



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Matthew Chavez Appointed to Second Judicial District Court Bench

Matthew Chavez has been appointed to the Second Judicial District Court bench by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, filling the vacancy left by the retirement of the Honorable Stan Whitaker.

With over 12 years of criminal law experience, Mr. Chavez brings extensive knowledge to the bench. He served as the District Defender in both the Twelfth Judicial and Second Judicial Districts, where he oversaw the Law Offices of the Public Defender's (LOPD) operations, managed complex caseloads, and advocated for criminal justice initiatives.

Since April 2023, Mr. Chavez has served as the Chief Legal Counsel for the New Mexico Department of Public Safety (DPS), where he advised the Cabinet Secretary and leadership on all agency legal matters, managed a team of legal professionals, and represented the department in various legal proceedings. In this role, he provided critical guidance on legislative issues, agency policy, contract negotiations, and compliance with state laws.

His experience extends beyond litigation—Mr. Chavez has collaborated with law enforcement agencies, state legislators, and community organizations to strengthen public safety initiatives and advocate for the rights of individuals within the justice system. Additionally, he has played a pivotal role in educating future legal professionals, serving as guest faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law and leading various training programs.

“It is truly an honor to be selected for this position,” **said Matthew Chavez.** “I am committed to serving the people of New Mexico with integrity, fairness, and dedication, and I look forward to working with my fellow colleagues.”

“We are thrilled to welcome Matthew Chavez to the Second Judicial District Court,” **said Chief Judge Marie Ward.** “With his extensive experience, he will be an asset and will be able to offer unique perspectives to the bench. The Second Judicial District Court looks forward to working with him.”

Mr. Chavez will be sworn in on March 14, 2025, and will be assigned to Division II.