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**Office of the Inspector General  
Miami-Dade County**

# Memorandum

To: The Hon. Alex Penelas, Mayor

The Hon. Chairperson Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed. D.  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Christopher Mazzella  
Inspector General

Date: August 17, 2004

Re: Elections Response Team; Arrest of Rita L. Picazo

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Attached is a press release announcing the formation of an Elections Response Team, which the Office of the Inspector General is proudly a member of. As a measure of insuring the integrity of our forthcoming elections, the Response Team investigates allegations of election fraud, and today the team's investigative efforts have resulted in its first arrest.

The joint investigation by the Office of the Inspector General, Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the State Attorney's Office resulted in the arrest of Rita L. Picazo for providing indirect contributions in the names of co-workers to the Jorge Roque Campaign for County Commission District 13. The false contributor information allowed the Roque Campaign to receive funds from the County's Campaign Trust Fund.

Picazo was also charged with Solicitation to Commit Perjury for requesting that her co-workers lie to investigators and prosecutors in an attempt to conceal the fraud. The investigation into further improprieties associated with the Roque Campaign's application for Miami-Dade Campaign Trust Fund monies is on-going and additional arrests are expected.

The investigation and arrest of Picazo, is the first for the newly formed Elections Response Team spearheaded by the State Attorney's Office.

cc: Mr. George Burgess, County Manager  
Mr. Robert A. Ginsburg, County Attorney  
Ms. Constance Kaplan, Supervisor of Elections  
Ms. Cathy Jackson, Director, Audit & Management Services

Clerk of the Board (Copy Filed)



## **STATE ATTORNEY**

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#### **Press Conference Announcing Creation Of An Election Response Team And An Arrest In An Elections Fraud Probe**

Miami (August 16, 2004) – State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle has joined with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), the Miami-Dade Supervisor of Elections, the U.S. Attorney's Office to announce the creation of an Election Response Team whose aim is to help insure the integrity of our forthcoming elections. Additionally, this press conference will announce the first arrest by this recently created joint Response Team.

The press conference will be held at 10:30 a.m. at the Office of the State Attorney in room 418-S on Tuesday, August 17, 2004. The Office of the State Attorney is in the E. R. Graham building located at 1350 NW 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Miami. Please arrive early enough to obtain security clearance through the building's security review process.

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