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Governor Christie Announces Senior Staff Changes to Continue Government Reforms and Move New Jersey Forward

Thursday, December 22, 2011 • Tags: [Appointments](#)

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today announced changes in his senior staff leadership, moving familiar faces to critical leadership roles to best carry out his reform agenda for New Jersey. The movement represents a smooth transition to the new year and second half of his term, in which Governor Christie will rely upon trusted and tested advisors in key front-office posts.

Among those moves by Governor Christie is the elevation of Deputy Chief Counsel Kevin O'Dowd to Chief of Staff, replacing Rich Bagger, who is returning to the biopharmaceutical sector as Senior Vice President for Corporate Affairs and Strategic Market Access for Celgene Corporation. Charles McKenna, currently director of Homeland Security and Preparedness and a former top advisor to the Governor at the U.S. Attorney's Office, will become Governor Christie's Chief Counsel.

Deborah Gramiccioni, currently head of the Governor's Authorities Unit, will become Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, replacing Wayne Hasenbalg, who has accepted the post of President and CEO of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.

In the Governor's Counsel Office, Paul Matey, currently the Governor's Senior Counsel, will fill the role of Deputy Chief Counsel; while Regina Egea, currently Chief of Staff to Treasurer's Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff, will take over as head of the Authorities Unit.

All of the changes go into effect on January 31, upon Mr. Bagger's departure from the administration.

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"I am extremely proud of all we accomplished in two years with my cabinet and senior staff, led by Rich Bagger and Jeff Chiesa," Governor Christie said. "Every one of my senior staff gave something up to join me and devote themselves to the single-minded cause of starting New Jersey's comeback in terms of fiscal responsibility, smaller and smarter government and business retention, expansion and job growth. I thank them, those who are leaving and those who are staying in the same or new roles, and commend them for their service to this noble cause on behalf of our state and its citizens and taxpayers.

"Now, with proven leaders and accomplished professionals in new roles, we embark on the second leg of this journey to bring back our state. These are all people who I know and have worked with, some for many years, who possess the intelligence, integrity and drive to continue moving New Jersey forward. I demand a lot from my senior staff and cabinet, and I know they are up to and excited by the opportunity to serve and improve government and life in our great state.

"I need to extend special gratitude to Rich Bagger for his remarkable leadership, intelligence and humor – even in the most trying moments – and above all his sage advice as a state government veteran committed to helping get New Jersey back on the right track. I wish him well and much success in his return to the private sector with Celgene, a great New Jersey innovative company."

Kevin O'Dowd, Chief of Staff

Kevin O'Dowd has served as the Deputy Chief Counsel to Governor Chris Christie since January of 2010. As Deputy Chief Counsel, O'Dowd was Governor Christie's lead negotiator with the New Jersey State Legislature and supervised the day-to-day operations of the Office of Counsel to the Governor.

Prior to joining the Christie Administration, O'Dowd served as the Chief of the Securities and Healthcare Fraud Unit in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey. During the seven years he served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office, O'Dowd prosecuted various crimes ranging from complex healthcare, securities and financial fraud matters to international child pornography distribution, cyber and narcotics prosecutions.

During his time at the United States Department of Justice, O'Dowd received numerous awards and honors from a host of federal law enforcement agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the United States Secret Service. O'Dowd was twice awarded the prestigious Integrity Award from the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Award for Excellence from the United States President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

Before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2003, O'Dowd spent the previous five years serving as a

Deputy Attorney General in the Department of Law & Public Safety and an Assistant Counsel in the Office of Counsel to the Governor. O'Dowd received his B.A. from The Catholic University of America and his J.D. from St. John's University School of Law.

A New Jersey native, O'Dowd currently resides in Princeton with his wife and son.

Charles B. McKenna, Chief Counsel

Charles McKenna was appointed Director of the New Jersey State Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness on January 6, 2010 and took office on January 19, 2010.

Mr. McKenna came to this position from the United States Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey, where he had served for 18 years. At the time of his appointment, he was the Chief of the Criminal Division, a position in which he directed attorneys responsible with prosecuting federal criminal violations since 2008. He also supervised investigations and interacted with heads of law enforcement-including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, Internal Revenue Service and Department of Defense and was responsible for establishing and administering policy for the Criminal Division, the largest in the US Attorney's Office.

