



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet

Matthew G. Bevin, Governor

John C. Tilley, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mike Wynn  
502.229.8417  
Mike.Wynn@ky.gov

### **Damon Preston Appointed as Kentucky Public Advocate**

*Preston brings more than 20 years of public defender experience to the role.*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 11, 2017)** – Gov. Matt Bevin and Justice Secretary John Tilley announced today that Damon Preston has been appointed as Kentucky’s next Public Advocate, continuing his decades of steadfast work at the Department of Public Advocacy (DPA) on behalf of indigent clients.

Preston is taking the helm after 20 years of service at key levels of the department. Since joining the DPA in 1997, he has worked as a staff attorney, director of trial offices, and manager of the department’s appeals branch. In 2007, Preston joined the department’s leadership team as director of the Trial Division. He was later appointed deputy public advocate in 2011.

“As a career public defender, I am thrilled to be entrusted with the position of Kentucky’s Public Advocate,” Preston said. “I have been blessed to work under the strong leadership of past advocates Ed Monahan and Ernie Lewis and intend to continue their tradition of faithfully upholding the Sixth Amendment right to counsel in the Commonwealth. My goal is to improve our statewide system, which already provides excellent representation to indigent clients in the criminal courts of Kentucky.”

The Department of Public Advocacy provides legal representation to low-income clients accused of crimes, fulfilling their constitutional rights to an attorney and to a fair trial. Each year, DPA attorneys, investigators, mitigation specialists, alternative sentencing workers and administrative specialists handle more than 140,000 trial and post-trial cases statewide. These include involuntary commitments, juvenile cases, misdemeanors and felonies.

Today’s appointment fills the position of outgoing Public Advocate Ed Monahan, who dedicated more than 40 years of service to the department. Gov. Bevin selected Preston from three candidates nominated by the Public Advocacy Commission. The appointment takes effect September 16, 2017.

“Damon is a proven leader who commands with a steady hand, and he has played an instrumental role in every aspect of DPA over the past two decades,” Secretary Tilley said. “We value his data-driven approach and eye toward accountability and look forward to his continued service at the department. We also thank Ed Monahan for his unyielding service and sacrifice on behalf of DPA and its clients. He has provided a great deal of resolute leadership during tough budgetary times, and his work has impacted many lives for the better.”

A native of Harrodsburg, Ky., Preston earned a mathematics degree from Transylvania University and later graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1994. He began his legal career as a public defender at the Legal Aid Society in New York City.

As deputy public advocate, Preston has focused on DPA's legislative efforts and led the department's implementation of a comprehensive information and case management system. Last year, Gov. Bevin also appointed Preston to serve on the Criminal Justice Policy Assessment Council.

In addition to work at DPA, Preston serves on the board of the Kentucky Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and is a past chair of the Criminal Law Section of the Kentucky Bar Association. He is married with two daughters and lives in Georgetown.

###