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County Committee moves ahead on Honor Code

A Miami-Dade County Commission committee today took a step forward to adopting a Public Service Honor Code for elected officials and employees. The Strategic Planning and Government Operations Committee voted 5-0 to approve the proposal, initiated by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE).

If the resolution, implementing order and ordinance – all sponsored by Commissioner Rebeca Sosa -- are adopted by the full Commission and implemented by the County, all officials and employees would be obliged to follow an honor code of conduct that revives a long-ignored 1964 County Administrative Order requiring that they report criminal government misconduct to appropriate authorities when they know about it. It adds directives that employees monitor their workplaces for misconduct, place the public interest ahead of personal loyalties, and cooperate truthfully with investigations. Failure to abide by the code could result in disciplinary action.

“It is time to bring a public service honor code into all levels of Miami-Dade County government,” said COE Executive Director Joseph Centorino. “No one whose primary duty is to serve and protect the public may be said to perform that duty adequately by remaining a bystander after becoming aware of corrupt practices by a colleague or supervisor.”

Also today, the BCC Committee adopted a resolution proclaiming Thursday, October 22nd as Ethical Governance Day 2015. The resolution echoes the Ethics Commission call for all public and private institutions and residents to participate in appropriate civic or educational ethics programs. In addition, for the fourth year in a row, the COE will place community leaders in almost every 12th grade government and economics class on that day to emphasize the importance to high school seniors of civic engagement. For more information or to volunteer, visit ethics.miamidade.gov

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.

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