

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Judiciary

BILL: SB 1750

INTRODUCER: Senator Negron

SUBJECT: Postconviction Capital Case Proceedings

DATE: March 29, 2013

REVISED: 4/1/13

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Brown	Cibula	JU	Favorable
2.			ACJ	
3.			AP	
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

SB 1750 is the implementing legislation for SJR 1740. That joint resolution authorizes the Legislature, by general law, to govern the postconviction or collateral review of capital cases resulting in a death sentence.

Accordingly, this bill provides procedures to replace court rules governing postconviction or collateral review of capital cases. The purpose of the new procedures is to streamline and further expediency for the postconviction or collateral review of capital cases. The bill also:

- Deletes the requirement for the court to appoint counsel to represent defendants in clemency proceedings occurring after July 1, 2013.
- Recreates the Capital Collateral Regional Counsel for the Northern Region of Florida, and eliminates the registry attorney pilot program.

If SJR 1740 passes both houses of the Legislature and is approved by the voters at the 2014 General Election, the provisions in this bill relating to policies and procedures in capital cases will take effect July 1, 2015. All other provisions take effect July 1, 2013.

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 27.40, 27.51, 27.511, 27.5303, 27.5304, 27.702, 27.703, 27.708, 27.7081, 27.7091, 27.711, 922.095, 924.055, 924.056, 924.057, 924.058, and 924.059.

This bill creates the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 924.0581, 924.0585, 924.0591, 924.0592, 924.0593, and 924.0594.

This bill repeals section 27.701(2), Florida Statutes.

This bill reenacts section 922.108, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Florida State Constitution

The State Constitution grants the Supreme Court jurisdiction over all aspects of practice and procedure in state courts. The constitutional authority includes jurisdiction over the administration of capital cases.

Section 2, Article V of the State Constitution provides, in part:

Administration; practice and procedure.—

(a) The supreme court shall adopt rules for the practice and procedure in all courts including the time for seeking appellate review, the administrative supervision of all courts, the transfer to the court having jurisdiction of any proceeding when the jurisdiction of another court has been improvidently invoked, and a requirement that no cause shall be dismissed because an improper remedy has been sought. ... Rules of court may be repealed by general law enacted by two-thirds vote of the membership of each house of the legislature.

Current Death Row Statistics

Florida is one of 33 states that impose the death penalty.¹ As of March 25, 2013, 405 people were on death row in Florida, more than any other state except California.² On average, Florida death row inmates spend 13.22 years on death row before execution.³ Of the 404 inmates on death row, 155 have been in custody for more than 20 years, and ten have been on death row for more than 35 years.⁴ Between 1976-2012, Florida executed 74 inmates.⁵ During the same period, Texas executed 492 inmates, Virginia executed 109 inmates, and Oklahoma executed 102 inmates.⁶ Florida executed 2 death row inmates in 2011 and 3 in 2012.⁷

¹ The other states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. *Facts About the Death Penalty* (updated December 28, 2012), Death Penalty Information Center, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/FactSheet.pdf.

² California has 724 inmates on death row. *Facts About the Death Penalty* (updated December 28, 2012), Death Penalty Information Center. Available at: www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/FactSheet.pdf. See also: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/activeinmates/deathrowroster.asp> (last visited on March 25, 2013).

³ Florida Department of Corrections, *Death Row Fact Sheet*. Available at: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/deathrow/index.html#Statistics> (last visited on March 25, 2013).

⁴ Florida Department of Corrections, *Death Row Fact Sheet*. Available at: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/activeinmates/deathrowroster.asp> (last visited on March 25, 2013).

⁵ Florida Department of Corrections, *Death Row Fact Sheet*. Available at: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/deathrow/index.html#Statistics> (last visited on March 25, 2013).

⁶ Death Penalty Information Center, *Facts About the Death Penalty* (December 28, 2012), Available at: www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/FactSheet.pdf (last visited on March 25, 2013).

Capital Cases – Direct Appeal

A defendant who is convicted of a crime and sentenced to death automatically receives a direct appeal of his or her conviction and sentence to the Florida Supreme Court.⁸ During the direct appeal, the defendant is represented by the public defender's office, if the defendant is indigent, or by a private attorney. Matters raised on direct appeal include evidentiary rulings made by the trial court during the course of the defendant's trial and other matters objected to during the course of trial such as the jury instructions, prosecutorial misconduct, and procedural rulings made by the trial court.

The Florida Supreme Court must render a judgment within two years of the filing of the notice of appeal.⁹ If the Florida Supreme Court affirms the appellant's conviction and sentence, the appellant has 90 days after the decision is entered to file a petition for a writ of certiorari with the United States Supreme Court seeking discretionary review of the Florida Supreme Court's decision.¹⁰ If the United States Supreme Court denies the case, the direct appeal has concluded, and the defendant may begin state postconviction proceedings.

Rules of Procedure Governing State Postconviction Proceedings

The court rules committees of The Florida Bar, separated by subject area, submit proposals to the Florida Supreme Court on new rules of procedure and amendments to existing rules.¹¹ The Florida Supreme Court then adopts or rejects the proposals submitted by each Court Rules Committee. Rules of procedure apply to the areas of appellate, civil, criminal, family, judicial administration, juvenile, probate, small claims, and traffic court practice.¹²

Rules 3.811, 3.812, 3.850, 3.851, and 3.852 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, and Rule 9.142 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure govern all state postconviction proceedings initiated by death row inmates challenging a conviction or death sentence. Unlike a direct appeal, which challenges the legal errors apparent from the trial transcripts or record on appeal, state postconviction proceedings are designed to address claims that are "collateral" to what transpired in the trial court (e.g., claims that the defendant's trial counsel was ineffective, claims of newly discovered evidence, or claims that the prosecution failed to disclose exculpatory evidence). Because the consideration of these claims often require new fact finding, postconviction motions are filed in the trial court that sentenced the defendant to death. Appeals from the grant or denial of postconviction relief are filed with the Florida Supreme Court. A detailed review of state postconviction proceedings follows.

⁷ Florida Department of Corrections, *Death Row Fact Sheet*. Available at:

<http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/deathrow/index.html#Statistics> (last visited March 25, 2013).

⁸ Section 921.141(4), F.S.; Art. 5, Sec. 3, FLA. CONST.; and Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.030(a)(1)(A)(i).

⁹ Section 921.141(4), F.S.

¹⁰ 28 U.S.C. s. 1257; and Sup. Ct. R. 13.

¹¹ See, i.e., the Florida Bar website page on the Appellate Court Rules Committee, at:

<http://www.floridabar.org/DIVEXE/BD/CMStanding.nsf/2021e58ed0c7505585256e45004b060d/15e0fcc0829efd6585256c5b00554844!OpenDocument> (last visited March 22, 2013).

¹² Online at:

<http://www.floridabar.org/tfb/TFBLegalRes.nsf/basic+view/E1A89A0DC5248D1785256B2F006CCCEE?OpenDocument#FLORIDA%20RULES%20OF%20PROCEDURE%3A> (last visited March 22, 2013).

Appointment of Counsel, Judge, and other Preliminary Matters

When the Florida Supreme Court affirms a judgment and sentence of death on direct appeal, the court must simultaneously appoint the appropriate office of the Capital Collateral Regional Counsel (CCRC)¹³ to represent the inmate during postconviction proceedings.¹⁴ If the regional counsel has a conflict of interest and the postconviction judge accepts his or her motion to withdraw, or the inmate was convicted and sentenced to death in the Northern Region of Florida (which no longer has a CCRC office), the chief judge of the circuit court must appoint an attorney from the statewide registry¹⁵ to represent the inmate in postconviction proceedings.¹⁶

Within 45 days after appointment, the inmate's trial counsel must provide postconviction counsel with all information pertaining to the inmate's capital case and postconviction counsel must maintain the confidentiality of all confidential information received.

