

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

SYNTHIA POOLE,
SYLVESTER BROWN,
WALTER COLLIER,
DENISE DAVIS,
JOSEPH JAMES,
FARAH JAMI,
JALIE JOHNSON,
RYAN NEMETS,
DANIELLE O'BRIEN,
MEGHAN REQUENA,
ANTHONY SANDERS,
ROBERT SMITH,
JARQUES STRAWTER,
ENRIQUE TORRES,
PATRICIA WOULARD,
VERONICA WOULARD,
Petitioners,

S.Ct. Case No.

STATE OF FLORIDA,
Respondent.

**ON DISCRETIONARY REVIEW FROM
THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL, FIFTH DISTRICT**

PETITIONER'S BRIEF ON JURISDICTION

JAMES S. PURDY PUBLIC DEFENDER
SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
TABLE OF CITATIONS	ii
STATEMENT OF THE CASE AND FACTS	1
SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT	2
ARGUMENT	3
THIS COURT HAS DISCRETIONARY JURISDICTION TO ACCEPT THE DECISION OF THE FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL BELOW FOR REVIEW.	
CONCLUSION	5
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE	6
CERTIFICATE OF FONT	6

TABLE OF CITATIONS

<u>CASES CITED:</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
<i>Flagg v. State</i> 74 So. 3d 138 (Fla. 1 st DCA 2011)	1, 3
<i>Jackson y. State</i> 64 So. 3d 1209 (Fla. 2011)	4
<i>Jollie v. State</i> 405 So. 2d 418 (Fla. 1981)	4
<i>Shelton v. Secretary, Department of Corrections</i> 23 Fla.L.Weekly Fed. D11(M.D. Fla. July 27, 2011)	1, 3
<i>State v. Adkins</i> 71 So. 3d 117 (Fla. October 12, 2011)	3
<i>State v. Adkins</i> 71 So. 3d 184 (Fla. 2nd DCA 2011)	3
 <u>OTHER AUTHORITIES CITED:</u>	
Chapter 893, Florida Statutes	1, 3

STATEMENT OF THE CASE AND FACTS

Petitioners were charged by Information with violations of drug offenses proscribed by Chapter 893, Florida Statutes (2010). Petitioners plead to the charges and were sentenced. On appeal to the Fifth District Court of Appeal, Petitioners filed a brief raising the constitutionality of Chapter 893 based on a decision of a Federal District Court judge who ruled Florida's drug possession statute unconstitutional for failure to include a scienter element. *Shelton v. Secretary, Department of Corrections*, 23 Fla.L.Weekly Fed. D11(M.D. Fla. July 27, 2011). On February 14, 2012, the Fifth District Court of Appeal issued an opinion affirming Petitioners' judgments and sentences thus rejecting Petitioners' attack on the constitutionality of Chapter 893. In doing so, the district court cited *Flagg v. State*, 74 So.3d 138 (Fla. 1st DCA 2011), wherein the First District Court of Appeal rejected the *Shelton* rationale. (Copy of opinion from the Fifth District attached as Appendix hereto)

Petitioners filed a timely Notice to Invoke the discretionary jurisdiction of this Court on March 1, 2012.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

Where a district court of appeal cites as authority for its affirmance, a decision of another district court of appeal which is currently pending review in this Court, the Supreme Court has jurisdiction to accept the case for review.

ARGUMENT

THIS COURT HAS DISCRETIONARY
JURISDICTION TO ACCEPT THE DECISION OF
THE FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL BELOW
FOR REVIEW.

Petitioners raised the constitutionality of Chapter 893 on the grounds that a Federal District Court judge had declared the statute unconstitutional for failure to include a scienter element. *Shelton v. Secretary, Department of Corrections*, 23 Fla.L.Weekly Fed. Dl 1(M.D. Fla. July 27, 2011). The Fifth District Court of Appeal issued an opinion in the instant case on February 14, 2012, affirming Petitioners' judgments and sentences and rejecting the challenge to the constitutionality. In doing so, the Fifth District cited to the decision of the First District Court of Appeal in *Flagg v. State*, 74 So. 3d 138 (Fla. 1st DCA 2011), wherein that Court held that the decision of the Federal District Court was not binding on State courts and since State courts had previously upheld the constitutionality of Chapter 893, it saw no reason to revisit the issue. The First District also recognized that the issue was squarely before this Court having been certified for immediate resolution from the Second District Court of Appeal in *State v. Adkins*, 71 So. 3d 184 (Fla. 2nd DCA 2011). This Court granted review in *Adkins* and has recently held oral arguments thereon. *State v. Adkins*, 71 So. 3d

117 (Fla. October 12, 2011). A Petition for Discretionary Review was filed in *Flagg* on November 21, 2011 and is currently pending before this Court in Case No. SC11-2282.

In *Jollie v. State*, 405 So. 2d 418 (Fla. 1981), this Court held that a district court of appeal per curiam opinion which cites as controlling authority a decision that is either pending review in or has been reversed by the Supreme Court continues to constitute prima facie express conflict and allows the Supreme Court to exercise its jurisdiction. This Court continues to adhere to the *Jollie* principle. See *Jackson v. State*, 64 So. 3d 1209 (Fla. 2011). Therefore, this Honorable Court has the jurisdiction to accept the instant case for discretionary review.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing reasons and authorities cited herein, this Honorable Court should accept the instant case for review, quash the decision of the Fifth District Court of Appeal and remand with instructions to discharge Petitioners.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been hand delivered to the Office of the Attorney General and mailed to the Petitioners, on this 8th day of March, 2012.

MICHAEL S. BECKER
ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER

CERTIFICATE OF FONT

I hereby certify that the size and style of type used in this brief is 14 point Times New Roman font.

MICHAEL S. BECKER
ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER