

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Selection of Jennifer Sellitti as New Jersey's Next Public Defender

11/15/2023

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced that he has selected Jennifer Sellitti to become New Jersey's next Public Defender. Sellitti will succeed Public Defender Joe Krakora upon his retirement on January 31. Her nomination will also be submitted to the Senate for a full five-year term.

"With over two decades of experience as a public defender and 17 years working within the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender, including in leadership roles, Jennifer Sellitti is ideally suited to be New Jersey's next Public Defender," **said Governor Murphy**. "Jennifer's efforts to ensure all defendants have effective legal representation have earned wide respect throughout our legal community. I look forward to working with Jennifer to continue our administration's work to make New Jersey's criminal justice system fairer and more equitable."

"I am grateful to Joe Krakora for his service as New Jersey's Public Defender since 2011," **Governor Murphy continued**. "Together we have taken steps towards building one of the most progressive criminal justice systems in the nation, including victories such as eliminating fees for public defender services in New Jersey. I wish him nothing but the best in his retirement."

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD), led by the Public Defender, provides the constitutional right to an attorney for indigent residents seeking criminal defense. The Public Defender also formulates overall policy and directs administration of all programs. Additionally, the Public Defender, along with Assistant Public Defenders, coordinates and oversees the work of the trial regions, appellate offices, and special units across the state.

Public Defenders are appointed to a five-year term by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

"I am incredibly grateful to Governor Murphy for nominating me to lead the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender into the future," **said Jennifer Sellitti**. "It has been my privilege to work alongside the dedicated attorneys, investigators, and support staff of this office for much of my career. I look forward to leveraging our agency experience and talent to move in a more holistic direction and to broaden community engagement to put and keep clients at the center of all we do."

"I am pleased that the Governor has nominated my long-time professional colleague and friend Jenn Sellitti to become the next public defender," **said Public Defender Joseph Krakora**. "I am confident that she will build on the successes achieved by this office during the past 12 years. We will work together to ensure a smooth transition."

Sellitti currently serves as the Director of OPD where she assists the Public Defender on special projects, leads several statewide initiatives, manages training programs for staff and pool attorneys, and represents clients in criminal cases. She joined the OPD in November 2006 as an Assistant Deputy Public Defender in the Essex County Adult Region. There, she represented adult clients charged with crimes before the New Jersey Superior Court and maintained caseload that included homicide cases and other serious felonies. She was later promoted to Deputy Public Defender in the Middlesex Trial Region, where she managed a regional office of 20 attorneys, 8 investigators, and 10 support staff, and represented adult and juvenile defendants in Middlesex County.



Sellitti holds a Bachelor of Science from Boston University and a Juris Doctor from Suffolk University Law School.

“I want to congratulate Jen Sellitti on being appointed New Jersey’s next state Public Defender,” **said Senator Vin Gopal**. “I have known Jen for many years and she has been a tireless advocate for representing New Jersey’s most vulnerable communities. I want to thank Governor Murphy for making this important and historic appointment, and I know Jen will serve our State with honor and dignity.”

“Jennifer Sellitti is an outstanding choice for Public Defender. She's smart, articulate, extraordinarily well-qualified and totally dedicated to her craft,” **said Senator Declan O’Scanlon**. “While we don't agree on everything, she always comes to the table with respect and challenging arguments. We need more of this energy in government!”

Governor Phil Murphy

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[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](#)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](#)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](#)

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[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

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[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

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