

FROM THE OFFICE OF
GOVERNOR
RON DESANTIS

@GOVRONDESANTIS | WWW.FLGOV.COM | 850-717-9282 | MEDIA@EOG.MYFLORIDA.COM

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Contact: Dave Vasquez
(727) 504-4676

David.Vasquez@eog.myflorida.com

What They Are Saying: Florida Leaders React to Governor Ron DeSantis' Appointment of Barbara Lagoa to the Florida Supreme Court

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Florida Third District Court of Appeals Judge Barbara Lagoa to the Florida Supreme Court, replacing retiring Justice R. Fred Lewis. Justice Lagoa is the first Cuban American woman in history to serve on the Florida Supreme Court. Here is what state leaders and stakeholders are saying:

“It’s an honor to join Governor DeSantis at the historic Freedom Tower, which has served as a beacon of hope for so many. I am excited that the Governor has appointed such an extraordinarily well qualified candidate to the Florida Supreme Court. Justice Barbara Lagoa embodies the work ethic and values of the South Florida community. She will be an outstanding jurist who will uphold our constitution and the rule of law.”

- Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez

“I appreciated the Governor’s comments during his inauguration yesterday in which he stressed the proper role of the judiciary, and I am confident today’s appointment of Justice Lagoa is in line with the standards the Governor laid out during his remarks. I share the Governor’s concern that in recent years the power of the judicial branch has extended beyond its limited constitutional responsibility, in many cases eroding the authority of the legislative branch. I believe democracy is at its best when each branch of government exercises both authority and restraint at the appropriate time. That concept was certainly at the heart of the many of the comments we heard from the Governor yesterday, and echoed again this morning with the appointment of Justice Lagoa. I offer my congratulations to Justice Lagoa and wish her well as she begins this exciting new role serving our state on the Florida Supreme Court. I also congratulate Governor DeSantis on his first Supreme Court appointment.”

- Florida Senate President Bill Galvano

"Governor DeSantis has begun his term with a judicial homerun. Justice Barbara Lagoa is eminently qualified to serve the state of Florida on the Supreme Court. Whether it was graduating from Columbia Law school, serving as an Assistant United States Attorney, or serving as a judge on the Third District Court of Appeal, Justice Lagoa's commitment

to this country and our Constitution should serve as an example for all Floridians. Today, one of Hialeah's own sits on the Florida Supreme Court. And freedom is more secure because of it."

- Florida House of Representatives Speaker Jose Oliva

"For the past 12 years, Judge Lagoa has served our community and judiciary as the first Cuban-American woman on the Third District Court of Appeal. CABA is very proud of all her accomplishments and her new role in the Florida Supreme Court. ... As a fellow daughter of Cuban exiles, I am excited that Governor DeSantis made such a wise choice for the Florida Supreme Court. Judge Lagoa has always set a bright example for the legal community and has an impeccable record as a jurist."

- Maria D. Garcia, President-Elect of the Cuban American Bar Association (CABA)

"Governor DeSantis' appointment of Justice Lagoa as the 87th justice to the Florida Supreme Court is the first step towards fulfilling his promise to appoint judges who will interpret the law and not legislate from the bench. The Florida Justice Reform Institute, on behalf of the business community, has long called for judges who are textualists -- who will say what the law is, and not what they think it should be -- and who show deference to the Legislature as the rightful policymaking branch of government. Justice Lagoa brings these exact qualities and an impressive record to the Court at a critical time. The Florida Justice Reform Institute applauds Governor DeSantis' on his wise and thoughtful choice that will have a profoundly positive impact on Florida for a long time."

- William Large, President of the Florida Justice Reform Institute

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