

From: [BOS Public Comment](#)
To: [All BOS Board Members](#)
Cc: [Steven Rose](#); [Alison Lehman](#)
Subject: FW: Position of the District Attorney
Date: Monday, June 7, 2021 11:32:00 AM

From: Loletta Hadel [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021 1:27 PM
To: BOS Public Comment <BOS.PublicComment@co.nevada.ca.us>
Subject: Position of the District Attorney

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Dear Board Members,

I would like to make a recommendation for the position of District Attorney of Nevada County.

I retired from Nevada County in 2018 after 31 years of service and for 28 1/2 of those years I was a crime victim advocate with the Nevada County Victim Witness Assistance Center.

I have had the pleasure of working with Jesse Wilson since he was a volunteer in the district attorney's office several years ago and then after he was hired as a full time deputy district attorney. After the Victim Witness program transferred from the probation department to the district attorney's office in July 2011, I got to know Jesse even better on a personal and professional level. Personally, he is a dedicated family man and when asked he proudly enjoyed talking about his wife and children. Professionally, Jesse is hard working, conscientious, professional, thorough and sensitive to the needs of crime victims. As an advocate, I worked many cases with Jesse especially when he was assigned to cover the sexual assault case load which is possibly one of the most difficult case loads to handle due to legal complexities and the unpredictability of the involved victims. However, Jesse was always patient and understanding of the victim's needs, their emotional trauma, their reluctance to seek prosecution and the added difficulties of working with victims that often included mental health and substance abuse issues.

Because Jesse has previously worked in the office, I believe he has a very good understanding of some of the deep seated issues that have been plaguing the office for quite some time leading to frequent turn over in personnel. Due to this constant turn over, I have seen many competent and outstanding employees leave Nevada County employment which then results in a drop in morale and increased case load on the remaining staff. Having worked with hundreds, if not thousands of crime victims, I can also tell you that victims often form a bond with the prosecutor and victim advocate involved in their case and the constant turn over of personnel is very difficult and upsetting to them as they are already very emotionally vulnerable and are struggling to regain their sense of trust due to their victimization. Many of his colleagues were saddened when Jesse left the office to work in El Dorado County so it would be a tremendous asset to have him return and to take the helm.

I am sorry that you are receiving this email so late in the selection process but I recently returned from a trip out of state and was unable to contact you sooner.

Thank you for your time and attention to all the input received on the candidates for this very important office.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Loletta Hadel

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Julie Patterson-Hunter](#)
To: [All BOS Board Members](#)
Cc: [Alison Lehman](#); [Steven Rose](#)
Subject: FW: Appointment of Interim District Attorney
Date: Monday, June 7, 2021 8:02:01 AM

From: Peter Brewer [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021 5:58 PM
To: bdofsupervisors <bdofsupervisors@co.nevada.ca.us>
Subject: Appointment of Interim District Attorney

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Dear Honorable Supervisors: I write to urge you to give strong consideration to appointing Chris Walsh as the interim District Attorney following Mr. Newell's departure. I was a volunteer in the District Attorney's office, until Covid made my further participation impractical, so I have seen the operations of that office from the inside and outside. My observation is that Mr. Walsh is dedicated, hard-working, and even-handed with both the citizens and the defendants. He is well-liked and respected by those who have been working under his supervision, myself included.

I think it would be a mistake to promote an outsider over the ranks of those who have worked under Chris and who support him. Moreover, if demoralizing Chris by appointing an outsider over him caused him to leave it would be a tragic loss of talent for our County. Appointing Chris as the interim D.A. would contribute to continuity in the office and cause the least disruption. If the citizenry feels differently, they can express themselves in the election in June 22.

Please give your dedicated consideration to Mr. Walsh's appointment. Thank you for these moments of your attention.

Peter Brewer, Attorney at Law
Volunteer Assistant at the Nevada County District Attorney's Office

From: [James Morris](#)
To: [BOS Public Comment](#)
Subject: District Attorney Appointment
Date: Friday, June 4, 2021 4:16:22 PM

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Dear Board of Supervisors,

My name is James Morris and I am a former Nevada County deputy district attorney (2016-2019). I am writing in regards to your upcoming decision on whom to appoint as the next District Attorney of Nevada County. As you no doubt appreciate, your decision will likely determine the definition of justice in Nevada County for years to come. I believe, based on my experience, that if the Board appoints Assistant District Attorney Chris Walsh, it will saddle the county with an ineffective, inefficient and corrupt District Attorney's Office. I apologize in advance for the length of my email, but there is a great deal of history the Board should be aware of before it makes its decision.

