	3.8%
Total	2,402,105	439,548	18.3%	452,985	18.9%	1,451,520	60.4%	58,053	2.4%

Source: Miami-Dade County, Department of Planning and Zoning, Research Section 2007.

TO: Susanne M. Torriente
Assistant County Manager
Miami-Dade County-Office of the Manager

DATE: September 4, 2007

FROM: Maurice A. Ferré
Board Member
Charter Review Task Force

RE:

ATTACHMENT: Three

Again my thanks for the excellent and very professional work you and your staff are doing for the CRTF. It is Miami-Dade County government at its best. Congratulations

I enclose the article I wrote to The Miami Herald in answer to the important article published in mid August written by Miguel de Grandy. The Herald, in its wisdom, did not publish my counterpoint, but El Nuevo Herald did. I enclose my original English version (not published) and the more complete Spanish version, also the somewhat toned-down, edited article the El Nuevo Herald published last Friday.

Please distribute copy of this letter and articles to all 21 members of the CRTF.

Thank you. See you Wednesday.

TO: The Miami Herald

DATE: August 16, 2007

FROM: Maurice A. Ferré

Word Count: 711

RE: Charter Review: The Need for Change. Add At Large County Commissioners

The weekly headlines in the Miami Herald are sufficient proof of our current dysfunctional County government.

It seems that now the critical juncture of change is whether we need "AT LARGE" Commissioners. Mayor Carlos Alvarez, in a memo to the Charter Review Task Force (CRTF) on July 31, answers yes, but does not recommend a specific number of "at large" commissioners. On August 10, the Miami Herald editorial says a better way would be to stay at 13 Commissioners, but elect them all in two steps, based on the successful San Diego, California, county election system : first a district primary, then a county-wide election between the two top district votegeters. This, the Herald believes, would cover both needs: general and neighborhood representation and a less parochial, more county wide view by all.

Miguel de Grandy, a respected and knowledgeable ex legislator, now an attorney, lobbyist appointed by Commissioner Natasha Ceijas to the CRTF, on August 14, in the Miami Herald, wrote a column claiming that "at large" commissioners would "minimize the political influence that commissioners from African-American communities can exert."

The Herald editorial and de Grandy are both wrong.

The San Diego, California current two tier electoral process is progressive, but would not sufficiently safeguard the political clout of neighborhood representation, if applied only to the current thirteen district commission of Miami Dade County.

Miguel de Grandy is unjustified in appealing to the fears of majority takeover and the subsequent minority influence loss.

The opinion polls of this year all show the low rating of the County Commission in the public view and the general lack of confidence in county government. One step forward was an elected chief of the administrative side of county government, the now "Strong" Mayor. The next progressive step would be electing some commissioners with a county wide perspective, not continually politically pressed to helping and protecting only their district.

Miami Dade County needs both government representations, the smaller community view and the larger regional view.

Jacksonville, Florida has a successful city/county government format of 19 council members, five at large, fourteen from districts. Since Miami Dade County already has 13 district commissioners, we would need six at large commissioners to give us similar balance.

Six is the preferred at large representation, because it would better assure properly configured districts (for residency purposes only) that would better assure an acceptable ethnic/racial/regional balance. Miami Dade County is currently 20.5% Black and 60.6% Hispanic. We would have a minimum of one African-American "at large" seat and three "at large" Hispanics seats. Proper balance would be almost guaranteed by then using the San Diego formula, thus assuring better chances of both area and minority representation at the "at large" level, without disrupting the current thirteen neighborhood representatives elected in districts.

To better assure Haitian-American representation, the district commission could go to 14 and the "at large" be 5 seats. Keep in mind that the 2010 demographics will be completely different from those in 2000, thus the configuration of the current 13 district seats will be completely different by the 2012 election.

The second most important reason why we need a 19 member County Commission, like Jacksonville, is to move from the Council (Commission) format to the Legislative Assembly governing body configuration. A major metropolitan area of almost 2.5 million people, Miami Dade needs to progress beyond the "up on the dais, looking down on you" format to, an on the floor, deliberative body of local legislators, looking out for our regional needs. Regarding the additional cost of 6 more commissioners, freeze the current budget (\$20 million a year) for the subsequent five years.

Lastly, while I was gratefully Mayor Carlos Alvarez's appointment to the CRTF 2007 committee of 21, I do not represent Mayor Alvarez. These are my own thoughts. I was part of the original lawsuit (Meek v. Miami Dade County) back in 1989. I still feel strongly in favor of the Voting Rights Act and the need of proper representation for our diverse community. I also believe in adjusting wrongs. The governing body of Miami Dade County is currently broken, it needs fixing.

Para: El Nuevo Herald

FECHA: 27 de agosto del 2007

ATTENCION: Andrés Hernández

DE: Maurice A. Ferré

Cantidad de Palabras: 1021

RE: La reforma imperante a nuestro mal sistema de gobernación de Miami Dade

El Comité de 21 miembros que revisa la actual Carta Constitutiva del Condado Miami Dade está a mitad de camino entre reuniones de discusiones informativas, debates, y vistas públicas. Hemos de terminar nuestro informe y recomendaciones a los Comisionados del Condado a mediados de octubre.

Los titulares sobre Miami Dade semanales en El Nuevo Herald son suficiente evidencia del actual mal sistema de gobernación Condal.

En los debates públicos parece que el punto quirúrgico para enderezar el actual sistema de mal gobierno local es la necesidad, o no, de incluir representaciones electorales “*At Large*”. Es decir, que algunos de los comisionados sean electos por todos los electores del Condado y algunos sean electos solo por los electores de sus distritos (en la actualidad hay 13 distritos). El Alcalde, Carlos Álvarez, el 31 de julio, dijo que Sí, a los comisionados generales (*At Large*), en un memorándum muy bien pensado y redactado, pero no recomendó el Alcalde un número específico de comisionados generales. El 10 de agosto, The Miami Herald dijo en su editorial, que mejor sería un sistema de doble elección, en función en algunas ciudades estadounidenses (San Diego, California), para

evitar el parroquialismo que ocurre cuando las juntas de gobiernos locales solo tienen representantes electos por distritos. En el sistema electoral de San Diego, primero celebran una elección por distritos. Los dos candidatos que saquen la más alta votación van a una segunda vuelta en una elección general en TODO el Condado. El ganador de la contienda general es el nuevo comisionado/a general.

