



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
CIRCUIT COURT  
22ND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
McHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS



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**For Immediate Release**

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## **22nd Judicial Circuit Announces Appointment of Richard A. Behof as McHenry County Public Defender**

**WOODSTOCK, IL** - The Circuit Judges of the 22nd Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois have appointed Richard A. Behof as the next Public Defender for McHenry County, effective February 7, 2026.

The appointment was made by majority vote of the Circuit Court Judges on January 15, 2026, pursuant to Section 3-4004 of the Illinois Counties Code. Mr. Behof will succeed Mark G. Cook, who announced his resignation after nearly 40 years of distinguished public service and whose final day in office will be February 6, 2026.

Mr. Behof brings more than three decades of experience in public defense and an extensive history of service to McHenry County. Born in Chicago and raised in the McHenry County area, he is a graduate of Carmel High School in Mundelein. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology from Carthage College and received his Juris Doctor from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 1994. After clerking with the Lake County Public Defender's Office, he was sworn in to practice law in May 1995 and began his career with the McHenry County Public Defender's Office later that year, where he has served continuously since September 1995.

Throughout his career, Mr. Behof has demonstrated a strong commitment to the constitutional rights of indigent defendants and to the fair administration of justice. His institutional knowledge, leadership, and dedication to public service reflect the values of the Office of the Public Defender and the broader justice system.

"I am honored that the Circuit Judges have the faith in me to carry out the duties of the Public Defender. I look forward to leading the fine group of attorneys at the Public Defender's Office" stated Mr. Behof.

**The mission of the 22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County is to be the guardian of life, liberty and property to all seeking access to justice, by adhering to practices that ensure equality, fairness and confidence in the judiciary.**

Mr. Behof resides in McHenry County, is a lifelong fan of the Chicago Cubs and Chicago Bears, and is the proud father of Carter, a 20-year-old college student pursuing aviation studies at Arizona State University. He has expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside the dedicated professionals of the McHenry County Public Defender's Office and values the relationships developed with colleagues past and present.

For additional information, please contact:

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