Mr. Walsh's tenure started in the summer of 2017. He inherited an office of committed and skilled attorneys that viewed each other not only as colleagues, but friends. I am confident that if you asked every attorney in the office at the time, they would agree that 2016, under the leadership of Joe Alexander, was one of the most professionally rewarding years of their life. Within two years attorneys were fleeing the office. By the fall of 2019 nearly every deputy district attorney left the office - some positions were filled and vacated more than once in that time. Except for those attorneys that left due to retirement, every one of those departures was related to the (lack of) leadership by Chris Walsh. In less than two years, Mr. Walsh destroyed the finest office I had ever been a part of.

Mr. Walsh initially got off to an impressive start. I was typically the first attorney in the building, but I soon found myself in competition with Mr. Walsh. It reached a point where we were both arriving at 5:00 a.m.. I couldn't help but appreciate his work ethic and enthusiasm. His commitment, however, quickly waned.

Within a month he began an affair with a young sheriff's deputy. Though another senior deputy and myself warned of the downsides to sleeping with a member of law enforcement in a small community, Mr. Walsh persisted. His attention eventually became consumed by the affair - I no longer had to worry about being the second attorney in the building. He would be unexpectedly out of the office for extended periods of time and would often miss entire days without any notice. The other deputies and I would routinely text or call the sheriff's deputy in order to get through to Mr. Walsh. The younger deputies and myself began turning more and more to Mr. Jesse Wilson for advice and general guidance on our cases. Eventually, Mr. Walsh's absenteeism began to cause significant problems with his casework.

When Mr. Walsh took over the assistant position he inherited a number of homicide cases. One of those was Jason Schuller. Mr. Schuller had pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. Although Mr. Walsh had turned over the bulk of the case to Mr. Wilson, he handled the insanity portion of the trial himself. In the weeks leading up to the insanity portion of the trial Mr. Walsh spent more time out of the office than in it. The deputies reached a point where we

were more surprised to see him than not. This is why it came as no surprise to any of us when the jury could not reach a verdict on Mr. Schuller's sanity. Even though the evidence was heavily in favor of the prosecution - Mr. Walsh had botched the case. I have no doubt his lack of preparation lead to the jury's decision. The insanity portion was retried but this time Mr. Walsh hired a grossly expensive expert witness from Los Angeles to help make his case. Mr. Walsh was successful the second time but only after a massive waste of office funds. Mr. Walsh's focus on his affair rather than his casework is also one of the root causes in the Finley Fultz fiasco.

The Finley Fultz case was one of the homicides Mr. Walsh had inherited when he took the assistant position. It was easily the most high profile and legally complex homicide in the office. Although Mr. Alexander had largely refused to consider cutting a plea bargain with two of the murder defendants, Mr. Walsh quickly began negotiating a settlement with two of the three murderers. Eventually he had a deal in place. Then, two weeks before trial, he dumped the case on Mr. Wilson. Although Mr. Wilson had assisted with the case, he did not anticipate being the lead attorney in this complicated multi-defendant homicide. The timing of Mr. Walsh's decision to turn the case over was especially curious because Mr. Wilson had just completed the latest in a string of demanding sexual assault trials. The other deputies and I recognized Mr. Walsh simply didn't want to invest the time and attention the case demanded - he had other things going on.

Mr. Wilson handled the trial with skill, but he could not have known that Mr. Walsh had failed to disclose to the defense the details surrounding the plea agreement with the two defendants. The failure to disclose those details amounted to what is called a *Brady* violation - meaning the prosecution failed to turn over exculpatory evidence to the defense. It is one of the worst offenses a prosecutor can commit. What I remember the most about the dismissal of the case is that Mr. Walsh did not bother to go to court when the judge issued his ruling. The most important case in the county was being dismissed because of his failures, but Mr. Walsh couldn't be bothered to actually go to court. He left Mr. Wilson there to receive the court's wrath even though he had nothing to do with the basis for the dismissal. Mr. Walsh's failure to stand before the judge was pure cowardice. But, even when Mr. Walsh wasn't distracted by his extracurricular activities, he continually displayed poor decision making and an inability to accurately assess evidence needed to obtain a conviction at trial.