El pasado 14 de agosto Miguel de Grandy, un respetado ex legislador estatal y ahora abogado/cabildero, nombrado al Comité de Revisión de la Carta Constitutiva por la Comisionada Natacha Seijas, escribió un artículo en la sección Opinión del The Miami Herald. De Grandy rechaza la elección de comisionados generales. Dijo de Grandy que ese sistema propuesto por el Alcalde Álvarez “minimizaría la influencia política de los comisionados de la comunidad afro-americana en Miami Dade.”

Yo opino que el Alcalde Álvarez tiene la razón y que The Miami Herald y Miguel de Grandy, ambos, se equivocaron.

El sistema de doble elección de San Diego aunque progresista, no garantiza lo suficiente la representación necesaria de los vecindarios en la política condal. Solo elecciones por distritos logra este propósito importante.

De Grandy no está acertado tampoco en su llamada a la incertidumbre en la comunidad afro-americana, impulsándola a creer que perderá su influencia política cuando surjan mayorías democráticas que no incluya a los Afro-Americanos.

Las encuestas de opiniones públicas locales de este año arrojan cifras muy altas en contra de los actuales comisionados condales electos por distritos y demuestran una notable desconfianza en el actual gobierno Condal. Un paso correctivo a esa desconfianza fue el cambio este 23 de enero que impuso un Alcalde “Fuerte”, a favor de la parte administrativa y ejecutiva del gobierno Condal.

Después de Alcalde Fuerte, el próximo cambio progresivo necesario, sería la elección de algunos comisionados con una perspectiva en pro de la comunidad en general, que no estuvieran siempre azotados e impulsados solo para proteger las necesidades e intereses parroquiales de sus distritos individuales y paralelamente no atender adecuadamente el bienestar de todos en común.

La respuesta a este dilema, como siempre, está en el centro, y no en los extremos. Miami Dade County necesita en su Junta de Gobierno, tanto representación de distritos, como representación general. Estos últimos deberían tener una más amplia definición del bien común.

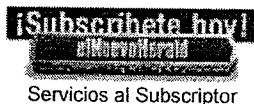
Jacksonville, Florida ha tenido por casi 50 años un gobierno condal consolidado con un Consejo de 19 concejales, 14 por distritos y 5 en representación general. Como Miami Dade ya tiene 13 comisionados por distritos, propongo que con solo elegir 6 comisionados generales tendríamos un balance similar a Jacksonville.

Seis es el número perfecto de representación general para Miami Dade, porque así aseguraría una representación geográfica adecuada, que a su vez aseguraría un balance en la Junta de Gobierno que democráticamente reflejaría las comunidades regionales, étnicas y raciales. La división electoral en seis distritos generales cumpliría con solo el requisito residencial. Es decir que los comisionados generales electos tendrían que residir en sus respectivos distritos. Aquí sí serviría la formula San Diego que recomienda The Miami Herald, en donde los dos aspirantes por los súper distritos de mayor votación irían a una segunda vuelta a votación general por todos los electores del condado.

La segunda razón de mayor importancia de tener 19 comisionados, como los tiene Jacksonville, el mejor gobierno local de la Florida, sería para cambiar el formato de gobernación del actual Consejo (municipal) al formato de una Asamblea Legislativa. Un área metropolitana (Miami Dade County) con casi 2.5 de residentes, para progresar y tener transparencia, contabilidad y diafanidad en su gobierno, necesita un cuerpo legislativo que se dedique a la función de gobernar legislativamente y no a interferir continuamente con la administración Condal, como ocurre hoy en Miami Dade. Los costos adicionales de 6 comisionados generales se controlarían congelando el presupuesto de la Junta de Comisionados, en la actualidad ya altísimo, \$20 millones, por los próximos cinco años.

Aunque agradezco y me enorgullece mi nombramiento al Comité de Revisión de la Carta Constitutiva por el Alcalde Carlos Álvarez, no lo represento. Él tiene sus ideas y gracias a Dios, en esta democracia Americana, yo puedo tener las mías. Formé parte del grupo litigante que pidió en el 1989 que se reconstituyera la Comisión, entonces de 9

comisionados, electos TODOS en general, por todos los electores de Miami Dade. Este sistema solo permitió un comisionado hispano y uno/a Afro-Americano. Aún creo en la justicia de la decisión del Juez Federal en el 1990 que impuso 13 comisionados electos solo por distritos. Pero a pesar de lo justo, después de 17 años de experiencia mixta, vemos que no es práctico el sistema actual de solo distritos, no funciona eficazmente. No tiene nada que ver con los actuales comisionados electos, es el sistema el que no funciona. Hay que reparar nuestro método de elegir a nuestra Junta de Gobierno Condal, para tener gobernación balanceada, con frenos y contrapesos, transparencia y contabilidad y más importante, división de poder.



elNuevoHerald.com 

Opinión

Publicado el viernes 31 de agosto del 2007

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La reforma necesaria en Miami-Dade

MAURICE A. FERRE

El Comité de 21 miembros que revisa la actual Carta Constitutiva del condado Miami-Dade está a mitad de camino. Debemos terminar nuestro informe y recomendaciones a los comisionados del Condado a mediados de octubre.

Los titulares sobre Miami-Dade son suficiente evidencia del mal sistema de gobernación condal. En los debates públicos parece que el punto neurálgico para enderezar el actual sistema es la necesidad, o no, de incluir representaciones electorales *at large*. Es decir, que algunos de los comisionados sean electos por todos los electores del condado y algunos sólo por los electores de sus distritos (en la actualidad hay 13 distritos). El alcalde, Carlos Alvarez, dijo el 31 de julio que sí a los comisionados generales (*at large*), pero no recomendó un número específico de comisionados generales. El 10 de agosto, The Miami Herald dijo en su editorial que mejor sería un sistema de doble elección, en función en algunas ciudades estadounidenses, como San Diego, California, para evitar el parroquialismo que ocurre cuando las juntas de gobierno locales sólo tienen representantes electos por distritos. En San Diego, primero celebran una elección por distritos. Los dos candidatos que saquen la más alta votación van a una segunda vuelta en una elección general en todo el condado. El ganador de la contienda general es el nuevo comisionado general.

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Las encuestas de opinión locales de este año arrojan cifras muy altas en contra de los actuales comisionados condales electos por distritos y demuestran una notable desconfianza en el actual gobierno condal. Un paso para aliviar esa desconfianza fue el cambio el pasado 23 de enero que impuso un alcalde "fuerte".

