



Supreme Court of Florida

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Florida's Chief Justice and Local Tallahassee Officials to Announce Free Juror Transportation as a Statewide Example

TALLAHASSEE—Florida Chief Justice Barbara J. Pariente will appear before a jury pool in the Leon County Commission Chambers at 8:30 a.m. Friday, May 6, as local officials announce a new program giving free bus transportation to those who serve as jurors in Tallahassee's courthouse.

Pariente said this cooperative effort between courts and other local government offices is an example that can be followed throughout Florida and will encourage people to show up for jury duty. Florida consistently has ranked behind the national average in the percentage of people who respond to jury summonses.

"The real thanks for this new service," said Pariente, "goes to Tallahassee Mayor John Marks and County Commission Chair Cliff Thaell. They listened to me after I became aware that local jurors were having to drive, find parking, and then walk to the courthouse. And they found one solution that makes everyone a winner, even as they are looking at other ways to make jury duty easier."

The Chief Justice also will thank jurors because this is Law Week, and the theme of this year's nationwide observation is about honoring the American jury. Law Week has been an annual event since it was first instituted by President Dwight Eisenhower.

Under the new program, citizens summoned for jury duty can ride free on the City of Tallahassee's Taltran bus system simply by showing their jury summons to the driver. Free transportation is good for the dates shown on the summons.

"The justice system is vital to the maintenance of our civil society," said Thael. "A juror's role is central to the functioning and credibility of this system. The Leon County Commission encourages citizens to answer their call to civic duty by providing more options for downtown parking and transportation alternatives to and from the courthouse.

"Mayor Marks feels as strongly about this as I do, and has been very supportive in this effort. He and I are working together to improve the experience of jury duty for residents, and in the process hope to expose more citizens to the downtown retail environment by asking downtown merchants to offer discounts to prospective jurors on the day of their jury summons."

The City and County also are still discussing other ways of making the experience of jurors better, including the possibility of operating a juror shuttle service between the courthouse and downtown public parking.

"Other communities in Florida are now offering incentives like these for jury service," said Pariente, "and most notably Orlando. My hope is that courts and local governments throughout Florida will see examples like these and will work together to help our jurors fulfill their duty."

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