From 2002 until 2008, Mr. McKenna served as Executive Assistant US Attorney under then US Attorney Chris Christie. Here, he had executive oversight for all Criminal and Civil Division investigations as well as administrative responsibilities to ensure efficient operations in the office. He also represented the office on many occasions to law enforcement and private industry groups, lecturing on various aspects of criminal law.

As an Assistant US Attorney, Mr. McKenna successfully prosecuted many cases involving violations of federal criminal laws. He was involved in the investigation into the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl, the Southeast Asia Bureau Chief for the Wall Street Journal, and he successfully prosecuted animal rights extremists. In 2002, he was a recipient of a Director's Award for Superior Performance from the US Department of Justice.

From 1999 to 2002, Mr. McKenna was the US Attorney's Office Liaison to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. From 2002 until leaving the US Attorney's Office, he was the Crisis Management Coordinator for the District of New Jersey.

Mr. McKenna received a J.D. in 1986 from St. John's University School of Law, where he graduated magna cum laude. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts summa cum laude in 1982 from Fordham University.

A New York City native, Mr. McKenna resides in Essex County.

Deborah Gramiccioni, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Planning

Deborah Gramiccioni currently serves as the Director of the Authorities Unit under Governor Chris Christie.

She previously served from June 2008 to January 2010 as the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice for the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law and Public Safety, where she oversaw criminal investigations and prosecutions brought by the State of New Jersey.

Before she came to work in State government, Gramiccioni served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey from September 1999 to November 2005. In September 2004, Gramiccioni was promoted to the position of Chief of the Commercial Crimes Unit, where she supervised the prosecution of white collar crimes involving financial fraud, identity theft and intellectual property. In November 2005, Gramiccioni was appointed Assistant Chief of the Fraud Section in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., where she supervised cases brought nationwide under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Gramiccioni graduated magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania in 1994 and the University of Virginia School of Law in 1997. After graduation, Gramiccioni worked first as an associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom LLP and then clerked for the Honorable Alfred J. Lechner, Jr., United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey. She and her husband Christopher have three children, Noah, Layla and Sarabeth.

Paul Matey, Deputy Chief Counsel

Paul Matey most recently served as the Senior Counsel to Governor Christie and Chief Ethics Officer for the Governor's Office. Among his duties, Mr. Matey supervised the development of legal advice for the Governor and managed significant litigation for the executive branch in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General.

Beginning in 2005, Mr. Matey served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of New Jersey in the Securities and Health Care Fraud Unit, and the Public Protection Unit. As an Assistant United States Attorney, Mr. Matey prosecuted a wide variety of offenses, including domestic and international child pornography networks, child exploitation, and complex white-collar crimes involving

investor fraud, securities fraud, healthcare fraud, and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. In 2009, he received the Director's Award for Superior Performance from the United States Department of Justice.

Prior to his service as a federal prosecutor, Mr. Matey worked as an associate in the Washington, D.C. firm of Kellogg, Huber, Hansen, Todd, Evans, and Figel, P.L.L.C., and served as a law clerk to the Honorable Robert E. Cowen of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and the Honorable John C. Lifland of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey.

A native of New Jersey, Mr. Matey received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Scranton in 1989, and earned his Juris Doctorate degree, summa cum laude, from Seton Hall University School of Law in 2001. He currently resides in Essex County with his wife.

Regina Egea, Director of the Authorities Unit

Regina Egea currently serves as Chief of Staff in the New Jersey Treasury Department under Governor Chris Christie.

Her responsibilities include general management of all Treasury operations. She has also played a leading role in developing and implementing the historic pension and benefit reforms that Governor Christie signed into law in June 2011.

Before she came to work in State government in January 2010, Egea was a Senior Vice President with AT&T in Bedminster where she led its global sales segment marketing team. Her more than 300-person team, located in offices around the world, supported AT&T's business sales force by delivering a full range of marketing programs. During her career at AT&T, she also led teams in areas including: business strategy development; product management; core network operations; Human Resource leadership; and executive succession planning.

In local government, Egea currently serves as Deputy Mayor in Harding Township in Morris County, where she was recently re-elected to a second three-year term. From 2003 until 2008, she was also an elected member of Harding Township's Board of Education, serving as Vice President in her final full year.

She earned an MBA in Marketing from Fordham University at Lincoln Center in New York City along with a B.A. from Montclair University in New Jersey. She also completed the International Executive Program at the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland.

A native of Monmouth County, she is married to Emilio Egea, an executive with Prudential Financial

Services in Newark. They reside in Harding Township with their son and daughter.

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