El próximo cambio necesario sería la elección de algunos comisionados con una perspectiva en pro de la comunidad en general, que no estuvieran limitados sólo a proteger los intereses de sus distritos.

La respuesta a este dilema, como siempre, está en el centro y no en los extremos. El condado necesita en su junta de gobierno tanto representación de distritos como representación general, con una definición más amplia del bien común.

Jacksonville ha tenido por casi 50 años un gobierno condal con un consejo de 19 concejales, 14 por distritos y 5 en representación general. Como Miami-Dade ya tiene 13 comisionados por distritos, propongo que con sólo elegir 6 comisionados generales tendríamos un balance similar al de Jacksonville.

Seis es el número perfecto de representación general para Miami-Dade, porque así garantizaría una representación geográfica adecuada, que a su vez reflejaría democráticamente las comunidades regionales, étnicas y raciales. La división electoral en seis distritos generales cumpliría sólo con el requisito residencial. Es decir, que los comisionados generales electos tendrían que residir en sus respectivos distritos. Aquí sí serviría la fórmula de San Diego que recomienda The Miami Herald, donde los dos aspirantes por los superdistritos de mayor votación irían a una segunda vuelta, a votación general por todos los electores del condado.

La segunda razón importante de tener 19 comisionados sería para cambiar el formato de gobernación del actual consejo (municipal) al formato de una asamblea legislativa. Un área metropolitana como Miami-Dade, con casi 2.5 millones de residentes, para progresar y tener transparencia en su gobierno, necesita una asamblea legislativa que se dedique a gobernar legislativamente y no a interferir continuamente con la administración condal, como ocurre hoy. Los costos adicionales de 6 comisionados generales se controlarían congelando el presupuesto de la junta de comisionados, ya altísimo, \$20 millones anuales, por los próximos cinco años.

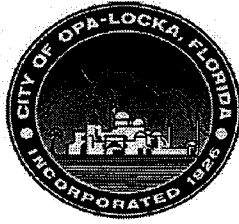
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Ex alcalde de Miami y ex

comisionado de Miami Dade.

C

"THE GREAT CITY"



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Susan M. Torriente, Asst. City Manager

FROM: Dr. Anna E. Ward, Assistant City Manager (electronic)

DATE: August 31, 2007

RE: Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force

The City of Opa-locka, in response to the Miami-Dade League of Cities request for every City to actively participate in the review and submission of recommendations relating to the charge of the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force, hereby submits the following general comments:

- City staff commends the work of the task force and trusts its reference to Florida's constitutional provision for Dade County's home rule charter (Article VIII, Section 11); the unique strength of which is afforded to only three other counties. (Items 4, 5, 10 & 12)
- City staff also commends F.S. Title XI, Chapter 145 (.012) for consideration as this statute references compensation of county officials; as does the Florida Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations *2008 Finalized Salaries of County Constitutional Officers and Elected School District Officials* (Items 1 & 2)
- City staff further commends the topic of "term limitations" to the national momentum as introduced and forcefully continues since the 1992 Time Magazine article entitled: *A Resounding Yes for Term Limitations*, which supports term limitations for congressional members, as Florida has term limits for its legislators. (Item 3)
(<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,977000,00.html>).
- Furthermore, the City's staff suggests that as with property management and information technology, recommendations relating to procurement reform should include increased efficiencies and align the recent and final report by the Acquisition Advisory Panel; a group of public and private

officials that examined how commercial buyers approach the government procurement process. (Item 6)

- Finally, City staff views Items 7, 8, 9 and 11 as having a scope exceeding the time limitations of the Task Force, and recommend special emphasis as might be appropriately designated for study within the County.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the above cursory comments as the Task Force seeks to make meaningful and insightful recommendations to strengthen the County's Home Rule Charter.

4

A

Memorandum



Date: September 4, 2007

To: Victor M. Diaz, Chairman
Charter Review Task Force

From: Susanne M. Torriente
Assistant County Manager 

Subject: Information Package for Charter Review Task Force – Issue 5

At its August 1, 2007 meeting, the Charter Review Task Force (CRTF) approved a list of issues, in priority order, for study during this process.

Per your direction, research on Issue 5, the Study of Initiative, Referendum, Petition & Recalls has been performed. Specifically, staff has conducted general research regarding the use of initiatives and recalls in the United States. The attached presentation includes information regarding the history and major pros and cons of these processes, as well as specific strategies used by communities to improve them. Additionally, we have attached detailed findings regarding provisions for initiative and recall in seven Florida counties and thirteen large counties nationwide.

I would like to thank Amy Horton-Tavera, Paul Mauriello, Cara Tuzeo, John Murphey and Tracie Auguste for pulling this data together. Staff will continue to research this issue, as well as the other issues approved by the Task Force.

c: Charter Review Task Force Members and Staff

Direct Democracy: Initiative and Recall

Prepared for the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force

September 2007

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Selected References

Primary References:

- Cronin, Thomas E. Direct Democracy: The Politics of Initiative, Referendum and Recall. 1989: Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA
- National Conference of State Legislatures Initiative and Referendum in the 21st Century: Final Report and Recommendations of the NCSL I&R Task Force, 2002.

