

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-10**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA, OPPOSING THE CONSOLIDATION OF CIRCUIT COURTS AFFECTING THE GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT.**

**WHEREAS**, the Speaker for the Florida House of Representatives has proposed the consideration of the “consolidation of the [judicial] circuits [which] might lead to greater efficiencies and uniformity in the judicial process, thereby increasing the public trust and confidence; and

**WHEREAS**, changes in the current effective operation of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit will have an impact on the judges, prosecutors, public defenders, attorneys, law enforcement and others who diligently and efficiently work to ensure access to justice and the safety of our citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, courts, drawn closest to the people who seek to have their most personal grievances resolved, have established confidence in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit and its court officers to have their matters handled; and

**WHEREAS**, our Fourteenth Judicial Circuit encompasses vast rural areas which already necessitate court personnel, officers of the court, parties, witnesses and jurors to travel great distances to provide live testimony, respond to jury summons, attend in-person hearings, and participate in trials, which cannot be resolved with video or telephone appearances; and

**WHEREAS**, our local attorneys, judges, magistrates, prosecutors and public defenders are accustomed to the heritage of justice which our citizens expect from our judicial system;

**WHEREAS**, the House Speaker in his request to consider circuit court consolidation bases his interest on “greater efficiencies and uniformity in the judicial process”, but we have yet to find the need to upend the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit if the need elsewhere requires changes in different circuits further south.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Commission of the City of Port St. Joe as follows:

**SECTION 1.** The City of Port St Joe opposes any Judicial Circuit Consolidation that affects whatsoever the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

**SECTION 2.** Despite population growth in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, changes in administrative and statutory law, regional disasters like Hurricane Michael and Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, our circuit judges, prosecutors, public defenders, attorneys and court personnel have been able to preserve our citizens access to justice without the need to reconfigure our circuit.

**SECTION 3.** The City Clerk is directed to transmit this resolution to the House Speaker Paul Renner, Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Supreme Court Chief Judge Carlos Muniz and the Honorable Jonathan D. Gerber, Chairman of the Judicial Circuit Assessment Committee.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 26<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023, by the PORT ST. JOE CITY COMMISSION meeting in regular session.

**CITY OF PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA**

By: Rex Buzzett  
Rex Buzzett, Mayor

Attest: Charlotte Pierce  
Charlotte Pierce, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

Clinton T. McCahill  
Clinton T. McCahill, City Attorney