



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Amy Weitz (415) 355-8800

Federal Public Defender for Central California Hilary Lee Potashner to Step Down

SAN FRANCISCO — Federal Public Defender Hilary Lee Potashner of the Central District of California announced today that she will depart later this year to take a position in private practice.

Ms. Potashner leaves after more than two decades of experience representing indigent defendants, including 18 years in the Office of the Federal Public Defender (FPD) for the Central District of California, which is headquartered in Los Angeles and maintains branch offices in Santa Ana and Riverside. She was appointed to her current position in June 2015.

During her time with the FPD, Ms. Potashner has served on a number of national committees, and advised the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California on Criminal Justice Act matters. She has managed an office with an annual budget of \$40 million and more than 200 employees, including attorneys, paralegals, investigators and administrative personnel. The office opened 3,830 cases in fiscal year 2018.

“Hilary has been a strong and effective leader of one of the largest defenders’ offices in the country,” said Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw, who chairs the Ninth Circuit’s Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders. “Throughout her time as a defender, she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to high-quality, client-centered representation. As the Federal Public Defender, Hilary has led by personal example, maintaining high morale within the office during the government shutdown, creating a non-capital habeas unit, working effectively with our courts and other stakeholders, and contributing on a national level. She has set a very high bar for anyone to follow.”

The Office of the Federal Public Defender was created by Congress to fulfill the constitutional requirement that indigent individuals charged with crimes in the federal justice system be provided with professional legal representation at no cost. Congress funds the offices of the Federal Public Defender through the Defender Services Division of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

An acting FPD will be appointed in the near future, while the Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders initiates a formal review process for selecting a permanent replacement.