Mr. Walsh charged Schennal Gomez and Christopher Bancroft with the murder of Donald Ormsby in 2018. He then immediately assigned the case to a deputy district attorney - by this point Mr. Walsh had largely outsourced the caseload that was previously assisted to assistant district attorney. The assigned deputy immediately recognized the case against Gomez and Bancroft could not be proven. I distinctly recall walking by the assigned deputy's office and seeing his head in his hands and a look of dejection on his face - he knew he couldn't prove the case but he also knew his boss had charged it so there was no turning back. The assigned deputy was right. The evidence against Gomez was insufficient to meet the lowest standard in criminal law (probable cause) and the case was dismissed at the preliminary hearing. Mr. Walsh declined to refile the charges. Bancroft's case wouldn't be dismissed for another two years, but once Mr. Walsh was faced with having to take the case to trial himself he dropped the charges. Mr. Walsh claimed he received new evidence to justify the dismissal, but I spoke with the defense attorney and confirmed the "new" evidence had been in law enforcement's possession for over a year. Mr. Walsh's inability to properly assess the strength of a case has been passed down to his new deputies.

Though I am no longer in the district attorney's office, I keep in touch with several defense attorneys and the sole remaining deputy from my time. These attorneys would tell me of the dramatic increase in acquittals at trial. I had a hard time believing the defense was as successful as they claimed, so I submitted a records request to the court for trial outcomes between 2016 and 2021. Between 2016 and 2019 (this the time period when the attorneys Mr. Walsh inherited were still in the office) the District Attorney's Office obtained convictions in 80% of their trials. Between 2019 and today, the office obtains convictions in 43% of the cases they take to trial. I cannot stress enough how alarming this decrease in conviction rate is. District Attorneys hand pick their cases. They choose which ones they file and through the plea bargaining process they ultimately choose which ones go to trial. This explains why most District Attorney offices typically enjoy trial conviction rates of 80% or higher range. For comparison, I requested the same records from Placer County. Between fiscal years 18-19 and 20-21, Placer County district attorneys obtained convictions in 85%, 90% and 86% of their trials. The near total collapse in the conviction rate means deputies are not being properly trained on how to present evidence at trial but also, and more importantly, how to discern what is a provable case and what isn't. From what I am told, Mr. Walsh has not initiated any substantial reforms in light of these trial outcomes.

I have many more stories to tell about Mr. Walsh, including his obvious and fierce retaliation against me when I supported Glenn Jennings in the last election, but I appreciate there must be a limit to my public comment - even if it is an email. You have a momentous decision in front of you. I urge you to make that decision based on those qualities that cannot be taught or simply learned over time: integrity, work ethic, willingness to mentor, adaptability and compassion. Jesse Wilson has those qualities. Whatever shortcomings he may have in terms of experience he makes up for with skill, character and commitment.

Thank you for your time and attention,
James Morris

To: Nevada County Board of Supervisors

My name is Ed Grubaugh, and I was a Deputy District Attorney in Nevada County from October 2017 until May 2020. During that time, I worked closely with Jesse Wilson. He was the assigned prosecutor for sexual assaults and tried a couple of homicide cases too. Mr. Wilson stood out to me as highly competent and ethical. I have been a prosecutor in the State of California for over nine years, and Mr. Wilson had a combination of skill, smarts, cleverness, and humility that I have rarely seen matched.

Mr. Wilson puts the work in. I remember coming into the office on the occasional weekend to check my email or look at a file. Often, I would see Mr. Wilson sitting at his desk, a giant folder open as he studied his upcoming trials. His willingness to work until the job was complete prepared him for his complex and difficult cases.

Mr. Wilson cares about the community. I joined the Nevada County District Attorney's Office after having served as a Deputy District Attorney in Orange County. Mr. Wilson helped mentor me to understand the issues specific to Nevada County. He would take the time to sit down with me and discuss my cases no matter how busy he was.

I trust Mr. Wilson. I see in him a good attorney and good leader, dedicated to serving the community and improving the attorneys around him. I wish you luck in making the right decision.

Sincerely,

Ed Grubaugh

From: [Oliver Pong](#)
To: [BOS Public Comment](#)
Subject: Endorsement for Mr. Jesse Wilson for Interim DA.
Date: Monday, June 7, 2021 5:33:13 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of County of Nevada email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I had previously written to you in expressing endorsement for Mr. Jesse Wilson. In The Union article, Mr. Wilson said he left our office to work in El Dorado County as the values in the Nevada County Office did not align with his. I am sure you are all sophisticated enough to read between the lines. Our office has had no leadership the entire 14 years when Cliff Newell held office. There was no moral compass. There was no ethical boundaries. The extraordinary number of deputies who had left is a clearest reflection of our dysfunction.

Now we have Mr. Mathew Beauchamp mention the lapse of ethical conduct by Mr. Walsh that resulted in Judge Anderson declaring a mistrial in the Fultz case. The misconduct is inexcusable for an attorney and completely unacceptable for an Assistant DA.

