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COE Sets Fourth Ethical Governance Day

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) today adopted a resolution declaring Thursday, October 22nd as “Ethical Governance Day 2015,” and called on public and private institutions, along with Miami-Dade residents, to participate in civic and education programs on that day. For the fourth year, the Ethics Commission will place hundreds of community leaders and volunteers in 12th grade government classrooms to address students on the importance of civic involvement and ethics in government. Last week, the Miami-Dade County School Board unanimously endorsed Ethical Governance Day and encouraged community leaders, elected officials, academic and political professionals, attorneys and other public servants to serve as guest speakers in the classroom. Volunteer registration will begin shortly.

In other action today, the COE approved a Letter of Instruction for administrators in the Miami-Dade Transit Department (MDT) who were accused by a Metromover technician of preventing him from receiving time cards and other documents he sought in a public records request. While the COE dismissed the complaint (**C 15-15**) because the investigation did not find any violations of the Citizens’ Bill of Rights, it did reveal that the Transit agency took 113 days to respond to the January 2015 request and sought more than \$5,900 in reproduction costs – an amount deemed excessive by COE staff. The Letter instructs MDT staff to develop and maintain a standard operating procedure to respond to public records requests to avoid undue delays, contact the Ethics Commission to arrange for training in public records law, and report within 90 days on the training and procedures implemented by the agency regarding records requests.

A complaint (**C 15-21**) filed against the director of the Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department for her handling of a fight between inmates and officers in December 2013 was deemed Not Legally Sufficient by the COE. The incident was referred to Miami-Dade Police, the Office of the Inspector General and the State Attorney’s Office, and finally, the Corrections Internal Affairs department found no wrong-doing. Because the allegations did not identify any violations under the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission, the complaint was dismissed.

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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