

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

## GOVERNOR MURPHY CONVENES THE CRIMINAL SENTENCING AND DISPOSITION COMMISSION

### *Announces Two Appointments to the Commission*

**East Orange** - Governor Phil Murphy today announced that he is convening the Criminal Sentencing and Disposition Commission, created by the Legislature, to examine racial and ethnic disparities in the state's criminal justice system.

"New Jersey has the nation's worst disparity in the rates of incarceration between black and white offenders," Governor Murphy said. "We can and must do better. A Criminal Sentencing and Disposition Commission can undertake the important review of our sentencing laws and recommend reforms necessary to ensure a stronger, fairer, and more just state."

In 2009, the Legislature established the 13-member Commission. But, under Governor Christie's administration, members were never appointed and the Commission failed to meet.

In addition to reconstituting the Commission, Governor Murphy also announced the appointment of two members: former Chief Justice Deborah Poritz and Jiles Ship. Poritz served as both as Attorney General of New Jersey and Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court. Ship is the former president of the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives and a current member of the New Jersey Police Training Commission, and previously served as a member of the Edison Police Department.

Governor Murphy is sending a letter to Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, and Minority Leaders Kean and Bramnick announcing the appointment of Poritz and Ship. Legislative leaders will also appoint four members to the Commission.

"We must make sure that New Jersey's criminal justice system adheres to the basic principles of fairness, proportionality and public safety," said Senate President Sweeney. "Sound sentencing policies and a deliberative review of the standards that help determine what sentences are imposed are important to a judicial system that doesn't just aspire to our ideals of justice, but meets them. This Commission will serve a role in identifying and correcting any racial or ethnic injustices in the system. Justice must be free of bias to maintain the trust and confidence of the people."

"I appreciate Governor Murphy reconstituting this important Commission," said Assembly Speaker Coughlin. "Racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system have plagued this state for far too long, and that must change. We're finally taking steps toward a more just New Jersey."

In addition to members appointed by Governor Murphy and legislative leaders, the Commission will also include the Attorney General, the Public Defender, the Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, the Chairman of the State Parole Board, the President of the New Jersey County Prosecutors Association, and the President of the New Jersey Bar Association. Named officials all have the option of appointing a designee to serve in their place.

**The Commission will issue a report to Governor Murphy and the Legislature within one year of its first meeting.**

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# Governor Phil Murphy

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