Within 30 days after the judgment of conviction and sentence of death being affirmed on direct appeal, the chief judge must assign the case to a judge qualified to conduct capital proceedings. Within 90 days after the assignment, the judge must hold a status hearing and thereafter hold status conferences at least every 90 days until:

- An evidentiary hearing, if ordered, is completed; or
- Any pending motion has been ruled on without a hearing.¹⁷

At the status hearing and conferences, the judge will entertain pending motions, disputes involving public records, or any other matters ordered by the court.¹⁸

Public Records

Rule 3.852 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure establishes the timeframes and procedures that apply to the production of capital postconviction public records. The rule requires the Attorney General (AG), within 15 days after receiving notification of the Florida Supreme Court's mandate affirming the sentence of death, to file a written notice of the mandate with the trial court and serve a copy of it on:

- The state attorney who prosecuted the case;
- The Department of Corrections (DOC); and
- The defendant's trial counsel.^{19, 20}

¹³ The CCRC represents persons convicted and sentenced to death for the sole purpose of instituting and prosecuting collateral actions challenging the legality of the judgment and sentence imposed against such person in the state courts, federal courts in this state, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court. Each regional office is administered by a regional counsel. Section 27.701(1), F.S.

¹⁴ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(b)(1).

¹⁵ Section 27.701(2), F.S., requires the responsibilities of the northern region CCRC office to be met through a pilot program using only attorneys from the registry of attorneys maintained pursuant to s. 27.710, F.S.

¹⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(b)(1); ss. 27.701(2), 27.703(1), and 27.710(5), F.S.

¹⁷ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(c)(2).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(d)(1).

The notice to the state attorney and to DOC must direct them to submit public records to the records repository within 90 days after receipt of the notice.²¹ The notice to the state attorney must also direct the state attorney to notify each law enforcement agency involved in the investigation of the capital case to submit public records to the records repository²² within 90 days after receiving the notice.²³

Within 90 days after receiving the AG's notice of the mandate, the state attorney and the defendant's trial counsel must provide the AG with the name and address of any person or agency that has public records or information pertinent to the case which has not previously been provided to defendant's postconviction counsel.²⁴ Within 15 days after receiving this information, the AG must notify the additional persons or agencies that they are required to copy, index, and deliver to the records repository all public records pertaining to the case that are in their possession.²⁵ The additional entities have 90 days from the receipt of the AG's notice to produce the records.^{26, 27}

Records delivered to the repository that are confidential or exempt pursuant to s. 119.07(1), F.S., or Article I, Section 24(a) of the Florida Constitution must be separately contained, without being redacted, and sealed.²⁸ The outside of the container must clearly identify:

- That the public record is confidential or exempt;
- That the seal may not be broken without an order from the trial court; and
- The nature of the public records and the legal basis for the exemption.²⁹

Upon court order, sealed containers must be shipped to the clerk of the court and may only be opened by the trial court in camera.³⁰

Within 240 days after postconviction counsel is appointed, retained, or appears pro bono, counsel must send a written demand for additional public records to each entity described above.³¹

²⁰ The original of all notices, requests, or objections filed under Rule 3.852 must be filed with the clerk of the trial court. Copies must be served on the trial court, the AG, the state attorney, postconviction counsel, and any affected person or agency, unless otherwise required by this section. Service must be made pursuant to Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.030. In all instances requiring written notification or request, the party who has the obligation of providing a notification or request shall provide proof of receipt. Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(c)(3).

²¹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(d)(2) and (3), and (e)(2) and (3).

²² Section 27.7081, F.S., requires the Secretary of State to establish and maintain a records repository for the purpose of archiving capital postconviction public records.

²³ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(e)(1) and (4).

²⁴ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(d)(2) and (3).

²⁵ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(d)(4).

²⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(e)(5).

²⁷ Persons and agencies required to produce records pursuant to Rule 3.852 must bear the costs of doing so, must provide written notification of compliance to the AG, and certify that to the best of their knowledge, all public records in their possession have been copied, indexed, and delivered to the records repository. Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(e).

²⁸ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(f)(1).

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ The moving party bears the costs associated with the transportation and inspection of the records by the trial court. Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(f)(2).

Within 90 days after an entity receives such demand, the entity must deliver to the records repository any additional public records in the entity's possession that pertain to the case, and certify that all such records have been provided (or that records previously provided were complete).³² The entity may object to the demand for additional public records within 60 days after receiving the demand.³³ In such instances, the trial court must hold a hearing and rule within 30 days after the filing of the objection.³⁴ The court must order an entity to produce additional public records if the court determines each of the following exists:

- Postconviction counsel has made a timely and diligent search;
- Postconviction counsel's written demand identifies, with specificity, those additional public records that are not at the records repository;
- The additional public records sought are relevant to the subject matter of a postconviction proceeding under Rule 3.851 or appear reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence; and
- The additional public records request is not overly broad or unduly burdensome.³⁵

Postconviction counsel who seeks to obtain public records in addition to those described above must file an affidavit in the trial court which:

- Attests that postconviction counsel has made a timely and diligent search of the records repository;
- Identifies with specificity those public records not at the records repository;
- Establishes that the additional public records are either relevant to the subject matter of the postconviction proceeding or are reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence; and
- Must be served on the AG, state attorney, and any affected person or agency.³⁶

Within 30 days after the filing of the affidavit, the trial court must order a person or agency to produce additional public records, but only if the court finds:

- Postconviction counsel has made a timely and diligent search of the records repository;
- Postconviction counsel's affidavit identifies with specificity those additional public records that are not at the records repository;
- The additional public records sought are either relevant to the subject matter of a capital postconviction proceeding or appear reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence; and
- The additional records request is not overly broad or unduly burdensome.³⁷

³¹ If counsel was appointed before October 1, 2001, counsel must submit the demand within 90 days after appointment. Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(g)(1).

³² Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(g)(2).

³³ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(g)(3).

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(i)(1).

³⁷ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(i)(2).

In any capital postconviction public records proceeding, the trial court may:

- Compel or deny disclosure of records;
- Conduct an in-camera inspection;
- Extend established timeframes upon a showing of good cause;
- Impose sanctions upon any party, person, or agency affected by this section including initiating contempt proceedings, taxing expenses, extending time, ordering facts to be established, and granting other relief; and
- Resolve any dispute unless jurisdiction is in an appellate court.³⁸

Any objections or motions to compel production of public records must be filed within 30 days after the end of the production time period provided.³⁹ Counsel for the party objecting or moving to compel must file a copy of the objection or motion directly with the trial court, which must hold a hearing on the objection or motion on an expedited basis.⁴⁰ The trial court may order mediation for any controversy as to public records production in accordance with Florida Rules of Civil Procedure 1.700, 1.710, 1.720, 1.730, or the trial court may refer any such controversy to a magistrate in accordance with Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.490.⁴¹

Time Limits for Filing an Initial Postconviction Motion

Any person sentenced to death whose judgment of conviction and sentence have been affirmed on direct appeal may file an initial Rule 3.851 motion, under oath, seeking postconviction relief.⁴² This motion must be filed within 1 year after the inmate's judgment and sentence become final. A judgment and sentence become final:

- On the expiration of the time permitted to file in the United States Supreme Court a petition for writ of certiorari seeking review of the Florida Supreme Court's decision affirming the inmate's judgment and sentence of death (90 days after the opinion becomes final); or
- On the disposition of the petition for writ of certiorari by the United States Supreme Court, if filed.⁴³

The Florida Supreme Court may grant an extension of time for the filing of a postconviction motion if the inmate's counsel can demonstrate good cause as to why counsel could not file the motion within the 1-year time limit.⁴⁴

A motion filed after the 1-year time limit will not be entertained unless the movant alleges that:

- The facts on which the claim is predicated were not known to the movant or his/her attorney and could not have been ascertained within the 1-year time limit by the exercise of due diligence;⁴⁵

³⁸ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(k).

