

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Whitman Submits Nomination for Insurance Fraud Prosecutor

NEW JERSEY-- Gov. Christie Whitman today submitted to the State Senate Judiciary Committee her choice for New Jersey's new Insurance Fraud Prosecutor.

The Governor nominated Assistant Attorney General Edward M. Neafsey, a 10-year veteran of the Department of Law and Public Safety, who has substantial experience litigating and prosecuting both criminal and civil cases.

"Ed Neafsey has demonstrated strong legal and prosecutorial skills in a wide variety of roles," Whitman said. "He is a highly qualified member of New Jersey's prosecutorial team."

"Gov. Whitman has made an excellent choice for insurance fraud prosecutor," said Attorney General Peter Verniero. "I am confident that Ed will build on the department's solid record in prosecuting those who would corrupt the system by engaging in fraudulent conduct."

Neafsey, of Avon, Monmouth County, is currently Chief of the Environmental Crimes Bureau in the Division of Criminal Justice. From 1995 to 1997, he served as acting prosecutor for Union County. Prior to becoming an assistant attorney general in the Division of Criminal Justice in 1992, he served as director and then assistant commissioner at the state Department of Environmental Protection, where he supervised all civil enforcement activities. Neafsey also has served as an assistant counsel to the Governor, deputy attorney general and assistant deputy public defender.

The Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor was created within the Department of Law and Public Safety's Division of Criminal Justice by the Automobile Insurance Cost Reduction Act of 1998, signed by Gov. Whitman on May 19. Under the direction and supervision of the Attorney General, the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor is charged with coordinating the state's efforts to combat insurance fraud.

The new office, with a professional staff of nearly 200 to deal with both civil and criminal insurance fraud cases, combines the former Department of Banking and Insurance's Division of Insurance Fraud Prevention with the prosecutorial resources of the Division of Criminal Justice.