



## **Michigan Indigent Defense Commission**

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James H. Fisher  
Chair

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 5, 2015

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## **Jonathan Sacks Named First-Ever Executive Director of the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission** *Hire Is a “Major Step Forward” for Long-awaited Public Defense Reform*

LANSING, MI -- The Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC) today announced the appointment of Detroit attorney Jonathan Sacks as the agency’s founding executive director.

First established by the Legislature in 2013, the 15-member commission works to ensure the state’s public defense system is fair, cost-effective and constitutional while simultaneously protecting public safety and accountability.

“Mr. Sacks brings an impressive mix of administrative leadership, legal knowledge and field experience to the commission,” said MIDC Chairperson Judge James Fisher. “He will provide aggressive leadership as we establish standards, systems and policies that address the challenges that have plagued Michigan’s indigent defense system for decades.”

Fisher noted longstanding concerns with indigent defense, including the waste of taxpayer dollars, threats to public safety, and more.

“For too many years, our public defense system has not provided adequate representation for indigent defendants or good value to taxpayers,” Fisher said. “With the active support of talent individuals like Jonathan Sacks, we take a major step forward in ensuring a stronger, healthier legal system for all.”

Sacks, who will begin work in February, comes to the commission from the Michigan State Appellate Defender Office in Detroit, where he has served as Deputy Director. His past achievements include the establishment of units to support indigent clients through evidence reviews involving the now closed Detroit Crime Lab, investigation of possible wrongful convictions, and social worker mitigation and reentry support. Prior to the Appellate Defender Office, Sacks worked as a felony trial supervisor and major trials unit attorney at the Defender Association of Philadelphia.

“This work becomes even more impressive when one considers the fact that Sacks also managed his

own caseload of indigent clients,” Fisher said. “He has a passion for justice that will serve the people of Michigan very effectively.”

The Michigan Indigent Defense Commission is housed within the judicial branch of state government. Its members are appointed by the Governor with recommendation of the Legislature, Supreme Court, the State Bar, and representing interests from the criminal justice system.

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