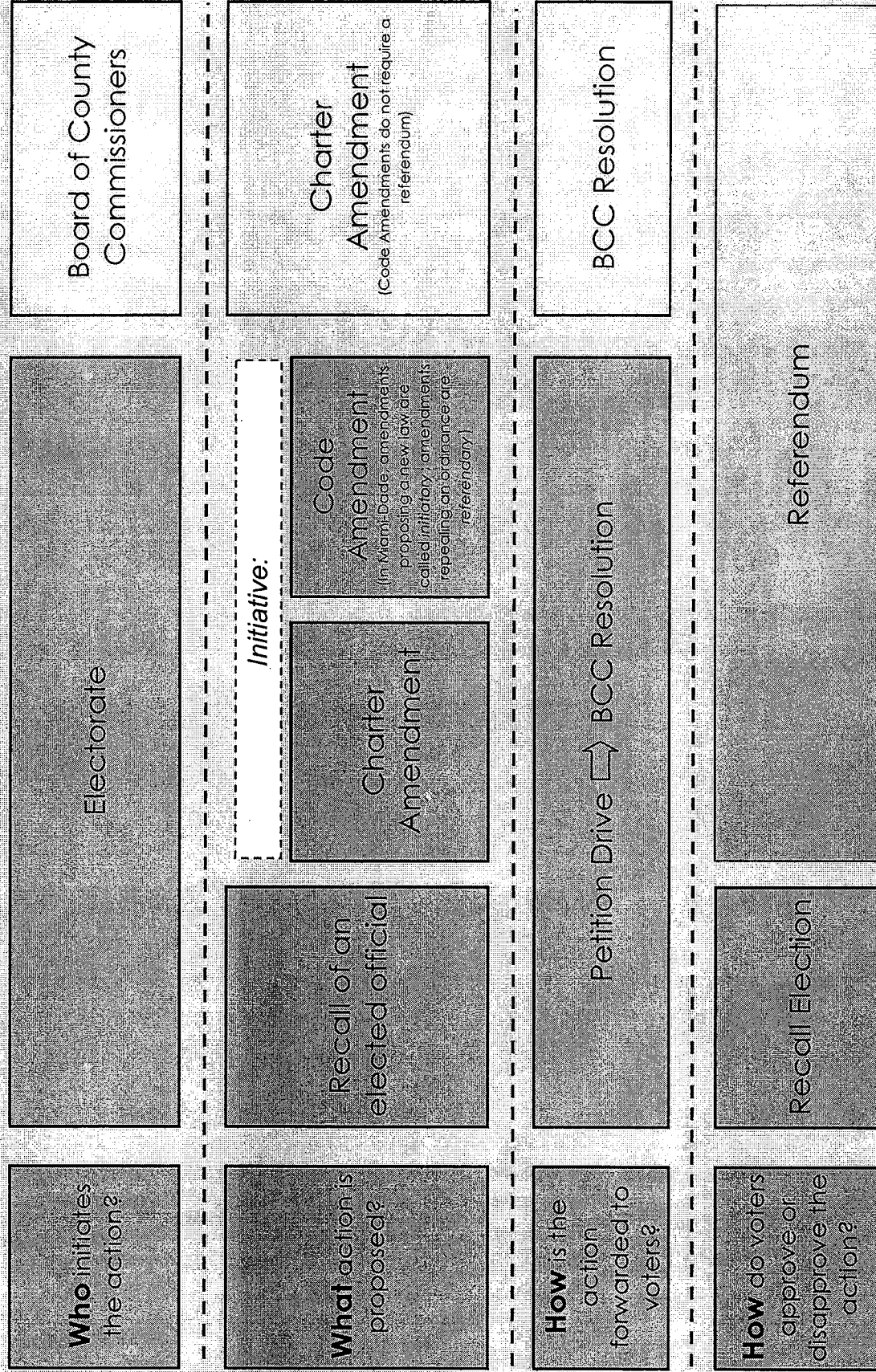
Supplementary References:

- International City/County Management Association Municipal Form of Government Survey, 2001
- Greenblatt, Alan Total Recall, Governing Magazine, September 2003
- Drage, Jennifer Taming the Initiative Beast, State Legislatures Magazine, September 2000

Websites consulted:

- National Conference of State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org
- Initiative and Referendum Institute, www.iandrinstitute.org

Overview of Direct Democracy Mechanisms



Terminology and procedures may vary somewhat by jurisdiction. Chart reflects the most common use of the terms *initiative*, *recall* and *referendum*.

In some jurisdictions, the legislative body may adopt Code amendments proposed by initiative in lieu of placing them on the ballot.

A Brief History of Referenda and Initiatives

- The notion of direct lawmaking by the people dates back to colonial times, when laws were often crafted through town hall meetings.
- During the 18th century, some colonies and later states provided for “binding representation” whereby legislators were required to vote in accordance with majority wishes.
- The modern referendum process developed during the 19th century, when many states required popular approval of state constitutions and some states began to require referenda to incorporate municipalities, establish schools, or incur debt.
- The citizen initiative process was championed by the Populist Party in the late 19th century and in 1898 South Dakota became the first state to establish an initiative process.

The Initiative Process Today

- There is no national initiative process.
- As of 2002, 21 states provided for statutory initiative and 18 states (including Florida) provided for state constitutional initiative.
- According to a survey conducted in 2001 by the International City/County Management Association, 58% of responding municipalities had initiative provisions.

Initiative: Major Pros and Cons

- Today's proponents of the initiative process argue that:
 - The initiative is a direct form of democracy and provides an mechanism by which the people can petition their government for redress of grievances.
 - The initiative provides a necessary tool for the people when the legislature is corrupt or unresponsive.
- Initiative critics argue that:
 - The initiative process undermines representative democracy and lacks its traits of deliberative debate and compromise.
 - Voters frequently lack the information necessary to make educated decisions.
 - Results are frequently unduly influenced by wealthy special interests.

Benchmarking Highlights - Initiative

- Staff conducted benchmarking research on the initiative process in 7 Florida counties and 13 large national counties. *Our findings reflect the provisions of the respective county charters or, for non-charter counties, the county code.*
- All 7 Florida counties provide for an initiative process. 11 of the 13 national counties also allow initiatives.
- All Florida counties require signatures from between 7% and 10% of registered voters. Three Florida counties (including Miami-Dade) place restrictions on the number of signatures that can come from a geographic area.
- Of the national counties, 3 base signature requirements on the number of registered voters; requirements range from 5 to 20% of voters. Eight counties base signature requirements on the number of voters participating in the last General Election. Requirements range from 8% to 20% of voters.
- Of the Florida counties, 5 restrict the time frame for signature gathering. In 4 of these counties, the limit is 180 days; in Miami-Dade County the limit is 60 days.
- Many of the national counties limit the time frame for signature gathering; limits range from 90 days to 1 year.

Benchmarking Highlights – Initiative cont.

- Only two of the 20 counties surveyed (Miami-Dade and Broward) impose a specific time requirement within which a referendum must be called; most require the referendum to be held at the next countywide election.
- Many counties impose a waiting period between the time a petition is verified and when the referendum is held; waiting periods range from 30 to 135 days.
- Many counties specifically provide that the council may adopt the proposed legislation in lieu of calling a referendum (generally for code amendments only).
- We identified three counties (including Miami-Dade) that restrict the council's authority to modify legislation approved by referendum within a certain time period. The California counties surveyed provide that legislation proposed by initiative, but enacted by the council, may only be overturned by popular vote.
- Three of the 7 Florida counties (Broward, Orange and Pinellas) impose restrictions on the subject matter of initiatives, such as budget issues, employee compensation, and functioning of the courts or constitutional officers.
- We identified 2 national counties with similar subject matter restrictions.