³⁹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(1)(2).

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(1)(3).

⁴² Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(a).

⁴³ Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.851(d)(1)(A) and (B).

⁴⁴ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(d)(5).

- The fundamental constitutional right asserted was not established within the 1-year time limit and has been held to apply retroactively; or
- His/her postconviction counsel, through neglect, failed to file the motion.⁴⁶

In addition to the aforementioned exceptions, Florida law allows a litigant to overcome a valid procedural bar by claiming that the alleged error constitutes “fundamental error.” In order for an error to be fundamental and justify consideration—despite being otherwise barred—“the error must reach down into the validity of the trial itself to the extent that a verdict of guilty [or sentence of death] could not have been obtained without the assistance of the alleged error.”⁴⁷ For instance, improper comments made in the closing arguments of the penalty phase only constitute fundamental error if they are so prejudicial as to taint the jury’s sentencing recommendation.⁴⁸ Fundamental error can be raised at any time,⁴⁹ including to collaterally attack a conviction or sentence in postconviction proceedings.⁵⁰

Timely filed motions may be amended or supplemented outside of the one-year time limit.⁵¹ To accomplish this, the movant must file a motion to amend no later than 30 days before the evidentiary hearing, including in the motion the reasons additional claims were not raised upon the initial filing and attaching to the motion the claims sought to be added.⁵² If the motion is allowed, the state has 20 days after the amended motion is filed to file an amended answer.⁵³

Contents of an Initial Postconviction Motion

An initial postconviction motion must include:

- A statement specifying the judgment and sentence under attack and the name of the court that rendered the judgment and sentence;
- A statement of each issue raised on appeal and the disposition of each issue;
- The nature of the relief sought;
- A detailed allegation of the factual basis for any claim for which an evidentiary hearing is sought; and
- A detailed allegation as to the basis for any purely legal or constitutional claims for which an evidentiary hearing is not required and the reason that these claims could not have been or were not raised on direct appeal.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ In order for evidence to be “newly discovered,” the movant must demonstrate that: (1) the asserted facts must have been unknown by the trial court, the party, or counsel at the time of trial, and it must appear that the movant or his/her counsel could not have known them by being diligent; and (2) the newly discovered evidence must be of such nature that it would probably result in an acquittal on retrial. *See Scott v. Dugger*, 604 So. 2d 465, 468 (Fla. 1992); *see also Miller v. State*, 926 So. 2d 1243, 1258 (Fla. 2006), quoting *Jones v. State*, 591 So. 2d 911, 915 (Fla. 1991).

⁴⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(d)(2).

⁴⁷ *Miller*, 926 So. 2d at 1261, quoting *Brown v. State*, 124 So. 2d 481, 484 (Fla. 1960).

⁴⁸ *Id.* Fundamental error can never be found harmless. *Johnson v. State*, 460 So. 2d 954, 958 (Fla. 5th DCA 1984).

⁴⁹ *Moore v. State*, 924 So. 2d 840, 841 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006).

⁵⁰ *Johnson*, 460 So. 2d at 958.

⁵¹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(d)(4) and (5) and (f)(4).

⁵² Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(4).

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.851(e)(1).

The movant must also attach to the motion a memorandum of law setting forth the relevant case law supporting relief on each asserted claim.⁵⁵ The memorandum of law must also state why claims that should have or could have been raised on direct appeal are being raised for the first time in the postconviction motion.⁵⁶

The state has 60 days from the filing of the initial postconviction motion to file its answer.⁵⁷

Discovery and the Evidentiary Hearing

Within 90 days after the state files its answer to an initial postconviction motion, the court must hold a case management conference where both parties must “disclose all documentary exhibits that they intend to offer at the evidentiary hearing, provide an exhibit list of all such exhibits, and exchange a witness list with the names and addresses of any potential witnesses.”⁵⁸ At this conference, the court must also:

- Schedule an evidentiary hearing, to be held within 90 days, on claims asserted by the movant which require a factual determination;
- Hear argument on purely legal claims not based on disputed facts; and
- Resolve any discovery disputes.⁵⁹

The court, upon a showing of good cause by either party, may extend the time for holding an evidentiary hearing on the initial postconviction motion for up to 90 days.⁶⁰

The court may dispose of an initial postconviction motion without holding an evidentiary hearing if:

- The motion, files, and records in the case conclusively show that the movant is not entitled to any relief; or
- The motion or a particular claim is legally insufficient.⁶¹

The movant must support the motion with specific factual allegations.⁶² Conclusory allegations will not justify an evidentiary hearing.⁶³

When an evidentiary hearing is held, the court must immediately request a transcript of the hearing at its conclusion.⁶⁴ Within 30 days after receiving the transcript, the court must render its order, including:

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(3)(A).

⁵⁸ The list of potential witnesses must include expert witnesses and the parties must attach reports of any potential expert witnesses to the list. Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(A).

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(C).

⁶¹ *Johnson v. State*, 904 So. 2d 400, 403 (Fla. 2005).

⁶² *Id.* at 404 (citing *Thompson v. State*, 759 So. 2d 650, 659 (Fla. 2000)).

⁶³ *Id.* (citing *Kennedy v. State*, 547 So. 2d 912, 913 (Fla. 1989)).

⁶⁴ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(D).

- A ruling on each claim considered at the evidentiary hearing and all other claims asserted in the motion;
- Detailed findings of fact and conclusions of law with respect to each claim; and
- Attached or referenced portions of the record as are necessary for meaningful appellate review.⁶⁵

Either party may move for a rehearing within 15 days after the rendition of the court's order on the postconviction motion.⁶⁶ Responses to such motions must be made within 10 days, and the court must render an order disposing of the motion for rehearing within 15 days.⁶⁷

The movant may appeal the court's decision to the Florida Supreme Court within 30 days after the date the court rendered its order on the postconviction motion.⁶⁸ If the Florida Supreme Court affirms the lower court's decision, the movant may file a petition for a writ of certiorari with the United States Supreme Court.⁶⁹ If the United States Supreme Court declines review or affirms the lower's court decision, the postconviction appeal is complete.

Successive Motions

If the state court previously ruled on a postconviction motion, a motion filed thereafter challenging the same judgment and sentence is considered a "successive motion."⁷⁰ In addition to the contents required for an initial motion, a successive motion must include:

- The disposition of all previous claims raised in postconviction proceedings and the reason(s) the claims in the present motion were not raised in the former motion(s); and
- The following, if the claims are based on newly discovered evidence:
 - The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all witnesses supporting the claim;
 - A statement that the witness will be available to testify under oath to the facts alleged in the motion, should an evidentiary hearing be held on that issue;
 - If evidentiary support is in the form of documents, copies of relevant documents, and affidavits must be attached to the motion; and
 - As to any witness or document in the motion or attachment to the motion, an explanation as to why the witness or document was not previously available.⁷¹

The state has 20 days after the filing of a successive motion to file its answer.⁷²

Within 30 days after the state files its answer to a successive postconviction motion, the court must hold a case management conference, at which the court must determine whether an evidentiary hearing should be held and hear arguments on any purely legal claims not based on

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(7).

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.110(b), Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.140(b)(1)(D) and (b)(3).

⁶⁹ 28 U.S.C. s. 1257.

⁷⁰ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(e)(2).

