



Miami SAO Newsletter

March 2024 | Volume 3



A Message from the State Attorney

Dear Friend

During the past few years, I focused a significant amount of time addressing condo association fraud. As prosecutors, we know that existing laws and regulatory agencies cannot adequately protect condo owners from being victimized by unscrupulous board members and/or management companies. I have long believed that property owners deserve better protection from those they elect to preserve the value and community peace of their homes.

To this end, we have travelled to Tallahassee to speak with statewide legislators and have proposed bills intended to eliminate possible wrongdoings in condo governance to safeguard the right of condo owners.

I am pleased to report that this year, the Florida Legislature heard our calls for reform and passed legislation that will make a difference. Once signed by the Governor, this legislation will expand the powers of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), the agency responsible for regulating condo associations. DBPR will now be empowered to:

- Attend and observe condo meetings;
- investigate a broader range of election and financial issues;
- investigate conflicts of interest; and
- and remove board members.

DBPR also will be required to refer criminal allegations to law enforcement.

The legislation also will make it illegal for anyone to engage in condo election fraud and for board members to take kickbacks. Perhaps most importantly, it also makes it illegal for condo associations to hide or destroy records. This critical change will make it easier for both condo residents and investigators to identify and address malfeasance, fraud,

and criminal activity.

I want to acknowledge the sponsors of these reforms, State Senator Jennifer Bradley and State Representative Vicki Lopez and the professional staffs of the Florida Senate and House for getting these initial reforms passed. A special congratulations should also go out to State Senator Jason Pizzo, who has long partnered with me to advocate for condo and HOA reform.

Since condo associations and HOAs have similar issues and require similar solutions, I will be advocating for HOA reforms during the 2025 Legislative session. Now is the time for Floridians to make their needs for HOA reform known to their elected state senators and state representatives. Help us help you. Together, we can make a difference.

Thank you and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katharine Prindle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

IN THIS EDITION

"A World without Violence and Crime"

Global Innovative Foundation

Annual Luncheon

Welcome Spring 2024



State Attorney
Katherine Fernandez
Rundle

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"A World without Violence and Crime"
Global Innovative Foundation Annual
Luncheon



State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle was honored to be the recipient of the “Justice Advocate Excellence Award” and address the attendees at the Global Innovative Foundation’s Annual Power & Influence Luncheon as the Keynote Speaker, sharing our latest efforts in the fight against human trafficking at their “A World without Violence and Crime” luncheon.

This event serves as a platform to raise support for survivors of human trafficking, gun, and domestic violence. Many survivors, community leaders, and elected officials attended this event, some of whom were recognized for their tireless work with victims of crime.

“It is always special for me to be surrounded by so many people who are making a difference for crime victims, victims of domestic violence, and victims and survivors of human trafficking. All the honorees with us today are true champions, trailblazers, and advocates for our Miami-Dade Community,” stated Katherine Fernandez Rundle.



“I have often been asked to choose one word that best describes what we successfully do here in Miami-Dade County to combat human trafficking, and my answer is always collaboration,” she continued, “What is clear from the work of these brilliant champions is that our community, our wonderful, vibrant Miami-Dade County, is not afraid of attacking the big challenges that confront us all.”



This truly inspiring luncheon included powerful speeches from many survivors and elected officials, whose stories serve as a reminder for community leaders to support victims and continue in their fight against crime. Together, our collaborative efforts can create a “World without Violence and Crime.”

Introducing Our Newest Team Members: Welcome Class of Spring 2024



State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle is proud to welcome our new Class of Assistant State Attorneys for Spring 2024. Their careers as prosecutors begin with a comprehensive six-week training program that prepares them for their roles as ministers of Smart Justice for all.



Over the next six weeks, they will immerse themselves in our office’s operations, gaining valuable insights into the role and responsibilities of a prosecutor within our community. This in-depth training will equip them with the tools to embody fairness, ethics, and effectiveness in their practice laying the groundwork for their futures as prosecutors, shaping their professional identity and approach to the law.



Chief Assistant Howard Rosen and Deputy Chief Assistants John Perikles and Nilo Cuervo welcomed our eight new attorneys, encouraging them to uphold integrity and pursue justice in service to our Miami-Dade County Residents.

Join us in congratulating the Spring 2024 Class of ASAs! Welcome to the “Best Team in America!”

Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: Welcome Women of Tomorrow Mentees

State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, a founding member of the Women of Tomorrow Mentor and Scholarship Program, recently hosted 9 groups of mentees from several schools around the county for their annual



field trip.

Approximately 265 young women had the incredible opportunity to explore the criminal court system firsthand. They heard from esteemed judges and assistant state attorneys about the operations of the criminal court system. The young women were encouraged to make smart, safe decisions and pursue their passions.



