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## **State Attorney Andrew Bain Issues First Month Update on the State Attorney's Office of the Ninth Judicial Circuit**

**NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, FL** – Since August 9, 2023, the State Attorney has been diligently working to uphold our commitment to justice, fairness, and the protection of our community.

The State Attorney Office of the Ninth Judicial Circuit is proud to provide an update on its accomplishments and initiatives after a month of new leadership under Andrew Bain:

- **Prosecutor Recruitment and Retention:** Since taking office, State Attorney Bain has hired seven prosecutors with nearly 75 years of prosecutorial experience. All of the newly hired prosecutors had previously worked at the Ninth Circuit State Attorney's Office and decided to return to the Circuit upon State Attorney Bain's appointment. Prior to State Attorney Bain's appointment, the office was severely understaffed and had approximately 30 open assistant state attorney positions.
- **Restoring Law & Order:** State Attorney Andrew Bain is taking bold action to reinstitute mandatory minimum sentencing for the possession of firearms by felons. The decision to restore this law and practice is driven by State Attorney Bain's unwavering dedication to public safety and accountability.
- **Enhanced Community Outreach:** State Attorney Bain has prioritized fostering stronger relationships with the Orange and Osceola communities through increased outreach efforts—meeting with the Orange and Osceola County Sheriffs, Fraternal Order of Police Chapters, and the Orlando Police Department. He's also attended listening sessions, met with community leaders, and participated in community engagement sessions to address concerns and gather feedback from residents.
- **Dedication to Transparency and Efficient Case Management:** We are actively working to streamline case management processes to reduce case backlog and ensure the timely resolution of cases. A review of the Conviction Integrity Unit revealed had a severe backlog of 200 cases. Moreover, defense counsel in the Ninth Circuit have complained of, in at least one instance, waiting for an answer on a diversion case since November of 2022.

- **Fair and Equitable Prosecution:** Our justice system must hold those who break the law accountable for their actions. A thorough review of outstanding cases determined that the previous administration did not consistently pursue the death penalty, even in cases where it may have been warranted. The office found that of the three death penalty cases the former administration filed within two years, assistant state attorney's had to be approved to seek the death penalty and were required to offer a life sentence that would remain open until a jury was selected.

This revelation underscores the importance of ensuring that the justice system operates consistently and in accordance with established laws and guidelines. The new state attorney's commitment to reevaluating these cases and upholding the principles of justice sends a clear message about his dedication to ensuring every case is handled fairly and transparently. Moving forward, it will be crucial to monitor how these findings impact the state's approach to capital punishment and the administration of justice. It is essential that the legal system maintains its integrity and adheres to the highest standards.

Additionally, there has been a significant call for transparency surrounding the use of force policies and procedures, particularly in cases where it is alleged that excessive or unjustified force was used. To ensure an objective, transparent and timely review of use of force cases, the State Attorney's Office has reviewed and changed the policy to ensure that use of force incidents are handled in accordance with the law. In the new policy, these cases will be thoroughly reviewed and presented to a grand jury to ensure community transparency, and a timely outcome for both law enforcement, families, and the community. There is a community policing aspect that will allow the grand jury to weigh in on best practices and training that will result in saving lives as well as reducing the number of these critical incidents.

- **Community Partnerships:** Our office is collaborating with various community organizations, legal aid services, and law enforcement agencies to create a more coordinated and effective criminal justice system. These partnerships aim to address the root causes of crime and improve overall public safety. The time for looking at criminal justice as a separate issue must come to an end. We have the tools in our community to aid in rooting out crime.
- **Victim Support Services:** Our office is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to victims of crime. We are expanding our victim support services to ensure that victims receive the assistance they need throughout the legal process.

**State Attorney Andrew Bain remarked,** "We are determined to build a justice system that our community can trust and rely on. These initial efforts are just the beginning, and we look forward to continued progress in the coming months and years. The State Attorney's Office of the 9th Judicial Circuit remains committed to its core values of integrity, accountability, and justice. We will continue to work tirelessly to uphold these principles and serve the best interests of our community."

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