The Initiative Process:

Issues and Community Responses

Issues are frequently expressed concerns; **community responses** are policies that have been implemented by governments and/or proposed by various organizations or community groups

Issue	Community Responses:
The Initiative process lacks the deliberation, debate and compromise characteristic of representative democracy	Allow for an advisory initiative process (Straw ballot) Provide for an indirect initiative process (After proponents gather required signatures, initiative is referred to the council, which may enact, defeat or amend the measure.) Require public hearings on initiative proposals Allow councils to place alternative proposals on the ballot Require sunset provisions on initiative measures Provide all voters with user-friendly information on initiative measures, including arguments in favor of and against the proposed measure Require fiscal impact statements on ballot Require public hearings on initiative proposals Provide voters with a list of individuals and organizations endorsing or opposing initiative measures
Voters often lack adequate and transparent information needed to make educated decisions	

The Initiative Process:

Issues and Community Responses cont.

Issue	Community Responses:
The Initiative process is often a tool of special interests whose supporters and motives may not be known	Require financial disclosure by individuals or organizations contributing money over a threshold amount Require signature gatherers to file statements of organization Make financial disclosure requirements for initiative campaigns consistent with requirements for candidates for elected office
Organizing a successful petition drive is costly, so only wealthy interests have access to the process	Lower signature requirements for all-volunteer campaigns Provide drafting assistance to proponents Prohibit the use of public funds or resources to support or oppose an initiative measure
The signature gathering process is vulnerable to fraud	Require signature gatherers to file statements of organization Prohibit payment in exchange for signatures Require signature gatherers to disclose whether they are paid Institute criminal penalties for fraud or misrepresentation

The Initiative Process: The Initiative Process: Issues and Community Responses cont.

Issue	Community Responses:
Some matters, such as budgetary and employee issues, or issues surrounding the court system, should not be subject to a popular vote	Prohibit or restrict (e.g. though supermajority provisions) initiatives on certain subjects
Initiatives can create unfunded mandates for governments	Prohibit or restrict (e.g. though supermajority provisions) initiatives that appropriate revenue or change fees
Initiative proponents elect to amend the charter rather than code to prevent the council from amending or repealing the proposal	Require fiscal impact statements on ballot Limit the council's authority to amend legislation approved by initiative
Lengthy legal battles can impede the initiative process	Establish a review process and opportunity for public challenge of technical matters Impose time limits on technical challenges

A Brief History of Recall

- A Constitutional recall provision was considered but ultimately rejected by the Founding Fathers.
- The Populist and Socialist Labor parties urged states and cities to adopt the recall in the late 19th century.
- In 1903, Los Angeles became the first major city to approve the recall in its charter.
- Oregon was the first state to adopt the recall in 1908.

The Recall Process Today

- At least thirty-six states permit the recall of local officials. Most recall states, including Florida, have established specific recall requirements and procedures.
- According to research conducted in 2001 by the International City/County Management Association, 61% of U.S. counties and cities have a recall process. From 1996 to 2001, recall elections took place in almost 10% of cities.
- Local recalls are more prevalent in smaller cities and school boards than in large cities and counties.
- The “success rate” for recall elections is under one-third at the local level.
- There is no national recall process.

Recall: Major Pros and Cons

- Today's proponents of the recall process argue that:
 - It provides for continuous accountability of elected officials
 - The threat of recall helps provide a check against undue influence by special interests
 - Recall provides a "safety valve" for intense opposition and is a sensible alternative to impeachment
- Recall critics argue that:
 - The recall process undermines basic principles of representative democracy and constrains the independence of legislators
 - Recall elections can be unduly influenced by wealthy special interests
 - Recall elections can be polarizing and confusing to voters
 - Recall makes elective office less appealing to potential candidates

Benchmarking Highlights - Recall

- Staff conducted benchmarking research on the recall process in 7 Florida counties and 13 large national counties. *Our findings reflect the provisions of the respective county charters or, for non-charter counties, the county code.*
- In general, recall procedures tend to be regulated by state law.
- All 7 Florida counties provide for recall of local elected officials. Eight of the 13 national counties provide for recall.
- In 6 of 7 Florida counties, recall petitions must be signed by 5% of registered voters for large jurisdictions. In Miami-Dade County, the signatures of 4% of registered voters are required.
- Nationally, signature requirements vary and may be based on the number of registered voters or on the number of votes cast in the previous general election. In either case requirements range from 10 to 25%.
- Florida Statute 100.361 provides that officials may be recalled for "malfeasance; misfeasance; neglect of duty; drunkenness; incompetence; permanent inability to perform official duties; or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude."
- We identified 1 national county (Wayne, MI) that places restrictions on the reasons for recall.

The Recall Process: Issues and Community Responses

Issues are frequently expressed concerns; *community responses* are policies that have been implemented by governments and/or proposed by various organizations or community groups

Issue	Community Responses:
Some recall campaigns are groundless or constitute "sour grapes"	Restrict permissible reasons for recall Restrict the time frame within which a recall can be undertaken Impose high signature requirements Require financial disclosure by individuals or organizations contributing money over a threshold amount
The recall process is often a tool of special interests whose supporters and motives may not be known	Require signature gatherers to file statements of organization Make financial disclosure requirements for recall campaigns consistent with requirements for candidates for elected office
The signature gathering process is vulnerable to fraud	Require signature gatherers to file statements of organization Prohibit payment in exchange for signatures Require signature gatherers to disclose whether they are paid Institute criminal penalties for fraud or misrepresentation
Recall elections can be polarizing and confusing to voters	Require public hearings and/or preliminary trial by citizen jury Require "cooling off" period prior to a recall election

Initiative and Recall - Benchmarking Results
Prepared for the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force

