



**News Release**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Statement from PACDL President Peter E. Kratsa Further  
Condemning the Firings of Montgomery County Public Defenders**

On February 29, 2020 the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys (PACDL) issued a press release expressing its disappointment regarding the firing of the Montgomery County Public Defender leadership, Chief Dean Beer and Deputy Chief Keisha Hudson. At the time of that statement, we believed there were insufficient details to fully understand the situation and that the public perception of a link between Dean and Keisha's termination and the filing of an Amicus Brief advocating bail reform cried out for more information.

Over the last ten days, the totality of the evidence supports the inescapable conclusion that the Montgomery County Commissioners' firing of Dean and Keisha was directly related to the filing of the Amicus Brief only a few weeks earlier. We have reached this conclusion based on the timeline of the firings in relation to the filing of the brief, public statements by those involved, the termination letter issued to Mr. Beer by the Montgomery County Commissioners, and the lack of any other reasonable explanation for the firings by the Montgomery County Commissioners

Accordingly, the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys (PACDL) condemns these firings. One of PACDL's primary purposes, if not its primary purpose is "to foster, maintain and encourage the integrity, independence, and expertise of the defense lawyer in criminal cases" and "to achieve justice and dignity for defense lawyers, defendants and the criminal justice system itself."

Dean and Keisha have been tireless leaders in offering their insight and proposing remedies to address the "multitude of individual and community harms caused by dysfunctional bail practices."

Dean and Keisha have done what all worthy defense attorneys must do, as their role is essential to the administration of criminal justice. *The American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Standards* demand that defense counsel: "advocate with courage and devotion ... to ensure that constitutional and other legal rights of clients are protected." And, further, where there are inadequacies or injustices "counsel should stimulate and support efforts for remedial action."

Any governmental interference with, or retaliation against, the vital and independent function of defense counsel is an affront to the administration of criminal justice and should not be tolerated. The termination of Dean Beer and Keisha Hudson is, in fact, an injustice and a disservice to the community they served so diligently.

**About PACDL.** *The Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers is a not-for-profit association of criminal defense lawyers that are committed to equal justice under law. PACDL is the state advocate for its members, which includes nearly 1000 private criminal defense lawyers, public defenders and juvenile defenders. Founded in 1988, PACDL provides continuing legal education for criminal defense leaders and is an advocate for criminal justice reform. Visit [www.pacdl.org](http://www.pacdl.org).*

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