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(3)(B).

disputed facts.⁷³ As with initial postconviction motions, the court may dispose of any successive motion without holding an evidentiary hearing if the motion, files, and records in the case conclusively show that the movant is not entitled to any relief.⁷⁴ Additionally, the court may dismiss successive motions without an evidentiary hearing if:

- The movant does not provide a reason for failing to raise the successive claims in his/her previous Rule 3.851 motion; or⁷⁵
- The motion raises claims that have already been asserted and adjudicated on the merits in a previous Rule 3.851 proceeding.⁷⁶

If, however, the court determines that an evidentiary hearing should be held, the hearing should be scheduled and held within 60 days.⁷⁷ The court, upon a showing of good cause by either party, may extend the time for holding an evidentiary hearing on a successive motion for up to 90 days.⁷⁸

The deadlines for requesting transcripts and rendering orders after an evidentiary hearing on a successive postconviction motion are the same as those applicable to initial postconviction motions.⁷⁹ The rules relating to motions for rehearing and appealing an initial postconviction motion also apply to successive motions.⁸⁰

Appeal to the Florida Supreme Court

Postconviction Motions

Any party to a Rule 3.851 motion may appeal a trial court's final order to the Florida Supreme Court (Court) by filing a notice of appeal with the trial clerk within 30 days after the rendition of the order.⁸¹ When the notice of appeal is filed, the Court's chief justice directs the appropriate chief judge of the circuit court to monitor the preparation of the complete record⁸² for timely filing in the Court.⁸³

⁷³ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(B).

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ *See, e.g., Hill v. State*, 921 So. 2d 579, 584 (Fla. 2006)(holding that the movant's successive claim alleging that he was mentally retarded and, therefore, could not be executed pursuant to *Atkins v. Virginia*, 536 U.S. 304 (2002), was procedurally barred because the movant gave no reason why the claim could not have been raised in his 2003 Rule 3.851 motion, which was filed after the issuance of the *Atkins* decision).

⁷⁶ *See, e.g., Johnson v. State*, 904 So. 2d 400, 412 (Fla. 2005)(rejecting the movant's successive claim that lethal injection constitutes cruel and unusual punishment because it was raised and rejected in the movant's previous postconviction proceeding).

⁷⁷ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(B).

⁷⁸ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(C).

⁷⁹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(5)(D).

⁸⁰ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(7) and (8).

⁸¹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(f)(8).

⁸² The complete record in a death penalty appeal includes all items required by Rule 9.200 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure and by any order issued by the Court. In any appeal following the initial direct appeal, the record that is electronically transmitted must begin with the most recent mandate issued by the Court, or the most recent filing not already electronically transmitted in a prior record in the event the preceding appeal was disposed of without a mandate, and excludes any materials already transmitted to the Court as the record in any prior appeal. Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(a)(1)(B).

⁸³ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(a)(1).

After the record is filed, the clerk establishes a briefing schedule that gives the defendant 30 days to serve an initial brief.⁸⁴ The answer brief must be served within 20 days after service of the initial brief, and the reply brief, if any, must be served within 20 days after service of the answer brief. If any brief is delinquent, an order to show cause may be issued,⁸⁵ and sanctions may be imposed.⁸⁶ Oral argument is scheduled after the filing of the defendant's reply brief.⁸⁷ The rules do not prescribe when the Court must rule on the appeal.

Petitions for Extraordinary Relief

Petitions for extraordinary relief are generally treated as original proceedings.⁸⁸ Such petitions must be in the form prescribed by Rule 9.100 of the Rules of Appellate Procedure, may include supporting documents, and must include in the statement of facts:

- The date and nature of the lower tribunal's order sought to be reviewed;
- The name of the lower tribunal rendering the order;
- The nature, disposition, and dates of all previous court proceedings;
- If a previous petition was filed, the reason the claim in the present petition was not raised previously; and
- The nature of the relief sought.⁸⁹

Petitions seeking a belated appeal must include a detailed allegation of the specific acts, sworn to by the petitioner or petitioner's counsel, that constitute the basis for entitlement to belated appeal, including:

- Whether petitioner requested counsel to proceed with the appeal and the date of any such request;
- Whether counsel misadvised the petitioner as to the availability of appellate review or the filing of the notice of appeal; or
- Whether there were circumstances unrelated to counsel's action or inaction, including names of individuals involved and dates of the occurrences, that were beyond the petitioner's control and otherwise interfered with the petitioner's ability to file a timely appeal.⁹⁰

A petition for belated appeal may not be filed more than 1 year after the expiration of time for filing the notice of appeal from a final order denying Rule 3.851 relief, unless it alleges under oath with a specific factual basis that the petitioner:

- Was unaware an appeal had not been timely filed, was not advised of the right to an appeal, was misadvised as to the rights to an appeal, or was prevented from timely filing a notice of appeal due to circumstances beyond the petitioner's control; and

⁸⁴ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(a)(2).

⁸⁵ Pursuant to Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.840.

⁸⁶ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(a)(3).

⁸⁷ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(a)(4).

⁸⁸ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(b)(1).

⁸⁹ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(b)(2).

⁹⁰ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(b)(3)(A).

- Could not have ascertained such facts by the exercise of due diligence.⁹¹

A petition alleging ineffective assistance of direct appeal counsel must include detailed allegations of the specific acts that constitute the alleged ineffective assistance of counsel and must be filed simultaneously with the initial brief in the appeal from the lower tribunal's order on the defendant's application for postconviction relief.⁹²

Petitions Seeking Review of Nonfinal Orders in Death Penalty Postconviction Proceedings

Petitions seeking review of nonfinal orders in postconviction proceedings are generally treated as original proceedings. Such petitions must be filed within 30 days after rendition of the nonfinal order to be reviewed.⁹³ Either party to the proceeding may file a petition, but must serve it on the opposing party and the judge who issued the nonfinal order being reviewed.⁹⁴

The petition must be in the form prescribed by Rule 9.100 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure and must contain:

- The basis for invoking the jurisdiction of the court;
- The date and nature of the order sought to be reviewed;
- The name of the lower tribunal rendering the order;
- The name, disposition, and dates of all previous trial, appellate, and postconviction proceedings relating to the conviction and death sentence that are the subject of the proceedings in which the order sought to be reviewed was entered;
- The facts on which the petitioner relies, with references to the appropriate pages of the supporting appendix;
- Argument in support of the petition, including an explanation of why the order departs from the essential requirements of law and how the order may cause material injury for which there is no adequate remedy on appeal, and appropriate citations of authority; and
- The nature of the relief sought.⁹⁵

The petition must be accompanied by an appendix⁹⁶ containing the portions of the record necessary for a determination of the issues presented.⁹⁷

If the petition demonstrates a preliminary basis for relief or a departure from the essential requirements of law that may cause material injury for which there is no adequate remedy by appeal, the Court may issue an order directing the respondent to show cause, within the time set by the Court, why relief should not be granted.⁹⁸ No response is permitted unless ordered by the Court.⁹⁹ Within 20 days after service of the response or such other time set by the Court, the

⁹¹ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(b)(3)(B).

⁹² Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(b)(4).

⁹³ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(2) and (c)(3)(A).

⁹⁴ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(3).

⁹⁵ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(4).

⁹⁶ As prescribed by Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.220.

⁹⁷ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(5).

⁹⁸ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(6).

