

Department of Justice creates new Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust

New Attorney General Seeks to Improve Office's Focus In Critical Areas

Attorney General Matt Denn announced today that the Department of Justice would be restructured to create a new Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust. The office will be responsible for protecting individual rights and liberties of Delawareans, enforcement of laws designed to ensure citizen trust in government, and conducting investigations where the Department of Justice's other responsibilities might present the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Denn has appointed Allison Reardon, one of the most senior attorneys in the Department of Justice, to head the new office. Reardon most recently served as State Solicitor, the highest ranking civil attorney in the Department of Justice. Reardon will report directly to the Chief Deputy Attorney General.

"This new office will create a focus for the office on civil rights and citizen trust in government," Denn said. "It will provide the legal firepower to ensure that these important areas are addressed, and will provide citizens with a point of contact in the office when they believe that there are civil rights or public trust issues that must be addressed."

“I am very pleased that Allison Reardon will be heading this new effort. It is important that the person in charge of this effort be a skilled attorney, have sound judgment, and have my confidence. Allison is one of the most respected attorneys in the Department of Justice, and is the perfect person to head up this effort.”

The responsibilities of the Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust will include:

1. Enforcement of Delaware laws protecting the individual rights and liberties of Delawareans, including but not limited to rights secured by the Delaware and United States constitutions, Delaware’s public accommodations laws, housing discrimination laws, employment discrimination laws, and laws protecting the educational rights of children and the rights of Delawareans with disabilities.
2. Enforcement of laws designed to ensure citizen trust in government, including election laws, laws governing the use of public funds, and laws governing the conduct of public employees and officials. In these areas, the office will work collaboratively with the Elections Commissioner, Public Integrity Commission, and State Auditor.
3. Investigations where the Department of Justice’s other responsibilities might present the appearance of a conflict, such as investigations of use of force by law enforcement officers and investigations of deaths or

near-deaths of children under state supervision.

Meredith Stewart Tweedie, who previously served as the head of the health law unit for the Department of Justice, has been selected to take over Ms. Reardon's role as State Solicitor. Attorney General Denn also announced today that State Prosecutor Kathleen Jennings, Consumer Fraud Director Matt Lintner, and Family Division Director Patricia Dailey Lewis would remain in their current positions.

Danielle Gibbs, currently a partner at Young Conaway Stargatt and Taylor will serve as Chief Deputy Attorney General. Gregory Patterson, a former aide to Gov. Jack Markell and to Denn as insurance commissioner, will serve as Chief of Staff and Emily Cunningham, who headed Denn's lieutenant governor staff, will serve as Deputy Chief of Staff in the Department of Justice.