

Press Release
For Immediate Release
Florida National Organization for Women

June 5, 2008

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Florida NOW Demands Gender Balance on the Florida Supreme Court

There will soon be four vacancies on the Florida Supreme Court. Justices Kenneth Bell and Raoul Cantero have recently resigned and next year Justices Harry Lee Anstead and Charles Wells must resign because they turn 70. The Florida National Organization for Women urges Governor Crist to take this opportunity to bring gender balance to the court. Currently the court is comprised of five men and two women, a notable under-representation of women. Without a balanced perspective, the courts may enact policy policies that shortchange every aspect of women's lives.

In 1994, then governor Lawton Chiles signed a bill calling for proportional representation for minority persons and defined the minorities as African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native Americans, and American Women. "Despite Governor Chiles' foresight," said Jessica McCaffrey, president of Florida NOW, "Women are still notably absent from the Florida Supreme Court."

Florida has many capable women judges. By appointing women to the court in proportion to the populace, Governor Crist will be making a statement that women are valued, that his administration will work to bring women into full partnership in governance of our state, and, thus, set an example to local governments to do the same. "NOW will be watching to see that justice for women is done." said McCaffrey.