

Kathleen McLeroy Authors Op-Ed Column for Tampa Bay Times: Elections Matter and Access to Justice Issues Should Count

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Carlton Fields Tampa Shareholder and Past President of the Florida Bar Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) public charity established to foster law related public interest programs, authored an op-ed column for the *Tampa Bay Times*. The column, “Elections matter and access to justice issues should count,” presents readers with facts and figures about access to justice in the state of Florida. According to McLeroy’s research, Florida is one of only two states that do not have state funding for civil legal aid. McLeroy advocates that Floridians “should encourage our politicians and candidates for statewide and local office to address issues of poverty and access to justice in their campaigns.”

Meaningful access to justice promotes and protects the Rule of Law, which is essential to a strong and stable democracy. When people lose faith in their ability to seek redress from their legal system, they take to the streets and sometimes resort to violence. When indigent Floridians face criminal charges, they are guaranteed legal counsel. However, Floridians with a civil legal issue must go it alone if they cannot afford a lawyer. Simply put, low-income people facing legal issues fall farther behind. It is unfair that our justice system is only accessible by those with enough money to endure the process. Merit, not money, should be the deciding factor when it comes to justice.

Read the [column](#).

Featuring



Kathleen S. McLeroy