⁹⁹ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(7).

petitioner may serve a reply, which may not exceed 15 pages in length, and supplemental appendix.¹⁰⁰

A stay of proceedings is not automatic - the party seeking a stay must petition the Court for a stay.¹⁰¹ During the pendency of a review of a nonfinal order, unless a stay is granted by the Court, the lower tribunal may proceed with all matters, except that the lower tribunal may not render a final order disposing of the cause pending review of the nonfinal order.¹⁰²

Inmate's Motion to Dismiss Postconviction Proceedings and to Discharge Postconviction Counsel

An inmate may file a motion to dismiss pending postconviction proceedings and to discharge postconviction counsel pro se.¹⁰³ In such instances, the clerk must serve copies of the motion on counsel of record for both the inmate and the state, and counsel of record may file responses within 10 days.¹⁰⁴

The trial judge must review the motion and the responses and schedule a hearing at which the inmate, collateral counsel, and the state must be present.¹⁰⁵ At the hearing, the judge must examine the inmate and hear the arguments of the inmate, postconviction counsel, and the state. If the judge concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe the inmate is not mentally competent, no fewer than two or more than three qualified experts shall be appointed to examine the inmate.¹⁰⁶ The experts must file reports with the trial court setting forth their findings. The trial court must then conduct an evidentiary hearing and enter an order setting forth findings of competency or incompetency.¹⁰⁷

If the inmate is found to be incompetent, the trial court must deny the motion without prejudice.¹⁰⁸ If the inmate is found to be competent, the trial court must conduct a complete inquiry to determine whether the inmate knowingly, freely, and voluntarily wants to dismiss pending postconviction proceedings and discharge postconviction counsel.¹⁰⁹

If the trial court determines that the inmate has made the decision to dismiss pending postconviction proceedings and discharge collateral counsel knowingly, freely, and voluntarily, the court must enter an order dismissing all pending postconviction proceedings and discharging collateral counsel.¹¹⁰ If the trial court determines that the opposite is true, it must enter an order denying the motion without prejudice.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁰ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(8).

¹⁰¹ Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(c)(9).

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(2).

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(3).

¹⁰⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(4).

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

¹⁰⁸ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(5).

¹⁰⁹ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(6).

¹¹⁰ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(7).

¹¹¹ *Id.*

If the trial court grants the motion:

- A copy of the motion, the order, and the transcript of the hearing or hearings conducted on the motion shall be electronically forwarded to the clerk of the Florida Supreme Court within 30 days; and
- Discharged counsel shall, within 10 days after issuance of the order, file with the clerk of the circuit court two copies of a notice seeking review in the Florida Supreme Court, and must, within 20 days after the filing of the transcript, serve an initial brief.¹¹²

If the trial court denies the motion, the inmate may seek review as prescribed by Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.142(b).¹¹³

Special Procedures for Postconviction Motions Filed After a Death Warrant is Signed

In cases in which the Governor signs a death warrant prior to the 1-year filing deadline, the Florida Supreme Court is required, on the movant's request, to grant a stay of execution to allow postconviction motions to proceed in a timely and orderly manner.¹¹⁴ In practice, however, this requirement is unnecessary because the Governor has agreed that, absent the circumstance where a competent death-sentenced individual voluntarily requests that a death warrant be signed, no death warrants will be issued during the initial round of federal and state review, provided that counsel for the death penalty movant is proceeding in a timely and diligent manner.¹¹⁵

Once the 1-year filing deadline has passed and after the initial round of state and federal collateral review is over, the Governor may sign a death warrant. At this point, any subsequently-filed postconviction motions, initial or successive, are subject to the following expedited procedures:

- The chief judge of the circuit court is required to assign the case to a judge as soon as the judge receives notification of the death warrant.
- Proceedings after a death warrant has been issued are required to take precedence over all other cases.
- The normal time limitations in Rule 3.851 do not apply after a death warrant has been signed; instead, all motions must be heard expeditiously considering the time limitations set by the execution date and the time required for appellate review.
- The assigned judge must schedule a case management conference as soon as reasonably possible after receiving notification that a death warrant has been signed.
- At the conference, the court must set a deadline for the filing of a Rule 3.851 postconviction motion, schedule a hearing to determine whether an evidentiary hearing should be held, and hear arguments on any purely legal claims not based on disputed facts.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Both the inmate and the state may serve responsive briefs. Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(8). *Also see*, Fla. R. App. Proc. 9.142(d)(2)(A).

¹¹³ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(i)(9).

¹¹⁴ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(d)(4).

¹¹⁵ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851 (comment).

¹¹⁶ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(h).

All motions for postconviction relief filed after a death warrant is issued are considered successive motions and must comply with the content requirements for successive motions.¹¹⁷ If the motion, files, and records in the case conclusively show that the movant is not entitled to relief, the motion may be denied without an evidentiary hearing.¹¹⁸ If, however, the trial court determines that an evidentiary hearing should be held, it must hold the evidentiary hearing as soon as reasonably possible considering the time limitations set by the date of execution and the time required for appellate review.¹¹⁹

After the evidentiary hearing is completed, the court must immediately obtain a transcript of all proceedings and, as soon as possible after the hearing is concluded, render its order.¹²⁰ A copy of the final order must immediately be electronically transmitted to the Florida Supreme Court and to the attorneys of record.¹²¹ The record must also be sent to the Florida Supreme Court, electronically, if possible.¹²²

Federal Habeas Corpus

After state postconviction proceedings have been completed, a capital defendant is entitled to file a petition for writ of habeas corpus in federal court. In habeas proceedings, the federal court reviews whether the conviction or sentence violates federal law. Federal habeas is limited to consideration of claims previously asserted on direct appeal or in state postconviction proceedings.

Execution

An inmate's death sentence may not be carried out until the Governor issues a death warrant.¹²³ A death warrant may be issued after the inmate has pursued all possible collateral remedies in a timely manner or after the inmate has failed to pursue said remedies within specified time limits.¹²⁴ Upon issuance of a death warrant, the Governor must transmit the warrant and the record to the warden and direct the warden to execute the sentence at a time designated in the warrant.¹²⁵

An inmate's death sentence will be carried out by lethal injection unless the inmate requests to be executed by electrocution.¹²⁶ The warden of the state prison designates the executioner.¹²⁷ The warden (or a deputy) must be present at the execution and must select twelve individuals to witness the execution.¹²⁸ A qualified physician must be present, and the inmate's counsel,

¹¹⁷ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(h)(5).

¹¹⁸ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(h)(6).

¹¹⁹ *Id.*

¹²⁰ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(h)(8).

¹²¹ *Id.*

¹²² Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.851(h)(9).

¹²³ Section 922.052(1), F.S.

¹²⁴ Section 922.095, F.S.

¹²⁵ Section 922.052(1), F.S.

¹²⁶ Section 922.105, F.S.

¹²⁷ Section 922.10, F.S. A person authorized by state law to prepare, compound, or dispense medication and designated by the Department of Corrections may prepare, compound, or dispense a lethal injection. Section 922.105(6), F.S.

¹²⁸ Section 922.11(1) and (2), F.S.

ministers of religion, representatives of the media, and prison and correctional officers may be present.¹²⁹ Immediately before the inmate's execution, the death warrant must be read to the inmate.¹³⁰ The physician must announce when death has occurred.¹³¹

After the death sentence has been executed, the warden must send the warrant and a signed statement of the execution to the Secretary of State and file an attested copy of the warrant and statement with the clerk of the court that imposed the sentence.¹³²

Sixty days after a capital sentence is carried out, after a defendant is released from incarceration following the granting of a pardon or reversal of the sentence, or after a defendant has been resentenced to a term of years, the AG must provide written notification of this occurrence to the Secretary of State.¹³³ After the expiration of the 60 days, the Secretary of State may destroy the copies of the public records held by the records repository that pertain to that case, unless an objection to the destruction is filed in the trial court and served upon the Secretary of State. If an objection is served, the records may not be destroyed until a final disposition of the objection.¹³⁴

Clemency

Clemency is an act of mercy that absolves the individual upon whom it is bestowed from all or any part of the punishment that the law imposed.¹³⁵ Types of clemency include pardons, commutation of sentence, remission of fines or forfeitures, restoration of the authority to possess a firearm, and restoration of civil rights.¹³⁶

The Governor and members of the Cabinet collectively are the Board of Executive Clemency. Pursuant to the Florida Constitution, the Governor has the power to grant clemency with the consent of at least two Cabinet members.¹³⁷ The Florida Parole Commission acts as the agent of the Board of Executive Clemency in determining whether offenders are eligible for clemency, investigating clemency applications, conducting hearings when required, and making recommendations to the Board.¹³⁸

Currently, ss. 27.40, 27.51, 27.511, 27.5303, and 27.5304, F.S., authorize the trial court to appoint a public defender, private attorney, or a registry attorney to represent a person who has been convicted and sentenced to death in clemency proceedings.

