



NEW JERSEY STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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Hon. Gurbir Grewal
New Jersey Attorney General
Hughes Justice Complex
25 West Market Street
P.O. Box 080
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear General Grewal:

Thank you for the efforts you and your staff have taken to provide guidance to New Jersey's Municipal Court prosecutors and, in particular your December 4, 2019 directive strengthening your oversight of municipal prosecutors. The New Jersey State Bar Association (NJSBA) is hopeful those efforts will result in the state's best practices being shared statewide and improve access to justice for everyone.

One issue noted in the December 4 directive is the lack of a current roster of municipal prosecutors. This has become an important necessary resource for defendants, defense attorneys and other involved parties to address pending municipal court matters during the COVID-19 shutdown. With pleas by mail being encouraged, and contested municipal court matters being handled virtually, pre-hearing access to municipal prosecutors has become more important than ever. However, as noted in the directive, information about individuals serving as prosecutors and appropriate contact information is not readily available.

As the directive requires municipal prosecutors to have registered with your office by May 1, the NJSBA respectfully requests that the information be made publicly available, at least to defense counsel, to facilitate the resolution of pending matters. While the NJSBA requests that this information be maintained and disclosed by your office on a regular basis going forward, it is particularly important now, as having the ability to confer with a municipal prosecutor before a virtual hearing would go a long way toward helping to resolve matters appropriately.

The NJSBA recognizes that municipal prosecutors, especially those serving in a part-time capacity while maintaining separate law practices, may have valid concerns about using their personal law firm contact information for municipal court matters. To address these concerns, the NJSBA suggests that the Attorney General's office consider providing separate email credentials to municipalities for continuous use by their assigned prosecutor. This will appropriately separate prosecutor communications (with the added benefit of ensuring more expedited responses to FOIA/OPRA requests), and allow for successor prosecutors to access the current status of a pending matter.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kimberly A. Yonta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'K' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'a'.

Kimberly A. Yonta, Esq.
President

cc: Robyn Mitchell, Esq., Deputy Attorney General
Domenick Carmagnola, Esq. NJSBA President-Elect
Angela C. Scheck, NJSBA Executive Director