



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Heather Williams Named Federal Public Defender for Eastern District of California**

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief Judge Alex Kozinski of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit announced today the appointment of Heather Williams as the new federal public defender for the Eastern District of California.

Ms. Williams, currently an assistant federal public defender in Arizona, will assume the Eastern District post effective May 6, 2013. She will serve on a provisional basis pending completion of an updated background investigative report. Ms. Williams succeeds Daniel Broderick, who stepped down December 31, 2012.

Ms. Williams, 56, joined the Office of the Federal Defender for the District of Arizona in 1994 and has served as first assistant federal public defender since 2006. She is responsible for the Tucson Criminal Defense Unit, which includes 34 lawyers and 31 office staff, and assists in supervision of staff in district offices in Flagstaff, Phoenix, and Yuma, and an out-of-district office in Salt Lake City, Utah. Ms. Williams also helps manage the district's Capital Habeas Unit, which consists of 15 lawyers and administrative staff of six.

“Ms. Williams is a well experienced defense lawyer and a proven administrator. We are fortunate to have someone of her qualifications assume this important office in one of our busiest districts,” Chief Judge Kozinski said in announcing the appointment.

The Office of the Federal Defender for the Eastern District of California, which opened 1,700 new cases in fiscal year 2012, is headquartered in Sacramento and maintains a fully-staffed branch office in Fresno. The office has an annual budget of \$17.38 million and approximately 95 employees, which include attorneys, paralegals, investigators, and administrative personnel.

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Ms. Williams began her career in public service in 1988 as an assistant public defender for Pima County Office of the Public Defender in Tucson, Arizona, where she handled felony cases including death penalty homicides, drugs, sex crimes, and child abuse. Prior to that, she worked as an associate attorney in San Diego, California, from 1986 to 1988.

A Tucson native, Ms. Williams received her bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, from Pittsburgh State University in 1982 and her J.D. from the University of San Diego Law School in 1985.

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. The annual salary for the position is \$155,500.

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