



**THE FLORIDA SENATE**  
**SENATOR BILL GALVANO**  
*President*

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Senators  
**FROM:** Bill Galvano  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Executive Suspensions, Special Master Appointments  
**DATE:** January 24, 2019

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As you are aware, the Senate is in possession of three executive suspensions made by Governor DeSantis.

- Ms. Mary Beth Jackson, Okaloosa County School Superintendent – Executive Order of Suspension, Number 19-13
- Mr. Scott J. Israel, Broward County Sheriff – Executive Order of Suspension, Number 19-14
- Ms. Susan Bucher, Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections – Executive Order of Suspension, Number 19-19

The Senate informed each suspended official of the Senate's receipt of the Governor's suspension action and inquired whether it is the intention of the suspended official to resign from office or request a hearing. The only response received by the Senate at this time is from Superintendent Jackson.

Superintendent Jackson responded to the Senate stating her intention to exercise her right to a hearing. As such and in accordance with the procedure outlined in Senate Rule 12 and in consultation with Rules Chair Benacquisto, I have appointed former Representative Dudley Goodlette to serve as Special Master regarding the suspension of Superintendent Jackson. Representative Goodlette will conduct a hearing on the merits of the suspension and submit an advisory report, which I will then refer to the Committee on Rules for consideration.

I served with Representative Goodlette in the Florida House of Representatives and know him to be a person of tremendous integrity who will carefully evaluate the facts of the case and provide a fair and impartial evaluation for our consideration. Representative Goodlette is a former House Rules Chair and also served as Chief of Staff to Speaker Cretul during the term I served as House Rules Chair. In those years, the House was confronted with several challenging matters, and I

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could always count on Representative Goodlette to offer an independent and objective point of view that enabled House Members to make their own informed decisions.

Should either Sheriff Israel or Supervisor Bucher formally request a hearing, my intention is to appoint Representative Goodlette as Special Master regarding those suspensions as well.

In selecting Representative Goodlette for this important role, I took into consideration his personal history in the legislative process. I am aware that as a former member of the Legislature, Representative Goodlette has weighed in on some of the issues at the root of the allegations contained in the Executive Orders of Suspension. I am also aware he served in the Legislature with individuals who could be involved in these proceedings, including Supervisor Bucher and current Senators. However, I believe his familiarity with the legislative process, his reputation for fairness and civility, and my own personal observations of his abilities to manage challenging and high profile situations make Representative Goodlette the right choice to serve the Senate in this important role.

As you may be aware, the Senate is also in possession of an Executive Order by Governor Scott suspending Hernando County Commissioner Nicholas W. Nicholson (Executive Order of Suspension, Number 18-121.) Commissioner Nicholson was suspended last April when he was charged with several misdemeanor offenses. He plead to those offenses last November. Should Commissioner Nicholson request a hearing, my intention is to appoint Ms. Christie Letarte, Senate Special Counsel, to serve as Special Master.

While there is no set timeframe for these hearings as a Special Master must work with the parties to define the issues and set the hearings, all possible efforts will be exerted to bring these matters to conclusion by the end of the 2019 Session.

As we move forward with this important constitutional responsibility, I encourage each of you to read the Executive Orders and follow the process so you are prepared when these matters reach the Senate floor. As I have mentioned previously, because we are tasked by Florida's Constitution to sit in judgment of the merits of a suspension, Senators should refrain from speaking publicly about the merits or substance of any executive suspension.

Thank you for your attention to this important responsibility of the Senate.