¹²⁹ Section 922.11(2), F.S.

¹³⁰ Section 922.10, F.S.

¹³¹ Section 922.11(2), F.S.

¹³² Section 922.12, F.S.

¹³³ Fla. R. Crim. Proc. 3.852(m).

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ Rule 1, Rules of Executive Clemency. March 9, 2011.

¹³⁶ Section 940.01, F.S. *Also see* Rule 4 I., Rules of Executive Clemency. March 9, 2011.

¹³⁷ Article IV, Section 8(a), FLA. CONST.

¹³⁸ Annual Report 2009-2010. Florida Parole Commission, p. 23.

Death Penalty Reform Efforts

The capital postconviction process has often been cited as one of the areas that causes the most delays in capital cases.¹³⁹ There are several reasons for this. Delays can result from litigation over public records requests, or from sentencing courts which may not hear or rule on postconviction motions for several months, or sometimes years. Postconviction attorneys often amend their motions to introduce new claims, which, if allowed, require additional time to investigate and respond to. Sometimes these motions improperly attempt to revisit issues that were or could have been resolved at trial or during the first appeal.

In a 1998 Florida Supreme Court opinion reviewing the death penalty of an inmate convicted in 1974, Justice Wells strongly expressed his position that the process needs to be changed, stating that,

I do again state my view that such an extended time period to finally adjudicate these cases is totally unacceptable and is this Court's and the State's prime responsibility to correct. (citation omitted). . . . The courts and the State must be able to do better, and any explanation of why we are unable to do so is insufficient.¹⁴⁰

Numerous reforms have been made over the years in an effort to improve the capital postconviction process. In 1993, the Florida Supreme Court created Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure and adopted the recommendation of the "Florida Supreme Court Committee on Postconviction Relief" to require that postconviction motions be filed within 1-year after the date the direct appeal became final.¹⁴¹ In March of 1999, Chief Justice Harding established by administrative order a Supreme Court Committee on Postconviction Relief in Capital Cases (the "Morris Committee"), to assist the Court in identifying inherent delays in the current postconviction process and recommend improvements.¹⁴² While the Court was considering the Morris Committee's report, the Florida Legislature passed the Death Penalty Reform Act of 2000.

Death Penalty Reform Act of 2000

During a special session in January of 2000, the Legislature passed the Death Penalty Reform Act (DPRA).¹⁴³ DPRA made a number of significant statutory changes to the capital postconviction process. However, on April 14, 2000, the Florida Supreme Court struck down the majority of the provisions of DPRA based on a separation of powers claim.^{144, 145} Specifically,

¹³⁹ See, *In Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.851 (Collateral Relief after Death Sentence Has Been Imposed)*, 626 So. 2d. 198, 199 (Fla. 1993)(stating that the Supreme Court Committee on Postconviction Relief in Capital Cases was created because of the substantial delays in the death penalty postconviction relief process).

¹⁴⁰ *Knight v. State*, 746 So. 2d 423, 439-440 (Fla. 1998). (Wells, J. concurring).

¹⁴¹ *In Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.851 (Collateral Relief after Death Sentence Has Been Imposed)*, 626 So. 2d. 198 (Fla. 1993).

¹⁴² *Amendments to Florida Rules Criminal Procedure 3.851, 3.852, and 3.993*, 772 So. 2d 488 (Fla. 2000).

¹⁴³ Chapter 2000-3, L.O.F.

¹⁴⁴ Article II, Section 3 of the Florida Constitution provides, "The powers of the state government shall be divided into legislative, executive and judicial branches. No person belonging to one branch shall exercise any powers appertaining to either of the other branches unless expressly provided herein." Further, Article V, Section 2 authorizes the Florida Supreme

the Court held that that the “DPRA is an unconstitutional encroachment on the Court’s exclusive power to ‘adopt rules for the practice and procedure in all courts.’”¹⁴⁶ The Court held that the provisions of the DPRA were “procedural” (rather than substantive) and ruled that because the Constitution gives the court the authority to adopt rules of practice and procedure, the Legislature was not permitted to act in this area.

The Court rejected the state’s argument that the deadlines for filing postconviction motions in DPRA were statutes of limitations which are substantive. The Court stated that Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.850 is a “procedural vehicle for the collateral remedy otherwise available by a writ of habeas corpus”¹⁴⁷ and further held that:

Due to the constitutional and quasi-criminal nature of habeas proceedings and the fact that such proceedings are the primary avenue through which convicted defendants are able to challenge the validity of a conviction and sentence, we hold that article V, section 2(a) of the Florida Constitution grants this Court the exclusive authority to set deadlines for postconviction motions.¹⁴⁸

2001 Florida Supreme Court Rule Revisions

Shortly after the DPRA was held unconstitutional, the Florida Supreme Court made a variety of revisions to the rules applicable to postconviction proceedings in capital cases. For example:

- Rule 3.851(b) was added to ensure appointment of postconviction counsel upon the Florida Supreme Court’s issuance of mandate on direct appeal.
- Rule 3.851(c) was added to provide for, among other things, the assignment of a qualified judge within 30 days after mandate issues on direct appeal and status conferences every 90 days after the assignment until the evidentiary hearing has been completed or the motion has been ruled on without a hearing. These status conferences are intended to provide a forum for the timely resolution of public records issues and other preliminary matters.
- Rule 3.851(f) was added to set forth general procedures relating to evidentiary hearings. Most significantly, to require an evidentiary hearing on claims listed in an initial motion as requiring a factual determination. The Court has identified the failure to hold evidentiary hearings on initial motions as a major cause of delay in the capital postconviction process and has determined that, in most cases, requiring an evidentiary hearing on initial motions presenting factually based claims will avoid this cause of delay.¹⁴⁹

Court to “adopt rules of practice and procedure in all courts.” This same section of the constitution authorizes the Legislature to repeal court rules of procedure with a 2/3 vote of the membership of both houses.

¹⁴⁵ *Allen v. Butterworth*, 756 So. 2d 52, 59 (Fla. 2000).

¹⁴⁶ *Id.* at 54.

¹⁴⁷ *Id.* at 61 (citations omitted).

¹⁴⁸ *Id.* at 62.

¹⁴⁹ *Amendments to Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure 3.851, 3.852 and 3.993*, 772 So. 2d 488, 491 (Fla. 2000).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Policies and Procedures in Postconviction Capital Collateral Cases

This bill is the implementing legislation for SJR 1740. That joint resolution authorizes the Legislature, by general law, to govern the postconviction or collateral review of capital cases resulting in a death sentence.

Accordingly, this bill provides procedures to replace court rules governing postconviction or collateral review of capital cases. The purpose of the new procedures is to streamline and further expediency for the postconviction or collateral review of capital cases.

Clemency

Currently, the court is authorized to appoint a public defender, private attorney, or a registry attorney to represent a person who has been convicted and sentenced to death in clemency proceedings. Section 27.5304, F.S., requires appointed attorney to be compensated, up to \$1,000, for attorney's fees and costs incurred in representing the defendant in clemency proceedings. Such compensation is paid out of the General Revenue Fund from funds budgeted to DOC.

The bill removes the court's authorization to appoint, or compensate, a public defender, private attorney, or a registry attorney to represent a person whose application for clemency relief is filed on or after July 1, 2013.

Capital Collateral Regional Counsel (CCRC)

The bill eliminates the registry attorney "pilot program," originally established in 1993, and reestablishes the CCRC in the northern region of the state. The Florida Legislature initiated the pilot program as a replacement to the northern region CCRC.

