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July 29, 2005

Honorable Tom Hall, Clerk
Supreme Court of the State of Florida
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1927

Re: SC05-998 In re: Petition of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules and Policy Committee on Amendments to Florida Rules for Certified and Court Appointed Mediators

Dear Sir:

The Florida Chapter of the Association of Family & Conciliation Courts (FLAFCC) is a multi-disciplinary association of family, court and community professionals dedicated to the constructive resolution of family disputes.

FLAFCC supports expanding the numbers and diversity of persons who can become certified family and dependency mediators. Supreme Court policies promote self-determination in the selection of mediators and participation in mediation. Increasing the pool and diversity of certified mediators will give families more choices and potentially increase their confidence in the process.

FLAFCC also supports high standards for obtaining and maintaining mediator certification. However, two of the most important mediation skills are understanding human nature and facilitating communication between people who are in stressful situations. These skills are not only learned from books. They are also developed through experience. Therefore, we also support the concept of substituting mentorship and experience for some degree requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Florida Rules for Certified and Court Appointed Mediators. In accordance with the policy set by the FLAFCC Board of Directors, our comments are directed to the principles underlying the proposed changes in mediator qualifications. FLAFCC does not advocate for or against specific rule changes or legislation. If we can assist the Court at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,



FLAFCC

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed.
President FLAFCC



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