

STATE OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 20-141

WHEREAS, the Honorable WILLIAM P. CERVONE, State Attorney for the Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida, has advised Governor RON DESANTIS that Thomas William Barnes, Jr., has a pending violation of probation; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable MELISSA W. NELSON, State Attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida handled the original case under Executive Order 17-316 for which the defendant was sentenced to probation; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable WILLIAM P. CERVONE has also advised the Governor that the original conflict continues to exist as Thomas William Barnes, Jr., is related to a frequent witness for the State in child sexual assault cases; and

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

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 Eighth Judicial Circuit of Florida, and are vested with the authority to perform the duties prescribed herein.

Section 3.

All residents of the Eighth 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 June 15, 2021.

Section 5.

The Assigned State Attorney shall notify the Governor on or before May 15, 2021, 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 15th day of June, 2020.



RON DESANTIS, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:



SECRETARY OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
2020 JUN 15 PM 1:15

FILED