



Commonwealth of Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet

Matthew G. Bevin, Governor

John C. Tilley, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Longtime Public Servant Will Lead Kentucky's Juvenile Justice Department

Raymond DeBolt previously served as deputy commissioner and general counsel for department

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 3, 2018) – Kentucky Justice Secretary John Tilley announced today that Raymond DeBolt, an attorney with more than four decades of experience in public service and juvenile matters, has been named as the next commissioner for the state Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

Over the past year, DeBolt has worked as a special assistant to the commissioner, helping develop policies and procedures and representing the department at legislative hearings and task forces. He previously served as deputy commissioner of program operations, overseeing all facilities, youth placement services and alternatives to detention, among other areas.

"Ray brings a deep commitment to the welfare and success of our youth along with a comprehensive understanding of our operations, values and mission," Secretary Tilley said. "His service and talents have proven invaluable over the past three years, and we are excited to have him in this new role."

Prior to his deputy appointment, DeBolt served as the division director over the department's western region, which included oversight of residential programs, group homes, detention services, and day treatment programs. He also supervised the classification system for placing juveniles in the least restrictive – and most resourceful – programs based on the youth's individual treatment needs.

Earlier in his career, DeBolt worked as general counsel for DJJ from 1997 to 2004. In addition, he has held multiple positions in public office, including work as a senior staff analyst for the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, as a litigation branch manager for the Office of Attorney General, as a public defender and as a detective assigned to youth services at the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Division of Police.

DeBolt holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He earned a master's degree in public affairs from Kentucky State University along with a juris doctorate degree from Salmon P. Chase College of Law.

"I'm humbled and honored by the appointment and I want to thank the Governor and the Secretary for this opportunity," DeBolt said. "I look forward to building on the incredible progress at DJJ and finding innovative ways to serve our youth and families. In addition, it's been an honor to work with Commissioner Carey Cockerell, and I wish him the best on his next chapter."

Commissioner Cockerell announced earlier this month that he planned to step down in December following more than two years at the helm – and more than 40 years working in youth programs. He plans to return to his home in Texas to reside closer to family.

During his tenure, Cockerell has overseen transformative efforts at DJJ to overhaul policy and dramatically increase the use of alternatives to incarceration for children. He has also shepherded the closure or consolidation of four facilities, allowing the department to better focus taxpayer resources on the most effective strategies for reducing youth crime.

“Carey has done an incredible job advancing the department with steady, forward-thinking and compassionate leadership,” Secretary Tilley said. “He has served as both a pacesetter on reform and a trusted advisor to the Justice Cabinet overall. We will miss him and wish him the best.”

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