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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
APPOINTS HALEY TO NEWLY CREATED DIVERSITY ROLE**

**Oct. 15, 2020--TRENTON, NJ--**Melinda Haley, Esq., who most recently served as the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) Director of Regulatory and Legal Affairs/Special Legal Advisor, has been appointed to the new position of Assistant Commissioner, Division of Diversity and Legal Affairs by Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq.

Haley, whose career with the NJDOC spans more than two decades, will work to expand the Department's Diversity and Inclusion efforts as the Chief Diversity Officer. She also will continue to oversee employment and inmate litigation as well as the Americans with Disabilities, Open Public Records and Inmate Disciplinary Hearing units.

"I am encouraged by the Commissioner's commitment to this important philosophical shift in management and honored that he has selected me to guide the Department in this regard," Haley said. "For years, there has been a focus on sustaining a diverse workforce. While there have been advancements in this employment initiative, we now know that to achieve the greatest benefits from a diverse staff, diversity must be complimented by inclusion. It is not enough to have a seat at the table unless you and your views are truly valued.

"Diversity and Inclusion is a simple concept: embracing, encouraging, respecting and valuing individuality," continued Haley, who has held various titles within the Department's Equal Employment Division. "However, to be truly effective will require the unpacking of historically embedded assumptions regarding competence and superiority associated with individual characteristics and traits. It is my goal to implement initiatives that

foster a culture of acceptance wherein everyone, regardless of background or ideology, finds belonging and has a voice. Success with these initiatives cannot come through force; there must be a shared vision between leadership and, more importantly, staff, which should enhance the effective management of the inmate population. I am challenging myself and the Department to be the nation's model for Diversity and Inclusion.”

Haley earned a bachelor of arts in psychology from the University of Delaware and a juris doctor from Widener University School of Law. She is licensed to practice law in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania and is a certified instructor with the New Jersey Police Training Commission.

“As the second-largest agency in the state, the NJDOC employs one of the most diverse workforces,” Commissioner Hicks said. “The benefits of workplace diversity are plentiful. Workplace diversity fosters mutual respect among staff. Additionally, employees who acknowledge one another's differences often also find similarities, particularly when there are common goals, such as production and quality. Furthermore, by bringing together individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, staff members can learn from colleagues' experiences and are better equipped to understand and manage modern-day correctional challenges and the incarcerated population. Ms. Haley's extensive experience will greatly benefit the Department as she assumes her new role in leading our diversity efforts.”

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