Florida Comptroller									
County	Population (approx.)	Signatures Required	Time Frame for Signature Gathering	Citizen Initiates		Council Authority to Modify Legislation	Subject Matter Restrictions	Recalls	
				Course Of Action					
Miami-Dade	2,376,000	CHARTER: 10% of total registered voters ORDINANCE: 4% of total registered voters; with no more than 25% coming from any single commission district.	60 days	Board must call an election within 60-120 days of the date the certified petition is presented; special election must be called if no general election is scheduled to occur within 60-120 days. In the case of an ordinance, the Board may adopt the ordinance as submitted (in an initiative petition) or repeal the ordinance (in a referendary petition) within 30 days.	An ordinance adopted by the electorate through initiative proceedings cannot be amended or repealed by the Board for a period of one year after it was adopted, but thereafter it may be amended or repealed like any other ordinance.	No - however, any reduction or elimination of existing revenue or any increase in expenditures not provided for by the current budget or by existing bond issues shall not take effect until the beginning of the next succeeding fiscal year.	Must be in office at least 1 year. Requires 4% of registered voters' signatures. BCC must hold recall election 45-90 days after certified petition is submitted.		
Broward	1,778,000	CHARTER/ORDINANCE: 7% of the total number of registered voters in the County, with no more than 25% shall come from any single district	180 days.	Once the petition is validated, the Commission must call a special election at least (60) days after the determination of the validity of the petition; or if the petition contains 10% of the registered voters in the County at the date of the last general election, the election shall take place preferably in an already scheduled election or at least (90) days and no later than (120) days from validity of petition		The initiative power shall not extend to the proposing of any part or all of the annual budget or capital programs or fixing ordinance making or repealing any appropriation of money fixing the salaries of County officers or employees or authorizing or repealing the levy of taxes	In accordance with F.S. 100.361, which requires signatures from at least 15% of registered voters. The recall election must be scheduled by the Chief Judge between 30 and 60 days following certification of signatures.		
Palm Beach	1,269,000	CHARTER: 7% of the total number of registered voters in the county.	Not specified	Once the petition is validated, the Commission holds public hearings on the proposed ordinance according to law and votes on the proposed ordinance. If the Board fails to adopt the proposed ordinance, they shall place the ordinance for referendum on the ballot at the next general election at least after (30) days after the Commissioner's vote.	Not Specified	Each amendment shall be limited to a single independent subject.	F.S. 100.361		
Hillsborough	1,132,000	8% of all registered voters in the county	6 months to get the required signatures before petition becomes in valid		Not Specified	Not Specified	F.S. 100.361		
Orange	1,023,000	CHARTER: Petitions must be signed by 10% of the total registered voters in the county. ORDINANCE: Petitions must be signed by 7% of the registered voters in the county.	180 days.	Once the petition is validated, the Board must call a referendum to be held at the next primary, general election or special election at least (45) days after the adoption of such resolution.	Not Specified	Initiative power does not include ordinances relating to administrative or judicial functions of county government, including, but not limited to, county budget, debt obligations, capital improvement programs, salaries of county officers and employees and the levy and collection of taxes.	F.S. 100.361		
Pinellas	928,000	CHARTER: Petitions must be signed by 10% of the total registered voters of the county, with no more than 40% residing in any one at-large district and no more than 30% residing in any one single-member district.	180 days.	In order for petitions to be placed on the ballot in the general election, they must be certified by the supervisor of elections at least 90 days before the election.	Not Specified	Proposed amendments may not affect the status, duties, responsibilities of the county officers (clerk of the circuit court, property appraiser, Tax collector, sheriff, and supervisor of elections).	F.S. 100.361		
Duval / City of Jacksonville	826,000	Petitions must be signed by 10% of the total registered voters of the county.	Not Specified	A public referendum is held once a validated petition is presented. Unless otherwise scheduled by the Council, the referendum is held as a part of and at the same time as the next consolidated government, school board, state or federal election in which all qualified voters of Duval County are entitled to participate, but not less than thirty (30) days from the validation of the petition.	Not Specified	Not Specified	F.S. 100.361		
Los Angeles, CA	9,935,000	10% of the number of votes cast within the County for all Governor candidates in most recent election	180 days	The Board of Supervisors has 3 options: 1) Adopt the ordinance without alteration at the regular meeting or within 10 days of being presented with certified petition. 2) Submit to voters in next general election (petitions signed by 20% of voters go to special election), or 3) Order a report at the regular meeting at which certified petition is presented. When the report is presented to the Board, it shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election.	An ordinance proposed and adopted by initiative petition may not be repealed or amended except by referendum, unless otherwise indicated in the original ordinance.	Recall may commence after 90 days in office, but not if officer has 6 months or less left in term. No specific grounds are required. Time for gathering signatures is 40 - 160 days (depending upon the size of the jurisdiction). Signature requirement varies between 10% to 30 %, according to the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction			

Initiative and Recall - Benchmarking Results
Prepared for the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force

