



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE

## OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 27, 2017**

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## **Vignati Appointed Assistant Commissioner at Department of Juvenile Justice**

**(Atlanta, GA)** – Joseph Vignati, who has served as the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice’s (DJJ) Division of Community Services since May 15, 2015, has been appointed by DJJ Commissioner Avery D. Niles to the position of Assistant Commissioner and Chief of Staff. In his new role, Vignati’s responsibilities will include program oversight and management of strategic initiatives for the Department.

Commissioner Niles stated, “I am pleased to promote Joe Vignati into this important position. During his tenure at DJJ he has made a difference each and every day, and I know he will serve the youth under DJJ care and the citizens of Georgia in an exemplary manner.

On October 1, 2016 Vignati began serving a two-year appointment to the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (FACJJ) by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice. He serves as the primary member for Jurisdiction G, which comprises Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina.

“To be appointed to this elite group is an honor for Joe and for the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and it speaks volumes for what he has accomplished at DJJ,” stated DJJ Commissioner Avery D. Niles. “On behalf of all of DJJ’s employees, we are proud and delighted for Joe. He will help convey FACJJ’s perspectives on juvenile justice issues to the President, Members of Congress and the OJJDP Administrator.”

Reacting to the appointment, Vignati said, “I am humbled to be selected for this role by Commissioner Niles and am excited about the challenges and opportunities that go along with the position. DJJ is making a difference in the lives of 50,000 young people in Georgia, and I am proud to work with 4,000 other DJJ employees to help these youths become productive members of society. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to help shape the important work that DJJ staff members carry out 24/7.”

(more)

*AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER*

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Intimately involved in all aspects of Georgia's juvenile justice system for nearly 30 years, Vignati has tirelessly served at-risk youth in a wide variety of roles, both in his career with state government and as a volunteer in community settings. During his tenure with the Governor's Office, he successfully secured \$67 million in federal criminal justice funds for the state of Georgia.

Vignati joined the Georgia Children and Youth Coordinating Council in 2000 and served as the state's Juvenile Justice Specialist until 2014. In 2008, he was named Director of Justice Programs of the newly created Governor's Office for Children and Families in Georgia and served as Administrator of the Office's Justice Division. In 2009, Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue issued an official commendation recognizing him as a great asset to the state.

In 2010, Vignati was elected the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's (CJJ) National Juvenile Justice Specialist by his peers in the 56 U.S. states and territories and served a two-year term. The CJJ presented the Tony Gobar Outstanding Juvenile Justice Specialist Award to Vignati in 2011 for his "demonstrated passion and dedication to bettering the juvenile justice system, advocacy for detention alternatives and service as a leader and a voice for juvenile justice specialists from around the nation in his role as the CJJ National Juvenile Justice Specialist. By exemplifying leadership through service, he reminds us all that every child is indeed special."

In 2012, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal issued an official commendation recognizing "his ongoing contributions to the protection and well-being of Georgia's children." In 2015 the Georgia Juvenile Services Association honored Vignati with the Harold K. Ables Award, recognizing his significant contributions to the field.

Vignati currently serves as Co-Chair of the Juvenile Incentive Grant Funding Committee that has helped award over \$20 million in grant funds specifically aimed to reduce unnecessary out-of-home placements of youth appearing before juvenile courts across Georgia.

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#### **ABOUT DJJ**

*The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is a multi-faceted agency that serves the needs of this state's young offenders up to the age of 21. The Department employs more than 4,000 men and women at 26 secure facilities and 92 community services offices throughout the state to effect justice and redirect the young lives in the agency's care.*

*Including those who are placed on probation, more than 50,000 youths are diverted each year to evidence-based community programs, sentenced to short-term incarceration or committed to the Department's long-term custody by the Juvenile Courts. It is the duty of DJJ's professional corrections staff to preserve public safety and safeguard the citizens of Georgia, as well as protect the victims of crimes so that they can rebuild their lives.*

*At the same time, DJJ holds juvenile offenders accountable for their delinquent conduct so that they can take responsibility for their actions through probation, supervision and secure detention. The youth are provided with medical and psychological treatment, as well as specialized education and programs designed to equip them with the social, intellectual and emotional tools needed to achieve their successful reentry and reintegration into community, workplace and neighborhood settings as more productive and law-abiding citizens.*



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