

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Attorney General Platkin Appoints Sundeep Iyer as Director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights

12/16/2022

NEWARK – Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin today announced that he has appointed Sundeep Iyer to serve as the Director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, the state agency charged with protecting the civil rights of all New Jersey residents. As required by statute, the appointment was also approved by Governor Phil Murphy and the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights. Sundeep will begin his new role on January 3, 2023.

“I am thrilled that Sundeep Iyer has been appointed to lead the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Sundeep is a brilliant attorney who has used his considerable talents to champion the cause of equal justice, including by working as a special attorney for the prosecution in the trial for George Floyd’s murder. I know Sundeep will fight tirelessly to safeguard the rights of all New Jersey residents, and I thank Attorney General Platkin for this outstanding appointment.”

“Enforcing New Jersey’s powerful civil rights laws is a top priority for me and the Murphy Administration. As the rate of bias incidents rises across our state and our country, and as we confront systemic inequalities like housing discrimination that plague our society, we must continue to work tirelessly to protect the civil rights of every person in New Jersey,” **said Attorney General Platkin**. “That is why, with Governor Murphy’s support, I am proud to appoint Sundeep as the next Director of the Division on Civil Rights. Sundeep has an extraordinary commitment to equality and social justice, and he has the vision and skills necessary to lead the Division as we work to protect the civil rights of our residents.”

Iyer, a New Jersey native, currently serves as Assistant Attorney General and Senior Counsel to Attorney General Platkin. In that capacity, he is the Attorney General’s principal advisor on civil rights matters. He oversees the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights and coordinates department-wide civil rights initiatives. He also works with the Office of the Solicitor General on appeals involving matters of constitutional law, statutory interpretation, civil rights, and criminal law.

Prior to joining the Office of the Attorney General, Iyer was a senior associate at Hogan Lovells US LLP. During his time at the firm, he served as a special attorney for the State of Minnesota in the prosecution of the four former police officers charged in connection with the death of George Floyd. He was part of the legal team that obtained a conviction of Derek Chauvin on charges of second-degree murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter, and he briefed, argued, and won key legal motions for the State at trial.

Iyer was also part of the litigation team that obtained an injunction against President Trump’s travel ban and defended that injunction before the U.S. Supreme Court. He represented federal death-row inmates in a challenge to the Trump Administration’s federal lethal injection protocol. And he was one of the lead attorneys for a group of eight plaintiff organizations challenging President Trump’s rescission of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.

“I am humbled by the opportunity to serve as the next Director of the Division on Civil Rights, and I thank Governor Murphy and Attorney General Platkin for entrusting me with this role,” **said Sundeep Iyer, incoming Director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights**. “This is a critical time for civil rights in New Jersey, and I look forward to working with the dedicated public servants in the Division to enforce our State’s civil rights laws and ensure that no New Jersey resident faces discrimination in our State.”

Iyer previously clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justices David H. Souter and Stephen G. Breyer, as well as for then-Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. He received his A.B. from Harvard College and J.D. from Yale Law School. Prior to graduating law school, Sundeep was the Principal Quantitative Analyst at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, where he directed statistical research on voting rights, campaign finance, and redistricting issues.

“I look forward to working with Sundeep Iyer as Director of the Division on Civil Rights,” **said John Traier, Chair of the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights**. “Director Iyer has an impressive background in both education and law experience, and most importantly a true vision and passion for civil rights issues. I know that the Division will be in very good hands.”

“We support the appointment of Sundeep Iyer and look forward to working with him in our joint efforts to protect New Jerseyans from unfair treatment and discrimination in all facets of life, whether that be housing, employment, education, etc., since these rights are paramount and at the core of our democracy,” **said Richard Smith, President of NJ NAACP and Civil Rights Commissioner**.

“Fair Share Housing Center congratulates Sundeep Iyer on his nomination to the position of Director of the Division on Civil Rights,” **said Adam Gordon, Executive Director of the Fair Share Housing Center**. “FSHC has had the pleasure of working with Sundeep during his tenure at the Office of the Attorney General and we are excited to have a Division leader with such a strong commitment to housing justice and civil rights. We look forward to continuing our work with Sundeep and his team to strengthen enforcement around housing discrimination in New Jersey.”

“Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey congratulates Sundeep Iyer on his appointment as the new Director of the Division on Civil Rights within the Attorney General’s Office,” **said Jackie Cornell, Executive Director of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey**. “Sundeep displays a true commitment to protecting the reproductive rights of all New Jerseyans. We look forward to continuing our work with him in his new role.”

We once again applaud Attorney General Matthew Platkin for another outstanding appointment in the office of the Attorney General,” **said Reverend Derrick L. Green on behalf of the Interfaith Action Movement (IAM)**. “Sundeep Iyer has the qualifications and moreover the unwavering commitment to justice and fairness to lead the Division on Civil Rights. We have enjoyed working closely with Sundeep in the past and look forward to continuing the work in the future.”

The Division on Civil Rights is responsible for enforcing the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, the nation’s oldest anti-discrimination law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin,

ancestry, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, pregnancy or breastfeeding, and a variety of other protected characteristics in the workforce, places of public accommodation, housing, and lending. The Division is charged with preventing and eliminating discrimination in New Jersey by investigating and acting upon complaints alleging discrimination, and by affirmatively issuing reports and publications, conducting investigations, and implementing educational and community outreach programs to address systemic discrimination.

Iyer will succeed Rachel Wainer Apter, who served as the Director of the Division on Civil Rights from October 2018 until she was confirmed as an Associate Justice on the New Jersey Supreme Court in October 2022.

“During her tenure, and in every aspect of her career, Rachel Wainer Apter has been a champion for justice and equal rights,” said Attorney General Platkin. “I am deeply grateful for her work advancing the cause of civil rights as Director of the Division on Civil Rights.”

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