County	Population (approx.)	Citizens Initiates			Recalls
		Signatures Required	Time Frame for Signature Gathering	Course Of Action	
		State statutes govern Submitting of Public Questions. Petitions which are binding may be submitted only as authorized by the particular statute pertaining to the law in question. Advisory questions require signatures by a number of voters at least equal to 8% of the votes cast for governor in the last election (there is no charter).	Generally, no longer than one year from the filing date, but may vary depending on the provisions of a particular state statute.	Variable depending on the specific state authorizing the petition.	
Cook County, IL	5,304,000			Not Specified	No recalls are authorized in the State of Illinois.
		10% of the number of votes cast within the County for all Governor candidates in most recent election	180 days	Board of Supervisors has 3 options: 1) Adopt the ordinance without alteration at the regular meeting or within 10 days of being presented with certified petition. 2) Submit to voters in next general election (petitions signed by 20% of voters go to special election), or 3) Order a report at the regular meeting at which certified petition is presented. When the report is presented to the Board, it shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election.	Recall may commence after 90 days in office, but not if officer has 6 months or less left in term. No specific grounds are required. Time for gathering signatures is 40 - 160 days (depending upon the size of the jurisdiction). Signature requirement varies between 10% to 30 %, according to the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction
Orange County, CA	2,989,000			Board of Supervisors has 3 options: 1) Adopt the ordinance without alteration at the regular meeting or within 10 days of being presented with certified petition. 2) Submit to voters in next general election (petitions signed by 20% of voters go to special election), or 3) Order a report at the regular meeting at which certified petition is presented. When the report is presented to the Board, it shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election.	Recall may commence after 90 days in office, but not if officer has 6 months or less left in term. No specific grounds are required. Time for gathering signatures is 40 - 160 days (depending upon the size of the jurisdiction). Signature requirement varies between 10% to 30%, according to the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction.
San Diego County, CA	2,933,000	10% of the number of votes cast within the County for all Governor candidates in most recent election	180 days	Board of Supervisors has 3 options: 1) Adopt the ordinance without alteration at the regular meeting or within 10 days of being presented with certified petition. 2) Submit to voters in next general election (petitions signed by 20% of voters go to special election), or 3) Order a report at the regular meeting at which certified petition is presented. When the report is presented to the Board, it shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election.	Recall may commence after 90 days in office, but not if officer has 6 months or less left in term. No specific grounds are required. Time for gathering signatures is 40 - 160 days (depending upon the size of the jurisdiction). Signature requirement varies between 10% to 30%, according to the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction.
Dallas County, TX	2,305,000	Citizens are required to contact their commissioner or county judge in order to suggest changes or amendments to ordinance.		N/A	Dallas County law does not allow popular recall by petition.
		CHARTER: 10% of the base vote (total votes cast in last gubernatorial election). INITIATIVE: 8% of the base vote.		If not enacted by the Board within 40 days, the measure must be submitted for approval or rejection at the next general election. The legislative body may reject any measure proposed by initiative and propose a different measure on the same subject. Both measures will appear on the ballot for approval or rejection and the measure with the highest vote will prevail.	Elected official must be in office 6 months prior to recall. Recall petition requires signatures from 25% of the base vote. The reasons for recall are subject to a clarity sufficiency finding by the Board, which finding is subject to appeal to the circuit court.
Wayne, MI	1,999,000		180 days	Not Specified	Not Specified
		REPEAL of ORDINANCE: 8% percent of the votes cast for the office of county executive at the last preceding election INITIATION of ORDINANCE: 10% percent of the votes cast in the county for the office of county executive at the last preceding election for county executive		No ordinance approved by a majority of the voters can be amended or repealed by the county council within a period of two years; but such ordinance may be amended within the two-year period by ordinance adopted by 2/3 of the Council members; such amendatory ordinance is not subject to referendum.	The following are not subject to repeal: An appropriation ordinance; an ordinance necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety or for the support of county government and its existing public institutions; an ordinance proposing amendments to this charter; an ordinance related to collective bargaining or providing for the compensation or working conditions of county employees; or an ordinance which has been approved by the voters by referendum or initiative.
King, WA	1,794,000		Not Specified		All elected officials are subject to recall in accordance with State law.
		All election laws for counties are in accordance with Virginia state law. Petitions must be signed by a number of registered voters of the county equal to 10 percent or more of the number of voters who voted at the last preceding general election in the county.	120 days	If the Board fails to adopt the proposed initiative ordinance without any change in substance or fails to repeal the referred ordinance within 30 days, the board shall submit the proposed or referred ordinance to the registered voters of the county. The vote of the county on the proposed or referred ordinance must be held at the next general election.	Petitions are required to be signed by 25% of the registered voters.
Clark, NV	1,711,000			Not Specified	Not Specified

Initiative and Recall - Benchmarking Results
Prepared for the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force

County	Population (approx.)	Citizen Initiates			Council Authority to Modify Legislation	Subject Matter Restrictions	Recalls
		Signatures Required	Time Frame for Signature Gathering	Course of Action			
Fairfax, VA	1,007,000	All election laws for counties are in accordance with Virginia state law. The petitions are signed by qualified voters of the county or city equal in number to 20% of the total vote cast in the county or city for presidential electors in the last preceding presidential election	90 days	Upon filing of a valid petition, the court orders a referendum to be held at the next general election for members of the governing body of the county or city held at least sixty days after the date of the order.		Not Specified	Petitions are required to be signed by 20% of the registered voters in the county.
Montgomery County, MD	930,000	CHARTER/ORDINANCE: Petitions must be signed by 5% of the registered voters in the county or 10,000 signatures.	Not Specified	Once the petition is validated, the question is submitted to the voters of the county at the next general or Congressional election.	Not Specified	Not Specified	Maryland law does not allow popular recall by petition. Councilmembers can be removed from office by an affirmative vote of no less than six Councilmembers after a public hearing on a finding that the Councilmember is unable by reason of physical or mental disability to perform the duties of the office.
Fulton County, GA	916,000	There are no citizen initiatives, there has to be a supporting act of legislation, such as a sales tax referendum required by the state to put on the ballot.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Petitions are required to be signed by 10% of the number of electors who were registered to vote at the last preceding election for any of the candidates offering for the office held by the public official sought to be recalled, whichever is smaller.
Mecklenburg, NC	786,000	10% of total registered voters or 5,000, whichever is less.	Not Specified	The date of the special election is fixed at not more than 120 nor fewer than 60 days after receipt of the petition. An ordinance adopted by referendum is not be subject to a referendum petition.	An ordinance adopted by the electorate through initiatory proceedings cannot be amended or repealed by the Board for a period of 1 1/2 years after the election, but thereafter it may be amended or repealed like any other ordinance.	Not Specified	Not specified
Baltimore, MD	786,000	CHARTER: 20% of the registered voters of the county, or 10,000 or more of registered voters in case 20% of the number of registered voters is greater than 10,000.	Not specified; but the county executive must publish the notice in at least to newspapers for 5 consecutive weeks prior to the election.	When proposed, whether by council or by petition, the question is submitted to the voters at the next general or Congressional election. If passed, the amendments become part of the Charter after the thirtieth day following the election.	Amendments to the Charter may be proposed by act of the county council approved by a majority plus one of the total number of county council members established by the Charter and such act shall be exempt from executive veto.	Not Specified	Maryland law does not allow popular recall by petition. Councilmembers can be removed from office by an affirmative vote of no less than six Councilmembers after a public hearing on a finding that the Councilmember is unable by reason of physical or mental disability to perform the duties of the office.

5

Fernandez, Margarita (CMO)

From: Patty A. Harris [pharris@kennynachwalter.com]

Sent: Friday, August 31, 2007 11:22 AM

To: Charter (CMO)

Subject: Charter Review Task Force

The Urban Environment League supports the concept that any modifications to the Urban Development Boundary (UDB) be voted on and approved by the people at large, as opposed to the County Commission solely. However, the Urban Environment League supports the authority of the County Commission to override a public vote if the public votes to extend the line.

In other words, the Urban Environment League supports the County Commission's veto of a public vote to EXTEND the line, but the Urban Environment League does not support the County Commission overriding a public vote to HOLD the line.

Further, the Urban Environment League does not support the concept that the County Commission should be able to transmit changes to extend the UDB to the Department of Community Affairs against the public's wishes.