Thank you to Assistant State Attorneys Stewart Hedrick, Shawn Abuhoff, Lindsay Davis, Maritza Clop-Liriano, Yaneth Baez, Leonard Thompson, Ashley Ramkishun, and Gleisy Sopena for sharing their insights with our mentees, and to Community Outreach Luis Martinez for organizing this experience for our future leaders!



Beyond the Courtroom: Engaging with Community

Division Chief Shawn Abuhoff participated in a panel discussion held by the First-Generation Law Association at the University of Miami School of Law. Shawn discussed his role as a prosecutor and offered professional guidance to first-generation law students.

Other panelists included former



ASA and now Honorable Judge Chiaka Ihekweba and Partner at Holland and Knight Kayla Pragid.

Chief of County Court Leonard Thompson, accompanied by Community Outreach Representative Janeen Jones, presented at the "Blocking the Transfer Portal to Prison" meeting hosted by Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust and NAACP Miami-Dade Branch.

Leonard spoke to attendees about how SAO reviews cases, diversionary programs, the importance and challenges of victim and witness cooperation, and why participating in jury duty impacts all our lives.



Empowered Voices: "Road to Leadership" Panel Inspires



In celebration of Women’s History Month, State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle had the privilege to sit among a distinguished group of women leaders who shared their insightful perspectives and experiences at the “Road to Leadership” panel discussion hosted by A Woman’s Voice. This gathering, sponsored by the Sanctuary of the Arts, celebrated, honored, and explored the challenges and successes of women both globally and within Miami-Dade County.

“It was a true privilege to be among such an inspiring group of women. As I listened to their stories of resilience and determination, I was reminded of the power we hold as women when we come together and support one another. This event was a testament to the incredible strength, resilience, and accomplishments of women, offering a platform to share stories and insights that are often overlooked.”

The State Attorney spoke on pivotal moments in her career, how she overcame and navigated barriers, and implemented programs and initiatives to empower women affected by crime, especially Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Victims. Attendees were encouraged to find their passion, build strong support systems, and persevere in the face of challenges.



Community Outreach in Action



Community Outreach Representative Angie Fernandez conducted a S.T.A.R.T. Program presentation to students at Calusa Elementary School in Kendall.

Angie explained a 5-step decision-making process during her presentation, which covered aspects of Juvenile Delinquency and related issues such as school violence, weapons at school, drugs, bullying, and consequences for these acts.



Community Outreach Representatives Janeen Jones and Jose Lopez attended the Miami-Dade County Community Action and Human Services Department - CAHSD Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities Services Division Community Resource Fair.

Janeen and Jose shared information with attendees on SAO Programs and Services, including the Elderly and Vulnerable Adults (EVA) Task Force and our "Second Chance" Seal or Expunge Events.

"Second Chance:" Seal or Expunge Event





State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle thanks all who attended the “Second Chance” Seal or Expunge Event held at Miami Dade College West Campus.

The State Attorney’s Office assisted 69 individuals, with 46 attendees eligible to seal or expunge one arrest in Miami-Dade County. This event would not be possible without the assistance from our community partners at the Miami-Dade Clerk of the Court and Comptroller, Miami-Dade Public Defender’s Office, NAACP Miami-Dade Branch, the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, Miami-Dade College, and the Doral Chamber of Commerce.

We look forward to bringing the “Second Chance” Seal or Expunge Event to Joseph Caleb Center on April 24, 2024, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Be sure to follow us for additional information.

SAO Alumni Profile

**Judge Christine Hernandez,
Circuit Court Judge**

This month, we highlight a distinguished alumni member of our SAO family.

We present our SAO Alumni Profile - Judge Christine Hernandez.

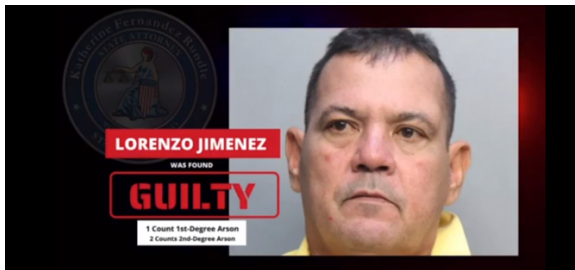


[READ PROFILE](#)

Trial Victory: Sentencing Update



[View Video Update](#)



Lorenzo Jimenez was sentenced to 10 years in prison after being found guilty of one count of 1st-Degree Arson and two counts of 2nd-Degree Arson.

Visit our website | www.miamisao.com



Miami Dade State Attorneys Office | [1350 NW 12th Avenue, Miami, FL 33136](#)

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Sent by katherinefernandezrundlenews@stateattorneysoffice.ccsend.com powered by



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