



New Jersey Governor Christie Shakes Up State Supreme Court



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Today, New Jersey's Republican Governor Chris Christie took an unprecedented step towards reshaping the future of New Jersey's Supreme Court by nominating attorney Anne Murray Patterson to replace Justice John Wallace. Justice Wallace, the Court's lone African-American, was nominated to the Court in 2003 by former New Jersey Governor James McGreevey. Justice Wallace was appointed for an initial seven-year term that expires this month, after which he would be eligible for tenure if re-appointed. Governor Christie declined to support Justice Wallace for tenure. Justice Wallace is the first New Jersey Supreme Court Justice to be denied tenure, making Governor Christie's announcement today an historic event.

Governor Christie stated that his decision not to support tenure for Justice Wallace, and to nominate Ms. Patterson in his place, was to fulfill a campaign promise to effect a change in what he views as an activist Court, rather than a commentary on Justice Wallace's service. Ms. Patterson, a graduate of Cornell Law School and currently a partner with the Morristown, New Jersey law firm of Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland & Perretti LLP, previously served as a special assistant to the New Jersey Attorney General and a Deputy Attorney General of the State of New Jersey. A litigator practicing primarily in the areas of product liability and commercial litigation, Ms. Patterson is well regarded amongst the defense bar and has been an active member of the New Jersey Defense Association.

Given the nature of Governor Christie's decision today, it is expected that Ms. Patterson's nomination will elicit considerable debate and opposition from many of New Jersey's Democratic State Senators. If confirmed by the New Jersey State Senate, Ms. Patterson would likely be a more conservative voice on the Court.



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