

Three Florida Supreme Court Justices could face a criminal investigation

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Tallahassee, Florida: Three justices of the Florida Supreme Court are under scrutiny for using state employees to help them with last-minute election paperwork.

Justices Fred Lewis, Barbara Pariente and Peggy Quince, whose current terms end this year, almost missed the April deadline to file for retention election. The court put a hearing on hold so that the justices could finish their paperwork. The paperwork was notarized by court employees. There is a law that prohibits candidates from using state employees to help them with their campaign during work hours. The question raised recently is whether or not this applies to judges. Gov. Rick Scott has asked the state Department of Law Enforcement to determine whether an investigation is necessary.

Gov. Scott wrote to Rep. Scott Plakon (R-Longwood), "I believe it is important for the people of Florida to have full faith and confidence in all government officials...Thus a full accounting of the events at issue ought to be provided, whereupon entities with appropriate jurisdiction...can take any necessary and warranted action."^[1]

Dan Stengle, legal counsel for the justices, says that what the state employees did was routine. Records show that such employees also notarized judicial retention paperwork in 2010.^[1]

References

- ¹ ↑ ^{1.0} ^{1.1} *Orlando Sentinel*, "Gov. Scott requests review of 3 justices' actions", June 5, 2012 (http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-06-05/news/os-supreme-court-justices-rick-scott-20120605_1_justices-fred-lewis-florida-supreme-court-justices-rick-scott)

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