**Patricia A. Harris
Member, Board of Directors
Urban Environment League**

09/04/2007

Fernandez, Margarita (CMO)

From: esr_inc@bellsouth.net
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2007 3:54 PM
To: Charter (CMO)
Subject: Incorporation]

>
> Subject: Incorporation
>
> TO ALL THOSE INVOLVED: 08/31/2007
>
> My wife and I have lived at 8400 SW 6th Street, Miami, FL 33143 for over ten years now and we are quite fed up with these Incorporation Groupies. We are happy when left in peace, harass us and you all will see the reaction.
>
> 1) WE DO NOT WANT TO BE INCORPORATED. WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN THE WAY WE ARE, NOT INCORPORATED.
>
> 2) WE DO NOT WANT TO BE BURDEN WITH MORE SALARIED AND PENSIONED OFFICIALS.
>
> 3) WE, ALONG WITH OUR NEIGHBORS, FOUGHT TO HAVE A 25% OF SIGNATURES TO START THE PROCESS, IT SHOULD STAY 25%. IMPOSE A MORATORIUM AND LET US LIVE IN PEACE.
>
> Thanking you in advance.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Ernesto S. Rodriguez, MD & Jossie Rodriguez
>
>

Fernandez, Margarita (CMO)

From: Citizen_Email
Sent: Saturday, September 01, 2007 1:22 PM
To: Charter (CMO)
Subject: Charter Review Task Force

Charter Review Comment Form

Name: ernestine saunders

Street Address: 861 NE 207 terr

City: miami

State: FI

Zip: 33179

Comment: I've listened to your meeting on 8/28/07 in reference to many issues concerning the Haitian community and their input in the community. I would like to say that the Haitians came here to make a better life for themselves. But the Afro Americans have been here forever and has contributed a lot and no one gives the credit for what they have built not only in the community but during American wars stemming back to world war II. We have been discriminated for so long that it has become a part of life for some African Americans. We all know what the problem is and it is up to us to solve the problem. Housing is a major issue along with education. Our system wants us to integrate in which African American embraces the idea but other ethnic groups has negative attitude towards blacks socially and economically. African Americans has worked to make a better life for themselves and their families, but the process for them to get ahead comes along with a lot of red tape especially getting loans for homes and education. Most ethnic groups look at the negative aspects of African Americans and what they perceive through propaganda from newspapers and television broadcasts. To solve the problem we must integrate and stop looking at one bad apple and expect the whole barrel to be ruined. Other ethnic groups can come over here and buy cars and homes without going through the red tape, but the history that has been given to them about African Americans clearly exercise their opinion towards black americans. I suggest that you work closely with the housing agencies to make sure that the integration process works instead of leading afro americans to a certain part of the county for their political gain in voting for candidates. Homestead, perrine, cutler ridge were places that white americans lived. But since hurricane andrew, the cities were rebuilt and through the housing agencies blacks are not only generated to move there but pushed there whether they want to live there or not. If you are on housing especially the section 8 program, you should be able to live a clean and decent environment that would give the communities a chance to grow along with other ethnic groups. We are divided not only by color but by language barriers. Now, the south end of the county has become more and more black populated. We need to stop dividing ethnic groups. There should be only one group and that should be the human group, the group God created us to be. The poor population has a lot to give to miami dade county and they have a lot of ideas to place in their communities only if someone would listen and give them the opportunity to do the things in their communities that they are accustomed to

09/04/2007

instead of embracing other culture activities and lifestyle. A broad advertisement of summer programs should be available to those parents who cannot afford summer programs through other agencies. Let's make dade county a place where everyone would like to live!!! Miami Dade is not diversified beaus ehter are noone enforcing the natural language of our country, insted we are forced to speak a language that we do not know. In stores and other public places serving the community, some hispanics cannot serve the american population simply because thewy do not speak English but yet advertise frequently in classified ads about being bi-lingual. It's unfair to the population of Miami dade County because they are not the only ones who live here. Remember when livimng in rome you do as the romans. It has caused a problem with getting jobs in the black community. English is the official language and its o.k. to speak spanish but when serving the public there should be accomodations for all. Our health system stinks, becuase when there is a product available to cure or treat a certain disease such as diabetes and high blood pressure, the cure and education of treatment does not go to the black community. The only treatment that black american gets is treatment for HIV/Aids, prenatal care, and other sexual transmitted diseases. There's no program for obese children or juvenile diabetes. In our neighborhoods, billboards fill the air with free housing. When shopping in the black neighborhood for wedding wrapping paper you will not find it, but you will find baby shower gifts and wrapping paper. There are no family or education billboards in the community for the children to see. There are no playgrounds with swings and slidingboards, but you will find a lot of basketball courts. Why is that? There are no black restaurants where other ethnic groups can taste the food of black americans. Is it because black americans are not worthy of grants and loans to produce a restaurant in the community instead of bar-b-que shacks and storefronts? How do we as a community get involoved in the process of getting our own instead of adopting other ethnic groups lifestyle and way of living? We have here in dade county, a haitian community, hispanic community andblack community, Why? We should all be a part of dade county and embrace each other as dade county residents. Black americans go to explore the calle ocho and gladly experience their culture, but that does not happen in the black community. Other ethnic groups has become to know black americans as a negative part of miami dade. Something has to be done to bring all of us together and solve the racial barriers to make dade county the best melting pot there is. Lets support one another and the commisioners can make it happen if they just put a little more effort in the social realm of miami dade county.

Fernandez, Margarita (CMO)

From: Nina West [ninawest@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Saturday, September 01, 2007 6:51 PM
To: Charter (CMO)
Subject: At Large Voting

I think we as citizens should be able to vote for the people who control our County Government. At the very least we should be able to have county wide run-off elections of the highest 2 vote getters in each district. That way, Commissioners would be responsible to the electorate directly for the votes they make affecting the residents outside their current districts.

Regina West
3690 Avocado Av
Coconut Grove, FL, 33133

09/04/2007

Fernandez, Margarita (CMO)

From: Hial1211@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, September 02, 2007 7:05 PM
To: Charter (CMO)
Subject: Charter Review Meeting

As I watch the meetings, and the concerns of the community, I could not help but to wonder why these meetings are not sub-titled in Spanish, since our community has a large percentage of Hispanics that vote but do not speak English.

Carmen Caldwell
620 West 17 Street
Hialeah, Florida 33010
305-298-6632 cell

I shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him.
-Booker T. Washington

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