

**BYLAWS OF  
THE CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT JUDGES OF FLORIDA, INC.**

(as amended August 7, 2023)

**ARTICLE 1 – NAME**

The name of this organization shall be: Conference of Circuit Judges of Florida, Inc., also known as and referred to as the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges and also known and referred to herein as the Conference.

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Conference is to assist circuit judges in more effectively and efficiently meeting their constitutional and statutory duties and responsibilities.

**ARTICLE III – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The duties and responsibilities of the Conference shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Considering and making recommendations concerning the betterment of the judicial system of the State and its various parts;
- B. Considering and making recommendations concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the several courts;
- C. Reporting to the Supreme Court such findings and recommendations as the Conference may have with reference to Sections (A) and (B);
- D. Through the Conference Chair, reporting to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House such recommendations as the Conference may have concerning defects in the law of this State and such amendments if additional legislation as the Conference may deem necessary;
- E. Compiling, studying discussing and disseminating information to circuit judges relating to problems of trials, disposition of litigation, and the organization and administration of the courts, and sponsoring, presenting and conducting programs respecting such matters;
- F. Fostering and promoting educational institutions and seminars for judges; and
- G. Gathering, studying and disseminating information relating to the judiciary to the public, press, educational institutions and such other organizations as may be interested in order to inform the people of the work and functions of their courts.

**ARTICLE IV – MEMBERS AND DUES**

Section 1 – Members. All active and retired judges of the State of Florida other than senior judges practicing law, shall be members of the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges.

Section 2 – Dues. The dues of the members of the Conference shall be such as may from time to time be assessed by a majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting of the Conference.

## **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Section 1 – Officers.** The Officers of the Conference shall be as follows: Chair, Chair-elect, Secretary, Treasurer.

**Section 2 – Election.** The Officers, with the exception of the Treasurer, shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present at the regular meeting of the Conference. The Chair-elect shall succeed the Chair. Each officer shall serve a one-year term commencing upon the adjournment of the annual meeting and ending at such adjournment the following year; provided, however, the Chair, Chair-elect and Secretary may serve a second one-year term upon a majority vote of the members present at the regular annual meeting. It is the intent of the Conference that any second one-year term of the officers be as closely coterminous as practical with the terms of the presiding officers of the Florida Legislature and the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. Voting by Proxy shall not be permitted. Contested elections shall be by written ballot. Uncontested elections shall be by voice vote. Any person desirous of being elected as Chair-elect or Secretary shall notify the Chair, in writing, at least sixty (60) days prior to the first day of the annual business meeting.

**Section 3 – Chair.** The Chair shall be principal executive officer of the Conference and shall supervise and control the Executive Committee. The Chair shall appoint all members of the standing committees specified in the Bylaws whose appointments are not otherwise determined, including the Committee Chairs and Committee Vice Chairs. The Chair may also create other committees from time to time and shall appoint the members of such committees, including the Committee Chairs and Committee Vice Chairs. The Chair shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and shall preside at all meetings of the Conference and the Executive Committee. The Chair shall faithfully execute all instructions, directions and resolutions of the Conference or the Executive Committee.

**Section 4 – Chair-elect.** The Chair-elect shall perform the duties of the Chair in the event of the incapacity or absence of the Chair and shall perform such other duties as may be required by the Conference or the Executive Committee or may be delegated to the Chair-elect by the Chair. In the event of the unavailability of the Chair-elect, the Secretary shall discharge such responsibility.

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[1] It is the intent of the Conference that the Conference Officers be allowed potentially to serve two years (two one-year terms) that are closely coterminous with the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court and presiding officers of the Florida legislature. The Chair-elect and Secretary would only serve a second year in their respective positions if the Chair serves a second year.

**Section 5 – Secretary.** The Secretary shall record, or cause to be recorded, the minutes of the meetings of the Conference and keep such other records as may be directed by either the Conference, the Chair or the Executive Committee, and shall perform such other duties as may be directed by the Conference.

Section 6 – Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the Conference and shall keep complete records of its receipts and disbursements and have the same ready at all times for inspection by the Conference. The Treasurer shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an annual financial report to be presented to the Executive Committee at the Annual Business Meeting. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Chair with the concurrence of the Chair-elect and Secretary or, alternatively, by majority of the three officers. The treasurer’s term shall be for one year commencing with the term of the Chair. In an effort to promote expertise, uniformity and consistency in financial records, the Treasurer may serve successive terms subject to the appointment process described herein.

Section 7 – Mid Term Vacancies in Office. Should a mid-term vacancy occur in the office of the Chair, Chair-elect or Secretary, it shall be filled in the following matter.

