



MALCOM THOMPSON
CLERK OF THE COURT
OSCEOLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

PRESS RELEASE

April 30, 2009

Effective May 1, 2009, VISA credit and debit cards will no longer be accepted by the Clerk of the Court as payment for any obligation. We know this will result in great inconvenience to many customers, but our actions are caused solely by and are the fault of VISA USA, Inc.

VISA regulations prohibit government agencies such as the Clerk's Office from charging a convenience fee to use their VISA debit or credit cards, even though such fees are expressly permitted by law (see Florida Statute s. 215.322). This statute allows the Clerk's Office to assess fees to those who choose to use a credit card without creating an additional burden on customers who choose to pay in cash.

In essence, VISA, a credit card company larger than all others in the USA combined, is seeking to curtail the ability of government agencies to assess such authorized fees, and instead have all other taxpayers, including those who pay cash, subsidize their credit cards operations. "It's just not fair to allow this," said Clerk of Court Malcom Thompson. "I encourage people to write to VISA with any complaints they have," he added.

Private businesses are, of course, free to allow their customers to use VISA cards, and all customers who pay cash understand that this is one of the prices they pay for doing business with those concerns. As a governmental agency responsible to the public, the Clerk has an obligation to make sure that one group (those who pay cash) does not subsidize another (those who use VISA).

MasterCard, American Express and Discover will continue to be accepted by the Clerk's Office at the counter and online through our website at www.osceolaclerk.com.