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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Attorney Monique H. Worrell Denounces Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association's Support of the Florida Sheriff's Association *Amicus* Brief Supporting the Suspension of Hillsborough County State Attorney Andrew Warren

ORANGE COUNTY, FL (April 13, 2023) — On Monday, State Attorney Monique Worrell sent a letter to the President of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association (FPAA), denouncing the decision to support Governor Ron DeSantis' unconstitutional and partisan removal of one of their own, Andrew Warren. Last August, the Governor singlehandedly removed Warren, a twice-elected chief prosecutor who dared to disagree with the Governor about issues of tremendous public importance, from office.

On March 31, 2023, at the Governor's request, the FPAA agreed to sign on to the *Amicus* Brief filed by the Florida Sheriff's Association supporting DeSantis' actions. Although several member State Attorneys objected, the FPAA nonetheless voted to sign the Brief as an organization. The State Attorneys for the 9th, 15th and 17th Judicial Circuits voted in opposition to the Governor's unlawful power grab, and asked for an individual member vote. However, FPAA leadership denied that request. On Monday, State Attorney Monique Worrell wrote a detailed letter asking the president of the FPAA to rescind the results of the vote because signing the Florida's Sheriff's Brief as an organization misrepresents the true consensus of the membership, and violates the American Bar Association's standards governing the independence of the prosecutorial function.

Specifically, the letter states that publicly supporting Governor DeSantis' unprecedented removal of a duly-elected State Attorney makes the consenting members of FPAA nothing but an arm of the Governor's office, demonstrating political acquiescence, rather than independent judgment and dedicated public service that the office of State Attorney requires. Moreover, by signing on to a Brief drafted by law enforcement, and not submitting an independent Brief addressing the role of the prosecutor, the FPAA demonstrates that it is not concerned with the importance of democracy, and is only concerned with remaining in the good graces of the Governor. Worrell wrote that the key function of a prosecutor, "should be free from political gamesmanship, partisanship, and coercion."

"This case is rooted in conservative ideology and political affiliation. That does not represent the will of the people who elected Andrew Warren twice as their State Attorney. This is another example of an attack on democracy that is being perpetrated by the Governor and condoned by the FPAA," Worrell said. "As the State Attorney representing the people of Orange and Osceola counties, I refuse to be complicit in such a shameful act. When voters elected me, I vowed to follow the law, my best judgment and the values of our community in exercising the discretion inherent in this office. I will keep that promise and will always fight to make our shared vision of justice a reality—that includes democracy."

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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.