1. The vacancy in the Office of Chair will be filled by the Chair-elect for the remainder of the term.
2. The vacancy in the office of Chair-elect will be filled by the Secretary for the remainder of the term.
3. The vacancy of the office of Secretary shall be filled by the Chair-elect assuming the dual responsibilities of both Secretary and chair-elect for the remainder of the term.
4. A Chair-elect filling a vacancy in the office of Chair for any portion of a term shall also remain Chair for the next full term unless he/she declines to serve. Should he/she choose not to remain Chair for the next full term then the Chair-elect would succeed to office of the Chair by succession consistent with these bylaws.
5. A Secretary filling a vacancy in the office of Chair-elect for any portion of a term shall succeed to office of the Chair at the end of that partial term unless there is no vacancy for the next term in the office of the Chair pursuant to Article V, Section 7, number 4.

Section 8 – Executive Committee/Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be known as the Executive Committee and the membership of one shall be identical to the membership of the other. The membership shall consist of the Officers of the Conference, the twelve (12) standing committee chairs, the vice chairs of the Legislative Committee, three (3) chief judges appointed by the Chair, the immediate past chair, the representative to the Florida Council of 100, the chairperson of the Trial Court Budget Commission and one member elected from each appellate court district. The appellate court district members (district representatives) shall serve a term of two (2) years without the right of succession in office. District representatives shall be responsible for placing appropriate memorial resolutions on the permanent record of the Conference. Election for district representatives shall be held during the Annual Business Meeting on the same day as the election of other Conference officers. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. All business of the Conference consistent with these Bylaws may be exercised by the Executive Committee/Board of Directors when the Conference is not in session. A majority of the whole number of the Executive Committee/Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 9 – Written Poll. Any question within the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee/Board of Directors may be determined by the Chair upon a written poll of all its members. E-mail communications shall be sufficient to meet the requirements of a written poll.

## **ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS**

Section 1 – Annual Business Meeting. The Annual Business Meeting of the Conference shall be held at such time and place as may be determined by the Chair, with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee.

Section 2 – Educational Conferences. An educational conference may be held at such time and place as determined by the Chair, with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee.

Section 3 – Notice of Meetings. Notice of the place and hour of the annual business meeting and educational conferences shall be delivered personally, by mail or by e-mail, to all members in a reasonable time in advance of such meetings.

Section 4 – Quorum. The business of the Conference may be transacted by a majority of members present at the annual business meetings.

Section 5 – Executive Committee Meetings. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at the call of the Chair at such time and place as determined by the Chair. Notice of the place, date and hour of such meeting shall be delivered personally, by mail or by e-mail to all members of the Executive Committee in a reasonable time in advance of such meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES**

Section 1 – Standing Committees. The Conference shall have sixteen (16) standing committees as follows:

1. Judicial Administration
2. Judicial Education
3. Probate
4. Juvenile Dependency
5. Juvenile Delinquency
6. Civil Justice
7. Criminal Justice
8. Drug Court
9. Family Law
10. Legislative Coordinating
11. Senior Judges Committee
12. Conference Management
13. Judicial Integrity Committee
14. New Judge Committee
15. Judicial Wellness
16. IT/Modernization Committee

Section 1 – Judicial Administration Committee. The Judicial Administration Committee shall consist of chief judges, the officers of the Conference and the immediate Past Chair. The

jurisdiction, scope and duties of the committee shall be prescribed by the Chair subject to otherwise being determined by the Executive Committee and subject of the Bylaws.

Section 2 – Judicial Education Committee. The members of the Judicial Education committee shall be responsible for the educational presentations of the Conference. Consistent with established practice, members of the Educational Committee shall serve staggered terms of three (3) years. Service on the Judicial Education Committee shall include the obligation to participate in the Faculty Training program at the first reasonably available opportunity.

Section 3 – Probate Committee. The Probate Committee shall review changes in probate law and make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the probate divisions of the courts.

Section 4 – Juvenile Dependency Committee. The Juvenile/Dependency Committee shall review changes in laws governing juvenile dependency and make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the dependency divisions of the courts. The Juvenile/Dependency Committee Chair and those members designated by the Chair shall also meet regularly with designated members of the Juvenile/Dependency and Family Law Committees to confer on issues affecting Unified Family Courts throughout the state and shall make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of the operation, practice and procedures of those Unified Family Courts.

