



NEWS RELEASE

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Steven G. Kalar Reappointed as Federal Public Defender for Northern California

SAN FRANCISCO — Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have approved the reappointment of Federal Public Defender Steven G. Kalar of the Northern District of California. Mr. Kalar was first appointed to the office in 2012. His reappointment to a second four-year term is effective October 9, 2016.

“We are pleased to announce the reappointment of Steve Kalar to lead one of our circuit’s busiest defender offices,” said Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas. “Steve and his assistants have provided exceptional representation to their clients in the Northern District.”

Mr. Kalar, 50, has worked in the Office of the Federal Public Defender for Northern District of California since 1998. He had served as a senior litigator from 2003 until his appointment to the office’s top post. He also worked as a training attorney and mentor to new assistant federal defenders and acted as a liaison and resource to the Northern District’s Criminal Justice Act panel attorneys.

Prior to his public service, Mr. Kalar worked briefly as an associate in the San Francisco office of Morrison & Foerster, LLP.

A native of Santa Rosa, California, Mr. Kalar received his A.B. in 1988 from Harvard University, graduating cum laude, and his J.D. in 1996 from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, where he served as a board member and associate notes editor of the Hastings International and Comparative Law Review. After law school, he clerked for Judge Harry Pregerson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Mr. Kalar has been a guest lecturer at Hastings and Stanford Law School and has taught locally and nationally on indigent defense and other matters.

Mr. Kalar is only the third person to serve as the federal public defender for the Northern District of California since the position was created in 1972. He succeeded Barry Portman, who retired in 2011 after serving 23 years in the office. The district's first federal public defender was the late James F. Hewitt, who served from 1972 to 1988.

The Northern District of California stretches along the coast from Monterey County in the south to the Oregon border in the north. The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District has a staff of more than 60 employees working in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. The office, which represents 75 percent of the defendants in criminal actions in the district, opened 1,880 new cases in fiscal year 2015.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender was created by Congress to fulfill the constitutional requirement that indigents 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.

By statute, judges of the courts of appeals select and appoint the federal public defender for a renewable term of four years. The court makes its initial appointment after a nationwide recruitment and the use of a local screening committee pursuant to Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines. A federal public defender may be reappointed if the court concludes that he or she is performing in a highly satisfactory manner based upon a broad survey and performance evaluation process.

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