



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568

Release # 1-2020
www.queensda.org

718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020

CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

PRECEDING HER INAUGURATION DISTRICT ATTORNEY MELINDA KATZ
ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES, POLICIES AND EXECUTIVE STAFF
AT THE QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

*Changes Reflect a New Era for Queens County;
Incoming and Promoted Executives Have a Combined 240 Years of Experience
In Criminal Law and Public Service*

On the eve of her inauguration, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced dramatic and immediate changes within the District Attorney's Office, introducing new initiatives and policies that will make the criminal justice system more fair and equitable for the 2.3 million people of Queens County. After an initial review of long-standing policies, on day one the District Attorney implemented changes to foster a new spirit of cooperation for all stakeholders in the criminal justice system. Today, the District Attorney also revealed a new executive staff that will push forward with these changes.

The policy changes implemented on day one include 4 major revisions. First, the 180.80 waiver policy is abandoned. The top count only plea policy after indictment is also eliminated. The District Attorney has established a Conviction Integrity Unit and a Community Partnerships Division.

Eliminating the so-called 180.80 waiver policy allows assistant district attorneys at all times to discuss resolving cases through plea negotiations without a defendant waiving their statutory right to grand jury proceedings.

Continuing in this vein, District Attorney Katz also eliminated the top count plea policy which limited post indictment pleas to the top count only. The DA is committed to an open-minded approach to resolving all cases and will consider all possible dispositions of a case that will culminate in a just outcome.

A Conviction Integrity Unit is now in place to examine cases and make recommendations for exoneration if someone is found to be wrongfully convicted. District Attorney Katz will work with defense attorneys and community leaders to determine which cases should be reviewed in order to prevent a miscarriage of justice. A wrongful conviction not only destroys the life of that innocent individual and his or her family, but it also undermines the faith we all have in our justice system.

Lastly, the first responsibility of the District Attorney is to make our streets and neighborhoods safe. That means reducing crime and taking the necessary steps to prevent crime from happening in the first place. The Special Prosecutions has been renamed the Community Partnerships Division and justly empowered to work with the community to foster communication and effectuate change. That means taking guns off our streets, finding avenues for young people to resolve their differences without resorting to violence, fairly investigating accusations of wrong-doing and creating diversion programs in partnership with the community.

In order to advance these changes, the District Attorney is proud to introduce a talented new executive team.

District Attorney Katz said, "We have created a team with the unique kind of expertise and specialized skills that will usher in a new era here in Queens County. The new policies and appointments are just the start, as we look forward to innovative ideas that will enhance the safety of all those who live, work and visit Queens."

The new executive team will be led by the District Attorney's recently appointed Chief Assistant Jennifer L. Naiburg. Please see the attachment for more details on the executive team.

#

Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.