

STATE OF NEW YORK
DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senate Confirms Appointment of Galen D. Kirkland as Commissioner of the New York State Division of Human Rights

Galen D. Kirkland, Governor David A. Paterson's nominee to serve as Commissioner of the New York State Division of Human Rights, was confirmed by the Senate yesterday.

"I am honored and deeply gratified to have this exciting opportunity to lead the New York State Division of Human Rights. My appointment as Commissioner is the realization of my professional aspirations because I have spent the majority of my career working to advance human rights in a variety of areas," stated Commissioner Kirkland in his remarks before the Senate's Finance Committee.

"Galen Kirkland has a strong history of service in New York State," said Governor Paterson at the time of his nomination. "In this position, he will continue to be a vital advocate for those in need of a powerful voice." Commissioner Kirkland was joined at his confirmation hearing by his wife Natalie Chapman and by First Deputy Commissioner Luis R. Burgos, Jr.

Prior to joining the Division, Commissioner Kirkland served as Director of Program Development at the New York State Office of the Attorney General, where he also served as First Deputy Director of Policy Development during his eight year tenure at that Agency. He previously served as the Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York, overseeing educational advocacy programs on behalf of students in the New York City public schools.

In 1989 Commissioner Kirkland served as the Executive Director of the New York City Civil Rights Coalition, a multiracial coalition of civil rights, religious, and community organizations, where he formulated responses to bias-related violence and organized neighborhood coalitions. Previously, he served as Vice President and General Counsel of the West Harlem Community Organization, Inc. He started his legal career as an associate at Cowan, Liebowitz and Latman in New York City.

Commissioner Kirkland holds a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and a Bachelor of Arts from Dartmouth College.

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New York has the proud distinction of being the first state in the nation to enact a Human Rights Law, which affords every citizen "an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life." The New York State Division of Human Rights was created to enforce this important law and does so through, among other things, the vigorous prosecution of unlawful discriminatory practices and the receipt, investigation, and resolution of complaints of discrimination. Please visit the Division's website at www.dhr.state.ny.us for additional information about the agency and its work.