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December 12, 2017

The Honorable Rick Scott
PL-05
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

The Honorable Joe Negron
409 Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

The Honorable Richard Corcoran
420 Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

RE: Recent “Judicial Hellhole” Ranking Deserves Our Collective Action

Dear Governor Scott, President Negron and Speaker Corcoran:

In many ways, Florida is on a roll. Since 2010, thanks to your collective leadership, we’ve seen more than \$7 billion in reduced taxes, and more than 80 percent of businesses no longer pay a corporate income tax. On the talent development front, achievement gaps are closing, high school graduation rates are at an 11-year high, and third grade reading scores are improving.

Yet, in recent days, the nation saw Florida’s weak point when the American Tort Reform Association (ATRA) – for the first time in its history – named Florida as the nation’s worst “Judicial Hellhole.” The impact on Floridians who are trying to make ends meet is undeniable, and the time for action is now.

There have been five Wall Street Journal articles this year alone highlighting Florida’s lawsuit abuse problem. The national Institute for Legal Reform named Florida the fifth worst legal climate in America, and now ATRA ranks Florida at the top of their list (even worse than California).

This abuse is driving up the cost of living on Floridians and translates into an approximate \$3,400 ‘tax’ for Florida families each year. You can view our “Meet Mary” employer to employee educational video by visiting www.FloridaChamber.com/MeetMary to see how this ‘tax’ impacts families.

One of the most egregious examples of abuse right now is the increasing cost of property and auto insurance rates resulting from a cottage industry of trial lawyers that file Assignment of Benefits (AOB) lawsuits. Not all lawyers engage in unscrupulous behavior, but a few bad actors are giving the industry a bad name.

Florida’s Business Advocate

Florida is simply better than this. And given the successes we've seen in education, the environment, targeted tax reform, job creation, and so much more, Florida's "Judicial Hellhole" black eye is a factor among companies considering expanding and growing their business in the Southeast.

The Florida Chamber stands ready to help. Whether it's helping to resolve Florida's workers' comp problem, ever-growing AOB lawsuits, working to create a fair liability environment to attract and keep medical professionals, leveling the playing field in bad faith lawsuits or ensuring juries receive more accurate information when awarding damages in liability cases, we are committed to helping make Florida more competitive.

While we may disagree from time to time, I think we can all agree that the nation is watching...and a Number 1 ranking as the worst legal climate casts a shadow on our collective success at securing Florida's future. As always, I look forward to our continued communication and our entire organization stands ready to work with you to move Florida from the bottom of the rankings to the top.

Thank you, in advance, for your leadership in helping us create hope, consistency and opportunity for millions of Floridians.

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Wilson
President