

## RESOLUTION 17-89

### A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PANAMA CITY BEACH, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING THE PURSUIT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW FEDERAL COURTHOUSE IN PANAMA CITY.

WHEREAS, federal law<sup>1</sup> provides that the federal court system in Florida shall be divided into 3 districts: Southern, Middle and Northern, and further provides that court for the Northern District be held in Gainesville, Marianna, Panama City, Pensacola, and Tallahassee; and

WHEREAS, the Northern District currently has 4 active districts (Gainesville, Panama City, Pensacola and Tallahassee), among which the Panama City division represents just under 20 percent of the caseload; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's lease of the present federal courthouse in Panama City expires on December 31, 2018, and will not be renewed due to security and other alleged inadequacies of the present building; and

WHEREAS, the federal government is considering closing the Panama City division rather than pursuing the re-establishment of the Courthouse at a new location; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated by the Bay County Chamber of Commerce that there are 27 jobs that will be directly impacted by the closure of the Panama City division and over 100 jobs that will be indirectly impacted; and

WHEREAS, the Bay County Jail houses Federal inmates which is a major source of income for county government, estimated at the highest point to be over \$400,000 annually; and

WHEREAS, the current Panama City federal courthouse facility also houses the US Marshal, US Attorney and Public Defender, and a federal probation office and it is foreseeable that some of these and other federal agencies will move out of town rather than establish new offices outside the closed federal courthouse; and

WHEREAS, the Panama City Federal Courthouse serves a six county region encompassing Bay, Gulf, Calhoun, Jackson, Washington and Holmes Counties with a current regional population of 306,000 and an estimated ten year population growth of over 500,000 more than justifies the provision of a locally situated federal courthouse; and

WHEREAS, the loss of the federal courthouse would have tremendous economic impact on those involved in federal cases (legal professionals, jurors, witnesses, investigators and law enforcement) which would involve travel 100 miles to Pensacola or

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<sup>1</sup> 28 U.S. Code § 89-Florida

Tallahassee, and overnight or longer stays, and the extent of that economic impact is anticipated to increase as this area continues to grow; and

WHEREAS, the City of Panama City Beach supports the efforts of the Bay County Chamber of Commerce Federal Courthouse Task Force created to fight for the continued operation of the Panama City division and establishment of a new federal courthouse in Panama City.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the people of the City of Panama City Beach, acting through their duly elected representatives, that the people of the City of Panama City Beach oppose the dissolution of the Panama City division and support the pursuit and establishment of a new federal courthouse facility in Panama City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Manager is directed to forward copies of this executed Resolution immediately to the Honorable Casey Rodgers, Chief Judge of the Northern District; the Honorable Ed Carnes, Chief Judge of the Eleventh Circuit; the state and federal legislators who also represent the people of the City, Bay County; the Bay County Chamber of Commerce Federal Courthouse Task Force; and to all others whom he may determine appropriate.

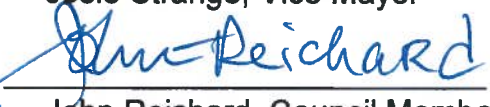
THIS RESOLUTION shall become effective immediately upon passage.

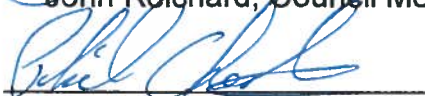
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY in regular session this 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017.


CITY OF PANAMA CITY BEACH

By:   
Mike Thomas, Mayor

By:   
Josie Strange, Vice Mayor

By:   
John Reichard, Council Member

By:   
Phil Chester, Council Member

By:   
Hector Solis, Council Member

ATTEST:

  
Diane Fowler, City Clerk  
  
Jo Smith, Deputy City Clerk