

August 31, 2023

Nathan Ochsner, Clerk of Court

By Deputy Clerk 

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF
APPOINTMENT OF
MAGISTRATE JUDGE
MERIT SELECTION PANEL

§
§
§
§

SPECIAL ORDER NO. H-2023-2

ORDER

In connection with the proposed reappointment of United States Magistrate Judge Dena Hanovice Palermo for the Southern District of Texas serving in the Houston Division, the Court appoints a Merit Selection Panel as required by § 6.03(b) of the Regulations of the Judicial Conference of the United States establishing procedures for such reappointments.

Under 28 U.S.C. § 631 and Regulations issued by the Judicial Conference on the appointment of Magistrate Judges, the Merit Selection Panel will also consider applicants and recommend nominees to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Magistrate Judge Sam Sheldon, effective December 30, 2023.

The Merit Selection Panel will be guided by the standards described in the pamphlet, "The Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges," published in October 2016 by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. The Clerk will make a copy available to each Panel member.

The Merit Selection Panel consists of the following persons:

Richard F. Callaway, Jr, Chair

Riva Collins, M.D. (Non-Attorney)

David Adler

Ashlee Grant

Ileana Blanco

Joseph Grinstein

Shauna Clark

Amy Hefley

Nancy Johnson

Brian Pidcock

Karima Maloney

Andres Soto

Andra Mulder (Non-Attorney)

Gregory Ulmer

As to the proposed reappointment of Magistrate Judge Palermo, the Clerk of Court has made a public announcement that her current term of office is due to expire on March 8, 2024. The public is invited to comment on her proposed reappointment by September 6, 2023. The Merit Selection Panel will thereafter submit to this Court its recommendation as to whether Judge Palermo should be reappointed to another term as United States Magistrate Judge in the Houston Division of the Southern District of Texas. The recommendation shall be filed no later than November 6, 2023. The Merit Selection Panel shall review the incumbent's performance in office as a magistrate judge. It should consider comments received from members of the bar and the public, and any other pertinent evidence as to Judge Palermo's character, judgment, legal ability, temperament, and commitment to equal justice under the law. An interview with the Southern District of Texas Magistrate Judge Committee and Judge Palermo is also generally considered to be useful to the Panel.

As to the selection of a new Magistrate Judge in the Houston Division, the Clerk of Court has made a public announcement inviting qualified applicants to apply. Applications are due by September 22, 2023. As required under the Regulations, the Panel will prepare and submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Court no later than November 22, 2023. Except for its report to the Court, all interviews, communications, and deliberations about the applicants must remain confidential within the Panel. Unsolicited contact with the Panel members regarding applicants is discouraged by the Court.

All Panel members are advised that the Regulations of the Judicial Conference of the United States Establishing Standards and Procedures for the Appointment and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges restrict former merit selection panel members from being considered for a magistrate judge position one year from the application deadline for the position and the earlier of either (1) the date when the panel on which the former member served submitted its report to the Court, or (2) the date when the former member resigned from the panel, unless there is a waiver to the restriction by the Judicial Conference Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System granted on an individual case basis.

Signed August 31, 2023.



RANDY CRANE
CHIEF JUDGE