

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR PASCO AND PINELLAS COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2023-023 PA/PI-CIR

**RE: ASSIGNMENT OF CASES INVOLVING THE HAGUE CONVENTION ON  
THE CIVIL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION**

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (“Hague Convention”) is a mechanism for parents seeking the return of children who have been wrongfully removed or retained from the child’s country of habitual residence. The Hague Convention is not an extradition remedy, but is a civil remedy for abduction.

In 1988, the United States codified the terms of the Hague Convention in 42 U.S.C. § 11601, which is known as the International Child Abduction Remedies Act. In 2002, the Florida Legislature recognized the Hague Convention and enacted sections 61.524 and 61.525, Florida Statutes.

On April 12, 2019, the Florida Supreme Court published Administrative Order AOSC19-19 which requires the chief judge of each judicial circuit to designate a judge with primary responsibility for handling Hague Convention cases filed within the circuit.

The Honorable David Ellis currently serves as the Family Law Division Administrative Judge for Pasco and Pinellas Counties. The Family Law Division includes Unified Family Court.

To create a unified process of how Hague Convention cases are handled, and to fulfill the requirements set forth by the Supreme Court of Florida, and in accordance with Article V, section 2, Florida Constitution, Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, and section 43.26, Florida Statutes, it is

**ORDERED:**

1. In conformity with AOSC 19-19, Judge Ellis is hereby designated as the judge with primary responsibility for handling Hague Convention cases within the Sixth Judicial Circuit.
2. Any judge who receives a case or motion involving the Hague Convention, the International Child Abduction Remedies Act, or any case relating to sections 61.524 and 61.525 of the Florida Statutes shall notify Judge Ellis immediately.
3. In the event that Judge Ellis is not available to handle a specific Hague Convention matter within the time constraints presented, as the Family Law Division Administrative Judge, Judge Ellis will designate another judge who shall rule on the matter until such time as Judge Ellis is able to address any other matter relating to sections 61.524 and 61.525, Florida Statutes.

4. No cases are to be reassigned based upon this Administrative Order. The case should only be transferred or reassigned in order to promote the efficient administration of justice.

Administrative Order No. 2019-027 PA/PI-CIR is hereby rescinded.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers, at Clearwater, Pinellas County, Florida this \_\_\_\_\_ day of July 2023.

ORIGINAL SIGNED ON JULY 27, 2023  
BY SHAWN CRANE, CHIEF JUDGE

cc: All Judges  
The Honorable Bruce Bartlett, State Attorney  
The Honorable Sara Mollo, Public Defender  
The Honorable Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pasco County  
The Honorable Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pinellas County  
Jennifer Parker, Trial Courts Administrator  
Ngozi Acholonu, Assistant Regional Counsel  
Michele Emmerman, Director of Administrative Services, Pasco County  
Law Enforcement Agencies, Pasco and Pinellas Counties  
Bar Associations, Pasco and Pinellas Counties  
Law Libraries, Pasco and Pinellas Counties