Postconviction and Collateral Review of Sentences in Capital Cases

The bill amends ss. 27.703, 924.056, and 924.058, F.S., to codify the majority of Rules 3.811, 3.812, 3.850, 3.851, and 3.852, of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, and Rule 9.142, of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure, as they relate to collateral review in capital cases. Differences are indicated below.

Public Records

This bill revises s. 27.7081, F.S., by incorporating the substance of Rule 3.852 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, which addresses public records in capital postconviction proceedings. The bill retains the provision in s. 27.7081, F.S., which requires the Secretary of State to establish and maintain a public records repository to archive capital postconviction public records.

Appointment of Counsel, Judge, and other Preliminary Matters

The bill revises s. 924.056, F.S., to require the CCRC to file a notice of appearance in the trial court or a motion to withdraw based on an actual conflict of interest or other legal ground within 30 days after appointment by the Florida Supreme Court. This departs from Rule 3.851(b)(2) of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, which requires the notice or motion to be filed within 30 days after the issuance of the mandate affirming a judgment and death sentence on direct appeal. The court may not hear motions to withdraw after the 30 days.

The bill specifies that if the defendant requests the court to remove or replace an attorney without good cause, the court must notify the defendant that no further state resources will be expended on representation unless the request is withdrawn.

This bill establishes a more active role for the court in conflict of interest situations. If the CCRC alleges the existence of a conflict of interest in a case, the court must hold a hearing to confirm an actual conflict. If the court confirms the conflict of interest, the court will designate another regional counsel. If regional counsel asserts a conflict of interest, the court will hold another conflict of interest hearing, and appoint a registry attorney if the court finds that an actual conflict exists which will adversely affect the replacement regional counsel's representation.

This bill requires the defendant's trial counsel to produce all information relating to the defendant's case within 45 days after appointment of postconviction counsel.

Form and Content of Postconviction Motions and Time Limits

The defendant must file all postconviction motions within 1 year of final judgment and sentence. Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure authorizes an extension of time past the 1 year limit upon a showing of good cause. The bill does not authorize extensions except in limited circumstances.

The bill requires concurrent filings of petitions for extraordinary relief before the Florida Supreme Court with the initial brief in the appeal of the trial court's order on the initial motion for postconviction relief. If the Governor signs a death warrant before the 1 year time limit expires for postconviction motions, the Florida Supreme Court will grant a stay of execution upon request to allow motions to be heard.

The bill requires all postconviction motions to be fully pled. Such motions may not exceed 75 pages in length, exclusive of attachments.

Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure permits a postconviction motion to be amended within 30 days after a scheduled evidentiary hearing upon a showing of good cause. This bill prohibits the defendant or defense counsel from:

- Raising a claim that trial counsel could have raised, or if properly preserved, counsel could have raised on direct appeal of the judgment and sentence. Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure permits claims that could have been raised at trial or on direct appeal.
- Raising a claim of ineffective assistance of collateral postconviction counsel.

- Amending a motion without court approval. The state must respond to an approved amended filing within 20 days. No amended filings can exceed the 1 year time limit.

Judicial Appointment and Status Conferences

Within 30 days after the issuance of mandate, the chief judge must assign the case to a judge qualified to conduct capital proceedings. The judge must hold a status conference within 90 days after being assigned to the case and at least by the end of every 90 days until the evidentiary hearing is completed. Attorneys may appear electronically, and the defendant's presence is not required.

Evidentiary Hearings

This bill shortens the timeline for filings, responses, and issuance of court orders.

Section 924.055(1), F.S., requires postconviction actions to be resolved within 5 years of sentence. This bill instead requires resolution as quickly as possible.

The clerk must immediately deliver to the chief judge or other assigned judge all motions filed in a postconviction proceeding.

The state must file its answer within 60 days after the filing of an initial postconviction motion. The trial court must hold a case management conference within 30 days after the filing of the state. At the conference, the court must schedule an evidentiary hearing on claims raised by the defendant that require a factual determination, to be held within 90 days. If the court determines that an evidentiary hearing is unnecessary, the court shall within 30 days after the case management conference, deny the motion and provide a written rationale. The trial court must immediately order a hearing transcript after an evidentiary hearing, and the transcript must be filed within 30 days. Within 30 days after receipt of the transcript, the court must issue an order, which is considered the final order for purposes of appeal.

Motions for rehearing must be made within 15 days after the trial court order, and a response must be filed within 10 days. The trial court must issue an order on the motion for rehearing within 15 days after the response. A petitioner may file a notice of appeal with the Florida Supreme Court within 15 days after the final order. This bill prohibits interlocutory appeals.

Successive Motions

The bill creates s. 924.058, F.S., to address procedures relating to successive postconviction motions.

- Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure does not contain any time limitations on the filing of successive postconviction motions. The bill bars successive postconviction motions unless fully pled and filed within 90 days:
 - After the facts giving rise to the claim were discovered or should have been discovered with the exercise of due diligence; or

- After the fundamental constitutional right asserted was established and held to apply retroactively.
- The bill prohibits successive postconviction motions from being filed or considered if filed beyond the timelines described above unless it alleges that postconviction counsel, through neglect, failed to file the motion.
- The bill bars successive postconviction motion claims that could have or should have been raised at trial, on direct appeal, or in the initial postconviction motion.
- The bill prohibits a successive postconviction motion from including a claim of ineffective assistance of postconviction counsel.
- Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure permits a successive postconviction motion to be amended within 30 days after a scheduled evidentiary hearing upon motion and good cause shown. The bill prohibits a successive postconviction motion from being amended beyond the time period established for the filing of the successive motion and requires court approval.
- Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure requires the court to hold a case management conference within 90 days after the filing of the state's answer to a successive postconviction motion. The bill amends s. 924.056, F.S., to change the timeframe to within 30 days after the filing of the state's answer.
- The bill adds a provision to s. 924.056, F.S., specifying that if the court determines that an evidentiary hearing is not necessary and that the defendant's successive postconviction motion is legally insufficient or that the motion, files, and records show that the defendant is not entitled to relief, the court must, within 30 days after the conclusion of the case management conference, deny the successive postconviction motion. The court must include a detailed rationale therefore and attach or reference the portions of the record that will allow for meaningful appellate review of the order denying relief.
- Rule 3.851 of the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure provides that an appeal of a court's ruling on a successive postconviction motion may be filed within 30 days after the entry of the order. The bill changes this timeframe to within 15 days after the entry of the order, and prohibits interlocutory appeals.

Appeal to the Florida Supreme Court

The bill creates s. 924.0581, F.S., which establishes the procedures that must be followed when an initial or successive postconviction motion is appealed to the Florida Supreme Court. The majority of the provisions of s. 924.0581, F.S., mirror those found in Rule 9.142 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.

- The bill includes a provision in s. 924.0581, F.S., which requires the Court, in instances where the lower court denied the initial or successive motion without an evidentiary hearing, to review the case to determine whether the lower court correctly resolved the case without a hearing. If the Court determines that a hearing should have been held, the Court may remand the case for such hearing. The lower court must schedule such hearing within 30 days after the Court's order and conclude the hearing within 90 days after scheduling. The Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure does not contain a similar provision.
- Rule 9.142 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure establishes timeframes in which briefs must be filed, and specifies that if a brief is delinquent, an order to show cause can be

issued and sanctions may be imposed. The bill provides that a brief submitted after the timeframes is barred and cannot be heard.