In the two decades I had served the county as a deputy DA, I have seen no mentoring of young experienced deputies by the management, no direction in how to evaluate cases or acting in a professional, ethical manner.

To appoint Mr. Walsh to be interim DA would be to perpetuate Cliff Newell's dysfunctional administration. Our office needs a clean slate and a house cleaning. While Mr. Beauchamp has experience as the DA of Colusa County, Mr. Wilson has personal knowledge of the problems in the office. He has credibility with the judges and staff in our office. He knows who and where the problems are and not be bamboozled by ingratiating employees.

Finally, Mr. Beauchamp's son Patrick is already a deputy DA in the office, and it will be a conflict of interest to have family members working in the same office. We have already experienced Mr. Newell dating and marrying his own deputy DA when she worked in the same office. We don't need anymore conflicts.

I thank you for your consideration.

OLIVER O. PONG,
DEPUTY DA 1999-2019, RETIRED

From: [sims_ely](#)
To: [BOS Public Comment](#)
Subject: Jesse Wilson is a great candidate
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 8:57:37 AM

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To The Nevada County Board of Supervisors:

It has come to my attention that Jesse Wilson is under consideration for appointment to interim District Attorney.

I had the pleasure of working as a prosecutor with Jesse Wilson at the Nevada County District Attorney's office from June 2018 to January 2019. I can say with compunction that Jesse Wilson would be a fantastic interim D.A. I can further say, based on first hand knowledge, that Jesse Wilson is better qualified and would make a better interim D.A. than any other internal candidate under consideration.

I am currently employed as a Deputy County Counsel for the County of Yuba. As such, I have an intimate knowledge of county government and what it takes to run an office like a District Attorney's office. It would certainly be in the public's best interest to appoint Jesse Wilson to the position.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Sims Ely

From: [Paige Carnahan](#)
To: [BOS Public Comment](#)
Subject: Jesse Wilson for DA
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 11:49:36 AM

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Dear Board of Supervisors,

My name is Paige Carnahan and I am a Deputy District Attorney who was employed at the Nevada County District Attorney's Office from 2017-2019, and also interned there in the summer of 2015. I grew up in Nevada City, and it is still my favorite place to come home to. I care a lot about the future of Nevada County and I believe this decision about who should be the next District Attorney is very important for the future of the community. I had the pleasure of working with Mr. Wilson the entire time I was employed in Nevada County. He was an incredible mentor to me as a young prosecutor, and I credit him with helping me become the trial attorney that I am today. He is well respected in the law enforcement and legal community and is the best choice for District Attorney. Mr. Wilson served Nevada County as a Deputy District Attorney for a number of years and was who I considered to be the top prosecutor in our office at the time I began in misdemeanors. He prosecuted all of the sex crimes in the county and handled that tough assignment with such integrity. He was always willing to help guide and mentor the younger attorneys no matter how busy he was with his own caseload. He even took on a homicide case from the acting ADA who was not in the office enough to adequately prepare for the case. He has had a successful career as a trial attorney, serving his community and obtaining justice for victims. He is an asset to the District Attorney's Office and will bring experience, knowledge, and professionalism to his role. Having worked with Mr. Wilson I have no doubt that he will be an outstanding District Attorney. He will serve the community in an ethical and just manner, and focus on mending relationships with justice partners. The opportunity to have Mr. Wilson return to Nevada County is one that can not be passed up.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions about Mr. Wilson.

Best,

Paige Carnahan
Deputy District Attorney

May 10, 2021

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to recommend to you Jesse Wilson as the next District Attorney for Nevada County. I first met Jesse when we were both deputy district attorneys in Nevada County in 2016. At that time, I was assigned to a misdemeanor caseload, while Jesse handled felonies. Given that Jesse was a more experienced DDA, I took every opportunity possible to learn from him. I witnessed firsthand Jesse address tough legal questions head on, do the hard work on every case, and never compromise his ethics and standards. I have strived to mirror Jesse's approach to cases as I continue working as a deputy district attorney. After my time at Nevada County, Jesse moved on to work for the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office. By all accounts, Jesse has only continued to refine his skills as a prosecutor in that office.

My career as deputy district attorney has afford me the chance to work in various District Attorney Offices throughout the state and meet numerous District Attorneys. It is against that experience that I can say that Jesse possesses every characteristic a county would want from their District Attorney. He is tough but fair, understands the importance of rehabilitation without sacrificing justice, and most importantly, knows the community he would be serving. Jesse will be an outstanding District Attorney.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this recommendation, please do not hesitate to call me at [REDACTED] or email me at [REDACTED]. Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Regards,

Joe Guzman