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LEROY COLLINS INSTITUTE ANALYZES SEGREGATION IN FLORIDA SCHOOLS WITH NEW REPORT

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The LeRoy Collins Institute (LCI) today issued its latest report, *Patterns of Resegregation in Florida's Schools*, which analyzes the enrollment changes and segregation trends in Florida public schools and charter schools. The report was issued at a Separate is Not Equal Conference hosted by LCI and Real Talk Coalition, which assessed the current state of racial segregation in Florida schools and discussed implications of the report.

The report examines patterns of resegregation in Florida's schools since 1994. It concludes that while our state has become much more diverse over that time, the schools have become more segregated. The percentage of intensely segregated schools (those with 90-100 percent non-white students) doubled over the past two decades to 20% of the schools in the state.

Similarly, double segregation – segregation by both race and poverty – is increasing in Florida. Low-income students are likely to be in highly segregated schools: Some 83 percent of low income students are in intensely segregated schools. Intergroup contact is limited, meaning students of color or living in poverty are less likely to be exposed to white middle-class students, and vice versa.

“Florida is the third-largest state in the country and has the most diverse student body in our state’s history, yet one-fifth of our public schools are intensely segregated,” said Dr. Carol Weissert, Florida State University (FSU) political science professor and LCI director. “Similar segregation is evident for low-income students. All Floridians deserve equal access to a quality education, regardless of race or economic standing. We hope this report ~~change and~~ serves as a catalyst for ~~change and~~ encourages additional dialogue and helps chart future actions on this important subject.”

The report finds:

- Florida experienced a rapid increase in the enrollment of Hispanic students over the past three decades, while the proportion of white students dropped dramatically. During the same period, the black share remained the same and the Asian share

increased slightly. However, enrollment trends in Florida's public schools do not reflect these demographic changes.

- More than one-third of Hispanic students and one-third of black students attend an intensely segregated K-12 school in Florida.
- Highly segregated schools are found in metropolitan urban areas of Florida, with the highest concentration in Miami and other segregated schools in Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville and Tallahassee.
- Black and Hispanic students are more likely to attend school with students living in poverty than white and Asian students.
- Charter schools and public schools are similar in terms of racial makeup, but charter schools tend to enroll more Hispanic students and fewer white students when compared to public schools.

“Former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins showed tremendous courage spearheading our state’s desegregation efforts, but much remains to be done to eliminate segregation in our schools,” said Lester Abberger, chair of the LCI board. “The implications of segregation in Florida’s K-12 schools are severe, and further research should be conducted to help us close the opportunity gap between students of color living in poverty and their peers.”

This report was written by Dr. Gary Orfield and Jongyeon (Joy) Ee. Dr. Orfield is a distinguished research professor of education, law, political science and urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the co-director of The Civil Rights Project at UCLA. Ee is a postdoctoral researcher at The Civil Rights Project at UCLA.

The report is being issued 60 years after Gov Collins issued a courageous statement disavowing the legislature’s passage of an resolution saying the state was not going to implement the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision calling for desegregation of the nation’s schools.

For more than 20 years, LCI has studied and promoted creative solutions to key private and public issues. Beginning in 2005, the Institute published several reports in a series called, Tough Choices: Shaping Florida’s Future. These publications provided an in-depth analysis of Florida tax and spending policy. Recent research produced another series, Tough Choices Facing Florida’s Governments, which focused on retirement benefits, including pension plans, health benefits and other post-retirement benefits, as well as ethics policy. This latest report is the first to focus on trends in school resegregation.

To access a complete version of *Patterns of Resegregation in Florida’s Schools*, please visit XX.

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About the LeRoy Collins Institute: Established in 1988, the LeRoy Collins Institute is a nonpartisan, statewide policy organization which studies and promotes creative solutions to key private and public issues facing the people of Florida and the nation. The Institute, located in Tallahassee at Florida State University, is affiliated and works in collaboration with the State University System of Florida. Named in

honor of former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins, the Institute is governed by a distinguished board of directors, chaired by Lester Abberger. Other board members include executives, local elected officials, and other professionals from throughout the state.