

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**September 30, 2022**

The United States District Court, Southern District of Florida, announced today that Panayotta “Penny” Diane Augustin-Birch has been selected by the Court’s District Judges to be appointed United States Magistrate Judge. Ms. Augustin-Birch will fill the magistrate judgeship position vacated upon the retirement of United States Magistrate Judge Lurana S. Snow.

Ms. Augustin-Birch earned her undergraduate degree from Florida Atlantic University in 1997 and her law degree from Thurgood Marshall School of Law in 2000. Ms. Augustin-Birch is an Illinois native and grew up in south Florida in Coral Springs.

From 2008 until the present, Ms. Augustin-Birch has been an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the Federal Public Defender’s Office in the Southern District of Florida. Before joining the Federal Public Defender’s Office, Ms. Augustin-Birch was an Assistant Public Defender in the Law Office of the Public Defender for the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit in Broward County, Florida.

The announcement of Ms. Augustin-Birch’s selection culminates a broad search process that began in February 2022. The Court appointed a selection panel, comprised of leaders in the legal community as well as non-lawyers in the community, to assist with the selection process. Fifty-two well-qualified individuals applied. The selection panel reviewed all 52 submissions and elected to interview 15 candidates in person. Following these interviews, the selection panel recommended eight finalists to the Court. The District Judges interviewed the eight finalists in May of this year. The Court selected Ms. Augustin-Birch to fill the vacant magistrate judgeship. Ms. Augustin-Birch’s selection was not previously announced pending completion of FBI and IRS background investigation reports, as is standard to the appointment process. The procedures followed by the Court in this process are consistent with those approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States and documented in the Administrative Office of the United States Courts’ publication entitled The Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges, *Judges Information Series No. 2*.

After an informal swearing in, Magistrate Judge Augustin-Birch will assume her duties at the United States Federal Building and Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Florida effective September 30, 2022. A formal investiture ceremony will be scheduled at a later date.

Please contact Angela E. Noble, Court Administrator • Clerk of Court, at (305) 523-5001 if you have any questions.