

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wansley Walters, Former Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice,
Joins Ballard Partners' Tallahassee Office**

TALLAHASSEE – Ballard Partners, Florida's leading governmental affairs firm, today announced the addition of Wansley Walters, a nationally recognized leader in juvenile justice, as a new partner in the Tallahassee office. Walters will co-chair the firm's public policy team with a strategic focus on children, youth and justice issues.

"Wansley is a highly-respected voice in Florida government and she's a proven leader with a track record of success," said Brian Ballard, president of Ballard Partners. "We are excited to bring her level of expertise and knowledge to our clients and their issues."

Walters was appointed by Governor Rick Scott in 2011 to serve as Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Under her leadership, Florida saw the lowest juvenile crime rate in 30 years. As the head of DJJ, Walters launched the Roadmap to System Excellence, which transformed the juvenile justice system in our state and emphasized the importance of prevention services. These reforms were so successful in reducing juvenile recidivism that they were unanimously passed by the Florida Legislature during the 2014 Legislative Session and signed into law by Governor Scott. Florida has since become a national model for juvenile justice. Walters also currently serves as Chair of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, a position she was appointed to by Governor Scott.

"It is an honor to join one of the most prestigious governmental affairs firms in Florida," said Walters. "I have been an advocate for Florida's children and families my entire career and I look forward to continuing that work with Brian, his team and the clients at Ballard Partners."

Walters previously served as the Director of the Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department for 14 years before being tapped by Governor Scott to lead the statewide agency. During her tenure as Director of the Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department, Miami-Dade had the lowest youth incarceration rate in the state and also boasted one of Florida's lowest juvenile crime rates. Walters developed and led reforms that resulted in a savings of more than \$30 million annually, a 51 percent reduction in juvenile arrests and an 80 percent reduction in juvenile recidivism. Prior to that role, Walters worked at the Miami-Dade Police Department as the Special Projects Administrator and then as Special Assistant to the Director of the Miami-Dade Police Department.

Walters has presented at numerous state, national and international conferences on juvenile justice. She received the 2012 Juvenile Justice Without Borders International Award presented by the International Juvenile Justice Observatory during the International Youth Justice Convention in London. Walters received her Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communications from the University of South Florida.

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Ballard Partners has been named by state and national publications as the leading government affairs firm in the Sunshine State. The Florida-based lobbying firm, with offices in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, West Palm Beach, Miami, Orlando and Tampa, combines extensive experience in government affairs with unwavering advocacy to maximize results for the clients they serve. Visit <http://ballard-partners.com> for more information.