Section 5 – Juvenile Delinquency Committee. The Juvenile Delinquency Committee shall review changes in laws governing juvenile delinquency and make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the delinquency divisions of the courts. The Juvenile Delinquency Committee chair and those members designated by the chair shall also meet regularly with designated members of the Juvenile Delinquency and Family Law Committees to confer on issues affecting United Family Courts throughout the state and shall make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of the operation practice and procedures if those Unified Family courts.

Section 6 – Civil Justice Committee. The Civil Justice Committee shall review changes in civil laws and make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the civil divisions of the courts.

Section 7 – Criminal Justice Committee. The Criminal Justice Committee shall review changes in criminal laws and make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the civil divisions of the courts.

Section 8 – Drug Court Committee. The Drug Court Committee shall study the progress and effectiveness of drug courts and make recommendations concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in those courts.

Section 9 – Family Law Committee. The Family Committee shall review changes in family law and make recommendations concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the family divisions of the courts. The Family Law committee chair and those members designated by the chair shall also meet regularly with designated members of the Juvenile/Dependency and Juvenile/Delinquency Committees to confer on issues affecting Unified Family Courts throughout the state and shall make recommendations of those Unified Family Courts.

Section 10 – Legislative Coordinating Committee. The Legislative Coordinating Committee shall assist the Executive Committee and the Officers in carrying out the legislative responsibilities of the Conference as defined by statute and shall serve as a conduit for the coordination and sharing of legislative information between the Executive Committee and Conference Members.

Section 11 – Senior Judges Committee. The Senior Judges Committee shall make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of the status of senior judges within the State.

Section 12 – Conference Management Committee. The Conference Management Committee shall be responsible for advising, planning and making recommendations to the Conference regarding conference meetings. The Conference Management Committee shall be composed of three members of the Conference which the Chair shall appoint. The members shall serve staggered terms of three (3) years.

Section 13 – Judicial Integrity Committee. The Judicial Integrity Committee shall make recommendations to the Conference concerning the Judicial Canons, Judicial Professionalism, and Procedural Fairness/Public Perception improvements as to these subjects.

Section 14 – New Judge Committee. The New Judge Committee shall review the needs of judges serving on the bench less than 2 years and make recommendations to the Conference concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice for all new judges.

Section 15 – Judicial Wellness Committee. The Judicial Wellness Committee shall make recommendations to the Conference and assist in the dissemination of new relief opportunities, mentoring and other activities geared toward the wellness of the Florida Judiciary.

Section 16 – IT Modernization/Technology Committee. The IT Modernization/Technology Committee shall be dedicated to monitoring and implementing new technology in order to disseminate important technological information to all circuit judges in a timely manner and make recommendations to the Conference concerning any and all technological advances that may assist the courts.

## **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEE TERMS**

Committee members duly appointed and acting shall continue to serve at the discretion of the Chair until the respective successor committee members are appointed, organized and ready to transact business.

## **ARTICLE IX – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

Robert’s Rule of Order, the most recent edition, except as otherwise provided herein, shall govern all meetings of the Conference, sections and committees.

## **ARTICLE X – CONFERENCE REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES**

Section 1 – Judicial Qualifications Commission. As provided in article V. Section 12, Florida Constitution, the conference shall select through election the number of representatives to the Judicial Qualifications Commission specified in that provision. The representatives shall serve the term provided by the Constitution or general law.

Upon notification of a vacancy due to an incapacitated or disqualified Circuit Court Member of the JQC, the Conference Chair shall submit a list of four circuit judges from which the Chair of the JQC shall choose a replacement who may temporarily serve in the absence of incapacitated or disqualified member for a term provided by the Constitution general law, and the Florida Judicial Qualification Commission Rules.

Section 2 – Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee. As provided in the enabling authority of the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee, the circuit judge representatives to the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee shall be selected by the Conference. The number of representatives to the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee specified in the enabling authority shall be appointed by the Conference Chair. The representatives shall serve staggered four-year terms with appointments every two years. The Conference Chair may appoint representatives to serve successive terms. Any vacancy in mid-term of 12 months or less shall be filled by appointment of the Conference Chair. Upon ratification of this amended bylaw the terms of the four current representatives shall expire immediately and the resulting vacancies shall be filled as follows:

1. The vacancies of the two longest serving representatives shall be filled for the new two-year terms.
2. The vacancies of the other two serving representatives shall be filled for new four-year terms.

Section 3 – Florida Council of 100. The Conference Chair shall appoint the conference Representative to the Florida Council of 100.

Section 4 – Supreme Court Appointees. There are various other bodies to which the Chief Justice appoints circuit judges and considers the recommendations of the Conference. The Conference Chair shall recommend appointment to these bodies when appropriate.

