

THE ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR LAWSUIT SUMMARY

The sponsor of the citizen initiative petition, “Taking Back Hillsborough County Political Committee, Inc.” (Sponsor), began collecting signatures in April of 2006 for an elected county mayor. The language of the proposed amendment called for the first county mayor to be elected at “the general election of 2008”. The Sponsor had not collected enough signatures to make the deadline for the 2006 general election, but continued to collect signatures and was ultimately certified by the Supervisor of Elections for the 2008 General Election. The Second District Court of Appeals ruled that such an election was impossible as the voters first decide on the amendment (i.e., approve the proposal to change to the Charter to have an elected county mayor instead of an appointed county administrator), before an election could be held. Thus, the Court ruled that voters could be misled as to how or when the county mayor would succeed the county administrator.