

STATE OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 20-298

WHEREAS, the Honorable DENNIS WARD, State Attorney for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida, has advised Governor RON DESANTIS that a complaint has been made against Eddie Martinez, who was running for Monroe County District 3 County Commission seat, alleging that Mr. Martinez violated section 104.011, Florida Statutes, or similar statutes, for false swearing and/or false voter registration; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable DENNIS WARD has also advised the Governor that the complainant, Monroe County Mayor and County Commissioner Heather Carruthers was the incumbent in this race and was Mr. Martinez's opponent, that Mayor Carruthers exercises significant authority over the county budget for the state attorney's office, that Mr. Martinez won the seat in a close race which required a recount, and that the state attorney has socially interacted with Mr. Martinez and his wife on a number of occasions; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable DENNIS WARD, 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 KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, State Attorney for the Eleventh 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 KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE discharge the duties of the Honorable DENNIS WARD, 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 KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, State Attorney for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, referred to as the “Assigned State Attorney,” is assigned to discharge the duties of the Honorable DENNIS WARD, State Attorney for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida, as they relate to the investigation, prosecution, and all matters related to Eddie Martinez.

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

Section 3.

All residents of the Sixteenth 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.

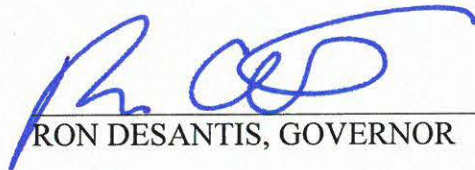
The period of this Executive Assignment shall be for one (1) year, to and including December 8, 2021.

Section 5.

The Assigned State Attorney shall notify the Governor on or before November 8, 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 8th day of December, 2020.



RON DESANTIS, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:



SECRETARY OF STATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

FILED