## **ARTICLE XI – BYLAWS AMENDMENT**

These Bylaws may be amended or revised by a majority vote of the members of the Conference present at any regular meeting of the Conference, provided the proposed amendment or revision shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary not later than thirty (30) days prior to such meeting and that the Secretary shall, at least fifteen (15) days prior to such meeting, furnish each member of the Conference a written copy of such proposed amendment or revision either electronically or by regular U.S. Mail.

## **ARTICLE XII – ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

Section 1 – Priority of Articles of Incorporation. Nothing in these Bylaws shall be construed to affect the legal status of the Conference as defined by its Articles of incorporation. The Articles of Incorporation and provisions thereof shall have priority over the provisions of these Bylaws in the event of inconsistencies herein.

Section 2 – Inconsistencies. Should any portion of these Bylaws be inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation and affect its legal status or status with the Internal Revenue Service then, in that event, those portions of the Bylaws creating the inconsistency will be considered a nullity.

## **ARTICLE XIII- DISSOLUTION**

Section 1 – Asset Disposition. Florida Court Education Council. In the event of the dissolution of the Conference, the Executive committee shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the Conference, dispose of all of the remaining assets of the Conference, (except any assets held upon condition requiring return, transfer, or to her conveyance in the event of dissolution, which asset shall be returned, transferred or conveyed in accordance with such requirements) exclusively for the purpose of the organization by transferring such assets to either the Florida Court Education Council, or if such organization is not then in existence, or unable to accept such transfer, then to the Supreme Court of the State of Florida as the Executive Committee shall determine, and for the sole and exclusive purpose of providing continuation of those educational programs and related purposes specified in Article III of these Bylaws.

Section 2 – Asset Disposition – Alternative Option. In the event that both the Florida Court Educational Council and the Supreme Court of the State of Florida are unable to accept such transfer of assets, the Executive Committee shall designate an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code or a governmental unit described in Section 170 (c) (1) of the Internal Revenue Code to receive such transfer of assets provided such assets are exclusively held and applies for those judicial educational purposes as shall at the time of transfer qualify under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Any assets not disposed of in the preceding manner shall be disposed of by a Court of general jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, in such a manner and to such organization or organizations as qualify under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as said Court shall determine.

## **ARTICLE XIV – EMERGENCY BYLAWS**

The Emergency Bylaws provided in this Article shall be operative during any emergency to address the business of the FCCJ resulting from a natural disaster, man-made catastrophe or other situation causing wide-spread disruption to societal infrastructure. An “emergency” is defined as any of the following events:

- A natural catastrophe, including, but not limited to, a hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, drought, or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, explosion or public health pandemic.
- An attack on this state or nation by an enemy of the United States of America, or upon receipt by this state of a warning from the federal government indicating that an enemy attack is probable or imminent.
- An act of terrorism or other manmade disaster that results in extraordinary levels of casualties or damage or disruption severely affecting the infrastructure, environment, economy, government functions, or population, including, but not limited to, mass evacuations.
- A state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor of Florida or by the U.S. President.

To the extent not inconsistent with the provisions of these Articles, the Bylaws provided in the preceding articles shall remain in effect during such emergency and upon their termination the Emergency Bylaws shall cease to be operative. During any such emergency:

- (a) Order of Succession: Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past Chair, then Past Chairs based upon recency if still presiding as a non-senior judge.
- (b) A meeting of the FCCJ Officers may be called by the FCCJ Chair. Notice of the time and place of the meeting shall be given by the Chair to the Officers as it may be feasible to reach them by any available means of communication. Such notice shall be given at such time in advance of the meeting as circumstances permit in the judgment of the person calling the meeting.
- (c) At any such meeting of the FCCJ Officers, a quorum shall consist of the number of Officers in attendance at such meeting.
- (d) The Officers are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the FCCJ. This authority is limited to the Annual Business and Education Conference, Executive Committee Mid-Year Meeting or any other FCCJ related activity, event or contractual obligation.
- (e) In cases of emergency, the Bylaws may be amended or altered by an affirmative vote (via e-mail or remote telecommunication) of three-fourths of the Executive Committee.

(f) The Executive Committee, either before or during any such emergency, may provide, and from time to time modify, lines of succession in the event that during such an emergency any or all Officers, employees or agents of the FCCJ for any reason be rendered incapable of discharging their duties.

(g) No Officer, Executive Committee member, Circuit Judge, Employee or agent acting in accordance with the Emergency Bylaws shall be liable except for willful misconduct.

(h) These Emergency Bylaws shall be subject to repeal or change by further action of the Executive Committee as needed.