

STATE OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 19-185

WHEREAS, the Honorable MELISSA NELSON, State Attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida, has advised Governor RON DESANTIS that the current public defender in the Fourth Judicial Circuit sent a civil demand letter to former public defender Matt Shirk regarding monies owed while he was public defender. In July 2019, The Auditor General released an Operational Audit Report which outlines alleged conduct that may warrant further review and investigation regarding the Public Defender's Office from July 2015 through December 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable MELISSA NELSON has also advised the Governor that, prior to being elected as state attorney, she testified in proceedings held before the Grand Jury investigating Matt Shirk; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable MELISSA NELSON, to avoid a conflict of interest or any appearance of impropriety, has voluntarily disqualified himself and has requested the executive assignment of another State Attorney with respect to the investigation and prosecution of this case and all related matters; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable WILLIAM P. CERVONE, State Attorney for the Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida, has agreed to accept an executive assignment in this matter; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the State of Florida and of the ends of justice that the Honorable WILLIAM P. CERVONE discharge the duties of the Honorable MELISSA NELSON, pursuant to section 27.14, Florida Statutes.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RON DESANTIS, Governor of Florida, in obedience to my solemn constitutional duty to “take care that the laws be faithfully executed,” and pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the State of Florida, issue the following Executive Order, effective immediately:

Section 1.

The Honorable WILLIAM P. CERVONE, State Attorney for the Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida, referred to as the “Assigned State Attorney,” is assigned to discharge the duties of the Honorable MELISSA NELSON, State Attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida, as they relate to the investigation, prosecution, and all matters related to Matt Shirk.

Section 2.

The Assigned State Attorney or one or more Assistant State Attorneys and Investigators, who have been designated by the Assigned State Attorney, shall proceed immediately to the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida, and are vested with the authority to perform the duties prescribed herein.

Section 3.

All residents of the Fourth Judicial Circuit are requested, and all public officials are directed, to cooperate and render whatever assistance is necessary to the Assigned State Attorney, so that justice may be served.

Section 4.

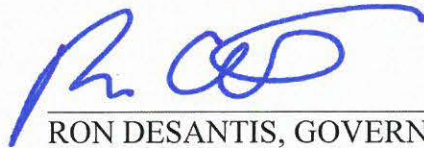
The period of this Executive Assignment shall be for one (1) year, to and including August 21, 2020.

Section 5.

The Assigned State Attorney shall notify the Governor on or before July 21, 2020, if additional time is required.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, this 21st day of August, 2019.



RON DESANTIS, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:



SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA