



UNITED STATES COURTS FOR THE FIRST CIRCUIT
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PRESS RELEASE

RACHEL BRILL TO BECOME FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

BOSTON (September 8, 2023) — Chief Judge David J. Barron of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit announced today that the Court has selected Rachel Brill to serve as the next Federal Public Defender (FPD) for the District of Puerto Rico. Attorney Brill will assume the position upon the successful completion of a full FBI background investigation.

Attorney Brill is a solo practitioner, who has practiced criminal defense for the vast majority of her 36-year legal career. Attorney Brill earned her law degree from Harvard Law School, cum laude, in 1987, after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, magna cum laude, in 1984. Immediately following law school, Attorney Brill clerked for Judge José A. Fusté of the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico (1987-1988) and then for Judge Frank A. Kaufman of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland (1988-1989). Following her clerkships, she joined the FPD Office for the District of Puerto Rico. After three years with the FPD Office, Ms. Brill opened her solo private practice, the Law Offices of Rachel Brill, in 1993. In the approximately 30 years since opening her practice, Attorney Brill has represented hundreds of indigent clients at all stages of federal criminal litigation, from Grand Jury investigations through petitions for writ of certiorari with the Supreme Court of the United

States; has tried one capital case through the guilt and penalty phases; and has served as local counsel in more than a dozen death penalty eligible cases. Through her solo practice, Ms. Brill also handles specialized civil litigation, such as § 1983 causes of action, federal forfeiture claims, and prisoners' rights litigation.

Attorney Brill has been a member of the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Panels for the First Circuit Court of Appeals and the District of Puerto Rico since 1993. Between 2006 and 2015, Attorney Brill served as a member of the District of Puerto Rico CJA Committee and as the CJA Panel Representative for the District of Puerto Rico. Attorney Brill was also appointed by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts to serve, from 2006 to 2012, on the Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on Criminal Rules.

Chief Judge Barron stated: "Rachel Brill is — and long has been — a leading member of the criminal defense bar in Puerto Rico, and herself a former member of the office she will now head. She is an exceptional advocate who is deeply committed to ensuring that indigent criminal defendants in the commonwealth receive exceptional representation, and I am confident that under her leadership, the District of Puerto Rico Federal Public Defender Office will continue to provide high quality criminal defense to the community it serves." The Chief Judge thanked Circuit Judge Gustavo A. Gelpí, who served as chair of the Committee for the Appointment of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Puerto Rico, and Circuit Judge Lara E. Montecalvo, who also served on the Committee. In addition, Chief Judge Barron commended the other members of the Committee: Circuit Executive Susan J. Goldberg; Francisco Adams-Quesada, Esq., of the Law Office of Francisco J. Adams-Quesada and CJA Panel Representative for the District of Puerto Rico; Justice Anabelle Rodriguez (retired), formerly of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico; and Sonia Torres Pabón, Esq., of DLA Piper.