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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Orange-Osceola State Attorney Monique Worrell Creates the Ninth Judicial Circuit's First-Ever Adult Civil Citation Program

Through the program, first-time misdemeanor offenses will be resolved with civil citations, educational programs, and community service instead of criminal charges

ORLANDO, FL, March 31, 2022 — State Attorney Monique H. Worrell was joined today by Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, Sheriff John Mina of the Orange County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Chief Jose Velez of the Orlando Police Department and Deputy Chief Betty Holland of the Kissimmee Police Department in announcing the circuit's first-ever Adult Civil Citation Program. The program is designed to divert people charged with first-time misdemeanor offenses away from the criminal legal system, and as part of the Adult Civil Citation Program, participating law enforcement agencies may use their discretion to issue civil citations for certain misdemeanor offenses in lieu of making a physical arrest or issuing a notice for a person to appear in court.

"Acknowledging the traumatic impact that incarceration has on individuals, this program serves as a mechanism to ensure that individuals are incarcerated only when absolutely necessary to ensure public safety," said State Attorney Worrell. "The Adult Civil Citation Program will allow the accused to keep their humanity and dignity, decrease the chance of a negative interaction with law enforcement, and increase the likelihood that they won't have future interactions with the criminal legal system, making our communities safer and more sustainable."

Individuals who participate in the program will be required to pay a fee, participate in educational programs that may be specific to the offense, and complete community service. Once completed, the person will be issued a certificate, no criminal charges will be filed, and the case will be dismissed.

First-time, misdemeanor offenses for which someone may receive an Adult Civil Citation may include: possession of drug paraphernalia; possession of marijuana under 20 grams; misdemeanor assault; misdemeanor battery; retail theft of a shopping cart; trespass on property other than a structure or conveyance; petit theft; criminal mischief; disorderly conduct; littering; loitering; possession of alcoholic beverages by a person under the age of 21; and other misdemeanor offenses that may be deemed appropriate at the discretion of participating law enforcement agencies and the State Attorney's Office. In certain instances, victims (if applicable) must agree with the issuance of the Adult Civil Citation.

Through the Adult Civil Citation Program, we have a way to make different pathways real for people, and this partnership ensures that arrest and incarceration are not the default way that we handle first-time offenses for low-level misdemeanors in the Ninth Judicial Circuit.

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Seek Justice. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly.

The Office of the State Attorney for the Ninth Judicial Circuit is represented by The Honorable Monique H. Worrell and serves Orange and Osceola counties in Central Florida. A culturally diverse community, the area is home to nearly 1.4 million residents and is a vacation destination for millions each year. Our office is committed to making Orlando and the surrounding area a vibrant and safe place to live, work and play.

For general media inquiries, please contact: PIO@sao9.org.

For media records request, please contact: mediarecordsrequest@sao9.org.

For specific media inquiries pertaining to State Attorney Monique Worrell, please contact Keisha Mulfort at kmulfort@sao9.org.