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DJJ COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN

(ATLANTA - GA) The Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice is pleased to announce the election of a new Board Chairman during the regular meeting of the DJJ Board on Thursday, March 22, 2012. Commissioner L. Gale Buckner confirmed the election of Mr. Avery D. Niles of Clermont, Georgia as the new Chairman of the DJJ Board. Chairman Niles will serve until June of 2014, at which time he is eligible to be re-elected by the Board to another two-year term.

Niles fills the post formerly held by Board Member Ed Risler. Former Chairman Risler stepped down this month after Governor Nathan Deal named a new Board appointee to fill Risler's expired term. Risler's term officially lapsed last summer following more than ten years of service with the DJJ Board and after working with five DJJ Commissioners. Commissioner Buckner commended Risler for his decade of service as Board Chairman.

The new Chairman represents the Board's ninth Georgia Congressional District. Niles is a 23-year veteran of the Hall County Sheriff's Department serving as warden of the Hall County Correctional Institution. He previously served as commander of the Hall County Detention Center.

Chairman Niles is the third vice president of the Georgia Prison and Warden's Association and a trustee of the Gainesville College Foundation Board. He is a member of the Georgia and National Sheriff's Associations, the North Georgia Investigator's Association, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Peace Officers Association of Georgia. The new Board Chairman is a graduate of Leadership Hall County, the Georgia Police Academy and the FBI National Academy. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in mortuary science while attending the Georgia law enforcement Command College in Columbus. He serves as a deacon at Antioch Baptist Church. He and his wife, Charlene, have one daughter and reside in Clermont.

As Chairman, Niles is elected to help guide Board Members as they serve in their advisory capacity to DJJ, providing leadership and counsel to the Commissioner to help improve Georgia's juvenile justice system. "I am honored to serve in this capacity," said Chairman Niles. "I want to thank the Board for their confidence and I will work diligently to maintain their trust." The Board is made up of 15 members representing each Congressional District in the state. DJJ Board members are appointed by the Governor and then confirmed by the State Senate.

Commissioner Buckner congratulated Chairman Niles who was recently appointed by Governor Deal as a Board Member in July of 2011. "The Georgia Juvenile Justice mission is to protect and serve the citizens of Georgia by holding young offenders accountable for their actions so they can become contributing members of society," the Commissioner said. "We look forward to making real changes in the lives of our young offenders with help from a smooth transition of Board leadership ahead," said the Commissioner.

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