



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING
THE PARENTAL LEAVE EXTENSION RULE AS NEW COURT ORDERS EMERGE**

[Orlando, Florida] – FAWL appreciates the efforts of the Florida Supreme Court and the chief judges around the state in issuing administrative orders to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 public health emergency on the judicial branch and its participants. FAWL recognizes the importance of the timely, fair and effective resolution of cases and ensuring the efficient use of court resources. However, the goal of moving cases expeditiously should not come at the expense of complying with the newly adopted parental leave rule.

FAWL urges trial judges contemplating a request for a parental-leave continuance under Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.570, which allows for continuances related to birth or adoption of a child by lead counsel, to adhere to the mandatory grant of a parental-leave continuance in the event a COVID-19 Administrative Order requires the setting of a substantive deadline or trial during a lead attorney's parental leave. Rule 2.570 states that the "court shall grant a timely motion for continuance" in the absence of a written finding by the court that: "(1) another party would be substantially prejudiced by the requested continuance; or (2) the requested continuance would unreasonably delay an emergency or time-sensitive proceeding or matter." With so many cases waiting in the wings to move forward, in most circumstances, a three month continuance pursuant to Rule 2.570 should not prejudice any one case over the many others that could be scheduled in its place. Particularly where there is no objection to the continuance by the opposing party, the courts should not deprive a client of its lead counsel. The adoption of Rule 2.570 was an important step forward for gender equality in our profession. FAWL encourages the judiciary to continue this path forward, even under the usual circumstances of these times.

With regard to case management reports and required timeframes in administrative orders specifically, in the event a COVID-19 administrative order requires a substantive deadline or trial date be proposed in a case management report during a period of time a lead attorney anticipates being out due to the birth or adoption of a child, FAWL suggests, upon agreement of the parties, that a date up to three months out is proposed in the case management report with a note to the court that the date outside of the time required by the administrative order is due to the birth or adoption of a child and that a motion pursuant to Rule 2.570 will be filed contemporaneously with the case management report.

Visit www.fawl.org for information. For questions, please contact Kari Hicks, FAWL's Executive Director at admin@fawl.org.

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