



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

**Contact:
Lucian Chalfen,
Public Information Director
Arlene Hackel, Deputy Director
(212) 428-2500**

www.nycourts.gov/press

Date: January 13, 2021

Hon. Deborah A. Kaplan Named NYS Justice Task Force Co-Chair

NEW YORK—Chief Judge Janet DiFiore today announced the appointment of Hon. Deborah A. Kaplan, Administrative Judge of New York County Supreme Court’s Civil Term, as co-chair of the New York State Justice Task Force. Judge Kaplan will replace Hon. Mark R. Dwyer, who has retired from the bench and is stepping down as Task Force co-chair but will stay on as an advisory member.

In her new capacity, Judge Kaplan, alongside Co-chair Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick, will assist Task Force Chair, Hon. Paul G. Feinman, in carrying out the group’s critical mission to promote fairness, effectiveness and efficiency in the criminal justice system; eradicate the harms caused by wrongful convictions; further public safety; and recommend judicial and legislative reforms to advance these causes.

Over the past decade, the Task Force—which comprises judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement officials, victim advocates and others across the criminal justice system—has made significant strides, with its work leading to major statutory

changes to the procedures used to conduct eyewitness identifications and interrogations, among other reforms.

In recent years, Chief Judge DiFiore, a former Task Force co-chair, expanded the group's mission to include the study of issues relating to bail reform and speedy trial, as well as the examination of racial disparities in the criminal justice system at all key stages of the process, including racial disparities in the composition of juries.

In making today's announcement, Chief Judge DiFiore said, "Judge Kaplan is an esteemed member of New York's bench, widely admired for her judicial expertise, leadership and dedication to the pursuit of justice. I am pleased to welcome her as co-chair and have utmost trust in her ability to help lead the Justice Task Force as it strives to advance the cause of justice."

Since 2018, Judge Kaplan has served as Administrative Judge of New York County Supreme Court's Civil Term, overseeing one of the busiest courts in the country, in addition to hearing matrimonial and other civil matters. Previously, she was the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Violence Cases, a position she assumed in 2015, and from September 2017 through December 2017 served as interim Administrative Judge for Civil and Criminal Matters in Richmond County. She began her judicial career with her election in 2001 to the New York City Civil Court and was subsequently assigned to the New York City Criminal Court bench in Manhattan. She was designated an acting Supreme Court Justice in 2007 and elected to the State Supreme Court, New York County, in 2012. Prior to becoming a judge, she held several non-judicial titles in the New York State court system, including Chief Management Analyst and Project Counsel for Court Treatment Programs, and before that worked at the Legal Aid Society, where she received the Orison S. Marden Award for her outstanding work.

Among her numerous professional activities, she is chair of the New York State Judicial Committee on Elder Justice, co-chair of the New York County Supreme Court Gender

Fairness Committee, a past president of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, and former co-chair of the New York Hague Convention and Domestic Violence Bench Guide Consulting Committee

In tribute to outgoing Co-chair Mark Dwyer, the Chief Judge added, "I want to thank Judge Dwyer for his many contributions during the past five years as Task Force co-chair and am delighted that New Yorkers will continue to benefit from his experience as an advisory member of the panel."

Additionally, Chief Judge DiFiore announced that New York State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz has assumed the role of an ex officio member of the Task Force based on his appointment as Chairman of the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Codes.

"The Task Force has an established track record of generating meaningful reforms to strengthen the fairness and effectiveness of our State's criminal justice system. With his distinguished background and experience, I am confident that Assemblyman Dinowitz will play a vital role in furthering the group's mission," she said, adding, "I am grateful to former Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol for his past efforts in his role as an ex officio member of the Justice Task Force and for his deep commitment to the panel's essential work."

###