- Rule 9.142 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure does not establish a specific timeframe in which the Court must hear oral argument - only that oral argument be scheduled after the filing of the defendant's reply brief. The bill requires oral arguments to be scheduled within 30 days after the filing of the defendant's reply brief.
- Rule 9.142 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure does not establish a timeframe in which the Court must ultimately rule on an appeal of an initial or successive postconviction motion. The bill requires the Court to rule within 180 days after oral arguments have concluded, and specifies that if the Court affirms a denial of an action for postconviction relief, the Governor may proceed to issue a warrant for execution.
- In instances in which the Court does not rule within 180 days after oral arguments, the bill requires the Chief Justice of the Court to, within 10 days after the expiration of the 180-day deadline, submit a report to the Legislature explaining why a decision was not timely rendered. Such report must be submitted every 30 days thereafter in which a decision is not rendered.

Reporting Requirements

The bill creates s. 924.0585, F.S., to bar postconviction actions filed in violation of established time limits, specify that all claims raised in these actions are waived, and prohibit a court from hearing these actions. The bill requires the AG to deliver to the Governor and the Legislature a copy of any pleading or order that alleges or adjudicates any claim filed in violation of the established time limits.

Severability

The bill contains a severability clause specifying that if any provision of the act or the application thereof is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

Effective Dates

The bill specifies that postconviction proceedings in every capital case in which the conviction and sentence of death have been affirmed on direct appeal before July 1, 2015, will be governed by the rules and laws in effect immediately prior to the effective date of the bill.

Therefore, the revisions to policy and procedure in capital cases take effect July 1, 2015, contingent on voter approval of SJR 1740 in the general election of 2014. Other provisions in the bill, removing right to counsel in clemency proceedings, eliminating the registry attorney pilot program in capital cases and reinstating the Capital Collateral Regional Counsel in the Northern region of Florida take effect July 1, 2013.

Section Directory

Section 1. Entitles the bill the "Timely Justice Act of 2013."

Section 2. Amends s. 27.40, F.S., relating to court-appointed counsel; circuit registries; minimum requirements; appointment by court.

Section 3. Amends s. 27.51, F.S., relating to duties of public defender.

Section 4. Amends s. 27.51, F.S., relating to duties of public defender.

Section 5. Amends s. 27.511, F.S., relating to offices of criminal conflict and civil regional counsel; legislative intent; qualifications; appointment; duties.

Section 6. Amends s. 27.511, F.S., relating to offices of criminal conflict and civil regional counsel; legislative intent; qualifications; appointment; duties.

Section 7. Amends s. 27.5305, F.S., relating to public defenders; criminal conflict and civil regional counsel; conflict of interest.

Section 8. Amends s. 27.5304, F.S., relating to private court-appointed counsel; compensation; notice.

Section 9. Amends s. 27.701, F.S., relating to capital collateral regional counsel.

Section 10. Reenacts s. 27.702, F.S., relating to duties of the capital collateral regional counsel; reports.

Section 11. Amends s. 27.702, F.S., relating to duties of the capital collateral regional counsel; reports.

Section 12. Amends s. 27.703, F.S., relating to conflict of interest and substitute counsel.

Section 13. Amends s. 27.708, F.S., relating to access to prisoners; compliance with the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure; records requests.

Section 14. Amends s. 27.7081, F.S., relating to capital postconviction public records production.

Section 15. Amends s. 27.7091, F.S., relating to legislative recommendations to Supreme Court; postconviction proceedings; pro bono service credit.

Section 16. Amends s. 27.711, F.S., relating to terms and conditions of appointment of attorneys as counsel in postconviction capital collateral proceedings.

Section 17. Amends s. 27.711, F.S., relating to terms and conditions of appointment of attorneys as counsel in postconviction capital collateral proceedings.

Section 18. Amends s. 922.095, F.S., relating to grounds for death warrant; limitations of actions.

Section 19. Amends s. 922.108, F.S., relating to sentencing orders in capital cases.

Section 20. Amends s. 924.055, F.S., relating to postconviction review in capital cases; legislative findings and intent.

Section 21. Amends s. 924.056, F.S., relating to Commencement of capital postconviction actions for which sentence of death is imposed on or after January 14, 2000; limitations on actions.

Section 22. Amends s. 924.057, F.S., relating to limitation on postconviction cases in which the death sentence was imposed before January 14, 2000.

Section 23. Amends s. 924.058, F.S., relating to capital postconviction claims.

Section 24. Creates s. 924.0581, F.S., relating to capital postconviction appeals to the Florida Supreme Court.

Section 25. Creates s. 924.0585, F.S., relating to capital postconviction proceedings; reporting requirements.

Section 26. Amends s. 924.0585, F.S., relating to capital postconviction proceedings; reporting requirements.

Section 27. Amends s. 924.059, F.S., relating to time limitations and judicial review in capital postconviction actions.

Section 28. Creates s. 924.0591, F.S., relating to incompetence to proceed in capital postconviction proceedings.

Section 29. Creates s. 924.0592, F.S., relating to capital postconviction proceedings after a death warrant has been issued.

Section 30. Creates s. 924.0593, F.S., relating to insanity at the time of execution.

Section 31. Creates s. 924.0594, F.S., relating to dismissal of postconviction proceedings.

Section 32. Provides a severability clause.

Section 33. Provides effective dates.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Capital Postconviction Proceedings

The bill codifies many of the current procedures that relate to capital postconviction proceedings. However, the bill modifies the rules or creates provisions designed to make the postconviction process more efficient. For example, the bill:

- Sets standards for conflict of interest determinations;
- Bars postconviction motions that are not filed within statutorily established timeframes or that are not fully pled;
- Prohibits courts from granting extensions of time at various stages of the postconviction process;
- Shortens timeframes relating to case management conferences and the amendment of postconviction motions;
- Establishes timeframes in which the Florida Supreme Court must hear oral arguments;
- Requires the Florida Supreme Court to rule on an appeal of an initial or successive postconviction motion within 180 days after oral arguments have concluded; and
- Creates reporting requirements that hold courts accountable for delays in the postconviction process.

To the extent that these provisions shorten the postconviction process, they will likely result in a cost savings to the state.

Death Row Inmates

Death row inmates are currently housed at Union Correctional Institution and Florida State Prison. The average per diem for inmates housed at these facilities is \$67.58 and

\$61.35, respectively, per day. It should be noted that these figures are not specific to death row inmates but instead apply to the entire inmate populations at those facilities.

On average, Florida death row inmates spend 13.22 years on death row prior to execution. Using the per diem figures above, Florida spends anywhere between \$326,093 and \$296,032 housing a death row inmate prior to his or her execution. To the extent, the bill shortens the postconviction process and thereby the time an inmate spends on death row prior to execution, the bill would have a positive fiscal impact on DOC.

Clemency

Currently, the court is authorized to appoint a public defender, private attorney, or a registry attorney to represent a person who has been convicted and sentenced to death in clemency proceedings. Section 27.5304, F.S., requires appointed attorney to be allowed compensation, not to exceed \$1,000, for attorney's fees and costs incurred in representing the defendant in clemency proceedings. Such compensation is paid out of the General Revenue Fund from funds budgeted to DOC.

The bill removes the court's authorization to appoint a public defender, private attorney, or a registry attorney to represent a person who has been convicted and sentenced to death in clemency proceedings in instances where the application for clemency is filed on or after July 1, 2013. This will likely result in a savings to DOC and the public defenders.

Capital Collateral Regional Counsel

The bill eliminates the registry attorney "pilot program" and reestablishes the CCRC in the northern region of the state.

For FY 13/14, the base budget for the Middle and Southern Region CCRC offices is \$7,020,537. In FY 2011/2012, the Department of Financial Services spent \$1.6 million compensating registry attorneys, who are paid based on the amounts set forth in s. 27.711, F.S. (note that this figure represents the amount paid to registry attorneys appointed in postconviction proceedings throughout the state, not just those in the northern region).

Reestablishing the CCRC in the northern region will likely have a negative fiscal impact on state government expenditures. However, the extent of impact is unknown.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
