

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Nomination of Victoria Kuhn as Department of Corrections Commissioner

01/13/2022

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced his nomination of Victoria Kuhn as the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC). Kuhn has served as Acting Commissioner since June 2021.

"Since Victoria was first asked to lead the Department of Corrections, she has impressed myself and many others with her dedication to reform and integrity," **said Governor Murphy**. "As a career corrections staffer, Victoria has the experience and knowledge to lead the Department during this pivotal time. I look forward to her confirmation by the Senate and to continuing our prison reform efforts together."

"I am truly grateful to Governor Murphy for entrusting me with leading the NJDOC team as we embark to establish this Department as the national model for leaders in prison reform and reintegration," **said Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq., Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections**. "I do not take this honor - or responsibility - lightly. This is the time for new beginnings - to launch new reform and reintegration initiatives, to ensure dignity and safety for our female offenders, and to establish mission-critical relationships with outside stakeholders and advocates. Equally important, we must recognize and re-invest in our dedicated staff, their welfare, and training, as they are integral to the success of the mission of the Department. We have much work to do, and I am proud to be a part of this extraordinary team."

As Acting Commissioner of the State's second-largest Department, Kuhn is responsible for a budget of nearly \$1 billion, approximately 8,000 employees, and the oversight of approximately 13,000 state-sentenced people housed across 11 correctional facilities, county jails, and community halfway houses. Ensuring the Department realizes its mission of operating safe and humane correctional facilities is the Department's core focus, along with the holistic rehabilitation of people who are incarcerated through behavioral therapy, addiction treatment, vocational and educational training, and staff well-being through training and issuance of holistic health resources.

Kuhn is a veteran corrections official, having worked for the Department of Corrections since 2007. Before she was appointed Acting Commissioner for the NJDOC, Kuhn served as the Department's Chief of Staff, and previously as the Deputy Chief of Staff, spearheading a number of initiatives. Prior to those roles, Kuhn led the Department's Equal Employment Division, which is charged with ensuring a discrimination and harassment-free work environment. She also oversaw the Office of Employee Relations, responsible for union labor relations, hearing employee grievances, reviewing misconduct, and imposing related discipline. Her career started as an Assistant Prosecutor, before transitioning to the Office of the Attorney General – Division of Law, where she addressed law enforcement and corrections matters, including federal and state court litigation, excessive force, Megan's Law, conditions of confinement and the development of the protocol regarding the sexually violent predator and CSL/PSL laws.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Drew University, and earned her J.D. from the Seton Hall University School of Law.

"In the decades during which we've been advocates on behalf of people in prison in New Jersey, we have not – until now – had the experience of prisoner contact, transparency, and genuineness of interest and commitment evidenced by the present Acting Commissioner and her team," **said American Friends Service Committee Prison Watch Program Director Bonnie Kerness and People's Organization for Progress Member Jean Ross, Esq.** "Indeed, Governor Murphy's team of "Acting" staff has shown the kind of leadership which should be elevated nationally. Acting Commissioner Kuhn is a model of what a real Department of "corrections" can be. Her outreach to community activists has encouraged appropriate and non-hostile communications within the prison community and improved safety on both sides of the walls."

"On behalf of those involved with the Department of Corrections, and the State Parole Board through New Jersey Reentry Programs, I am thrilled with the announcement by Governor Murphy selecting Victoria Kuhn as his candidate for Commissioner of Corrections," **said Volunteers of America Delaware Valley President and CEO Daniel L. Lombardo**. "In her acting capacity, Ms. Kuhn has been an innovator, and an outcome-driven professional committed to rebuilding the reputation of the Department. The work that Ms. Kuhn has already begun in the reestablishment of relationships with the State Parole Board, community providers, as well as departmental clients and their families is illustrative of what we can expect under her continued leadership. We applaud Governor Murphy and enthusiastically support the candidacy of Ms. Kuhn as the Commissioner of Corrections."

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