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Tuesday, April 13, 2021
For immediate release

Contact
LOPD PIO Maggie Shepard
(505) 690-4529

State's Public Defender Commission appoints Bennett J. Baur to second term as Chief Public Defender

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Public Defender Commission has unanimously appointed current Chief Public Defender Bennett J. Baur to a second, four-year term leading the state Law Offices of the Public Defender.

The LOPD employs more than 400 New Mexicans in the service of providing counsel to indigent people charged with crimes in the state's courts. The independent state agency most recently received a \$57.2 million budget to operate 15 offices across the state and to coordinate a network of over 100 contract attorneys. The commission selects the chief public defender and provides guidance in the mission and administration of the department.

“Chief Baur has been a very strong advocate for our indigent clients in his last five years leading this department. He has worked closely with the commission, the legislature and others in the criminal legal system to address the root causes of crime and to fight for the resources public defenders desperately need to address systemic injustices and provide effective representation across our great state,” Public Defender Commission Chairman Thomas Clear III said.

Baur began his career as a trial attorney in the Albuquerque office of the public defender in 1993. After time as an assistant district attorney and nine years in private practice, he returned to the LOPD as the First Judicial District Defender. He has also served as deputy chief and interim chief for the department. Baur is a past president of the New Mexico Criminal Defense Lawyers Association and has advocated on criminal justice issues in the New Mexico legislature for over 20 years. He resides in Santa Fe.

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