



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 21, 2015

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Appointment of Interim Pima County Public Defender**

As discussed in my April 24, 2015 memorandum to the Board of Supervisors, I have appointed Public Defender Lori J. Lefferts to the position of Director of Public Defense Services, a new position the Board approved at its May 12, 2015 meeting. As Director of Public Defense Services, Ms. Lefferts will be providing administrative oversight to the Public Defender, Legal Defender, Office of Children's Counsel and Mental Health Defender, as well as directly managing the Office of Court-Appointed Counsel.

Attached is a May 14, 2015 memorandum from Ms. Lefferts recommending the appointment of Chief Assistant Public Defender Steven Sonenberg to succeed her as Pima County Public Defender. Mr. Sonenberg has been an attorney with the Public Defender's Office for 20 years and has served as Chief Assistant for three years. He practiced criminal defense law in the Detroit area for approximately 16 years prior to joining the Pima County Public Defender.

I have accepted Ms. Lefferts' recommendation and appointed Mr. Sonenberg the Interim Public Defender.

Mr. Sonenberg's resume is attached for your information. If you would like to meet with Mr. Sonenberg, please let me know, and I will facilitate such a meeting.

CHH/mjk

Attachments

c: Ellen Wheeler, Assistant County Administrator
Lori Lefferts, Director, Public Defense Services

Date: May 14, 2015

To: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator

From: Lori J. Lefferts, Public Defender 

Re: Recommendation for Appointment of Steven Sonenberg to Pima County Public Defender

It has been a tremendous honor to serve Pima County as Public Defender for the past three years (and nearly 28 years total). Although I am very excited about the new challenges ahead of me as Director of Public Defense Services, I am sad to leave a job that I have loved. The greatest pleasure of being a part of the Public Defender's Office has been working side-by-side with a tremendously talented and dedicated group of people, all of whom I respect a great deal.

For three years, my Chief Assistant has been Steven Sonenberg. Steve is an excellent lawyer, and is highly respected by his peers, his opponents, his clients, and the judiciary. Steve has a brilliant legal mind and has played an important role in elevating the quality of the representation the office provides to its clients. He is the ultimate professional, and maintains a level-headedness that serves as a model to all. He is a hard worker, and a fierce advocate for justice. Steve's entire career has been dedicated to serving the poor. He graduated from Wayne State University Law School in 1979, and practiced indigent defense law in Detroit, before accepting a position with the Pima County Public Defender's Office 20 years ago. He has tried more cases than I can count, and served for a number of years as a Team Leader in the Felony Unit. As my Chief Assistant, he has been an integral part of my administration, and has demonstrated superior leadership skills. He has every qualification needed to lead the office, and for that reason, Steve is my recommendation to serve as the next Pima County Public Defender.

STEVEN R. SONENBERG
Chief Assistant Public Defender

Pima County Public Defender Office
33 N. Stone Ave., 21st Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

520/724-6930 (direct)
Steve.Sonenberg@pima.gov

EDUCATION:

- Wayne State University Law School – Detroit, Michigan
Juris Doctorate 1979
- University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, Michigan
Bachelor of Arts with high distinction, 1975

LEGAL EXPERIENCE:

- *Pima County Public Defender Office* 1995 to Present

Over the past 20 years I have worked as a staff trial attorney, team leader, and most recently Chief Assistant Public Defender since 2012.
- *Fried, Saperstein, Devine and Kohn, P.C.*, 1988 through 1995
Southfield, Michigan

Legal representation of criminal defendants at trial and appellate court levels.
- *Legal Aid and Defender Association of Detroit* 1981 through 1988
Felony Trial Division
Detroit, Michigan

Legal representation of indigent criminal defendants at the trial court level.
- *Charles Simpkins, P.C.* 1979 through 1981
Northville, Michigan

Associate for general practice law firm.
- *State Appellate Defender Office* 1978 through 1979
Detroit, Michigan

Assisted in the preparation of appellate briefs on behalf of indigent felony defendants.

LICENSURE AND ADMISSIONS:

- Licensed by State Bar of Arizona (1995), State Bar of Michigan (1979 – currently inactive)
- Admitted to practice in Arizona State Courts (1995), Arizona Federal Courts (2005), Michigan State and Federal Courts (1979)

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:

I have raised three sons who are now between the ages of 26 – 31. They are all high school graduates, college graduates (University of Arizona), Eagle Scouts, gainfully employed and homeowners.