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FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
CITRUS, HERNANDO, LAKE, MARION, AND SUMTER COUNTIES

June 10, 2025

Mounir Bouyounes
County Administrator
Marion County Administration
601 SE 25th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34471

Dear Mr. Bouyounes,

Thank you for your letter dated June 9, 2025. I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this important question, as the operation of the ME's office directly impacts my office. As the State Attorney for the Fifth Judicial Circuit, my job, simply put, is to prosecute criminals. To do so, I need tools. At the top of the list is a well-run, efficient, and professional medical examiner's office. We are fortunate that under Dr. Wolf's leadership, that is exactly what we have now. Anything that jeopardizes the status quo is of great concern to me. To be candid, Dr. Wolf has assured me that her office would be capable of serving both districts should this change happen. However, I have not been provided any real specifics on the proposal.

It is my understanding that the primary motive of this proposed move is the cost of the new building. Too often, the immediate savings realized today, quickly turn into net losses tomorrow. While a judicious use of taxpayer funds is always warranted, short term savings often fail to consider the long term needs of a community. Additionally, the Fifth Circuit needs to attract medical professionals from around the country to serve the needs of our constituents. To do that, a top-notch facility is required, and I think our constituents would demand nothing less.

Finally, I attended some of the committee meetings on this project. The only county that I ever saw express any reservations was Seminole. Eventually, every county agreed to move forward as planned, so I don't really know how we got here. As for the site itself, I am very familiar with it because for nearly 20 years I lived across the street. I know firsthand that it is as close to being in the center of the Fifth Circuit as one can get, located at the intersection of US Highway 301 and CR 42, which dissect the circuit. Personally, I don't think a better spot exists.

In the end, it is up to the people of Lake County to decide how they spend their tax dollars. But as the State Attorney, with the limited information provided to me so far, I am unpersuaded that this move serves anyone involved. I am available if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bill Gladson