

Press Release
For Immediate Release
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**PROSECUTORS AND PUBLIC DEFENDERS COME TOGETHER FOR
LASTING CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**

*Commonly Seen as Adversaries APA and NLADA are Now Collaborating
On Recommendations for Fundamental Changes to the Criminal Justice System*

Washington, D.C.- Over the past year and a half, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) have been serving as strategic allies in a national effort to bring lasting changes to the criminal justice system, also known as the Safety and Justice Challenge. The Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC or the Challenge) is a \$100 million investment by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation aimed at changing the way America thinks about and uses its jails. As strategic allies in the SJC, APA and NLADA are committed to supporting jurisdictions in fulfilling their criminal justice reform goals.

Defenders and prosecutors involved with the Challenge support twin goals of decreasing unnecessary criminal justice involvement and reducing racial and ethnic disparities within the law enforcement system. The ultimate objective is to promote justice and create safer communities, which is paramount to ensure a more just and fair U.S. criminal justice system.

“This is the ultimate story of strange bedfellows making the best partners,” said APA President and CEO David LaBahn. “Everyone involved in the Challenge recognizes that to make sustainable change requires collaboration from all criminal justice system stakeholders, including those who are traditionally adversaries in the courtroom, such as defenders and prosecutors. It has been a joy working with NLADA on this very important project, and we look forward to continuing this essential partnership for years to come.”



“Cultivating unlikely, yet powerful alliances with prosecutors enhances problem-solving for sustainable criminal justice reform,” said Jo-Ann Wallace, President and CEO, National Legal Aid & Defender Association. “We at NLADA are proud to be a part of the successful collaboration cultivated by the Safety and Justice Challenge. Working with APA on this critical initiative has been an honor and a pleasure. We look forward to realizing the transformative impact that this partnership can have on low-income people accused of crimes in a pretrial justice system so heavily weighted against them.”

The SJC’s national efforts required regular meetings where prosecutors and defenders shared information regarding effective collaboration strategies and developed new ideas on how to best leverage their respective roles and expertise to address systemic issues that contribute to jail incarceration.

As a result of those meetings, APA and NLADA were able to craft *Beyond The Adversarial System: Achieving the Challenge*. *Beyond The Adversarial System* is a joint paper with recommendations aimed at promoting and improving successful collaborations between prosecutors and defenders. Along with distributing the paper, APA and NLADA are hosting a joint webinar for the criminal justice community to learn more about this important partnership.

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