



Law Office of the  
**COOK COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER**

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Amy P. Campanelli • Public Defender

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**COOK COUNTY BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR  
NEW PUBLIC DEFENDER IMMIGRATION UNIT**

Today, during her annual budget address, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced the County's support of a new Immigration Unit being launched by Public Defender Amy P. Campanelli. The new Immigration Unit will be funded through a private/public partnership between Cook County and private funding thanks to the support of the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation.

During her remarks today, President Preckwinkle noted: *"The [Public Defender] Immigration Unit builds upon Cook County's commitment of being a fair and equal community for all residents regardless of their immigration status. With an additional \$350,000 for more staff, the Public Defender can continue to fight the good fight protecting our immigrant communities and ensuring that their clients are fully informed of the potential immigration consequences of their criminal cases."*

The new unit will finally enable the Public Defender's Office to comply with the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case of *Padilla v. Kentucky*, which ruled that the Sixth Amendment's right to counsel includes a criminal defendant's right to be counseled on the immigration consequences of their criminal cases. 559 US 356 (2010). Twenty-five years before the *Padilla* decision, the Illinois Supreme Court held that an attorney's failure to advise a criminal client about the immigration consequences of a guilty plea made the plea void because it was not done in a sufficiently knowing and intelligent manner and was therefore not voluntary. See *People v. Correa*, 485 N.E. 2d 307 (Ill. 1985).

The new Immigration Unit will provide Campanelli's assistant public defenders with the necessary support to make sure their clients are fully informed of the potential immigration consequences of their criminal cases, thereby enabling them to make strategic decisions about the resolution of their criminal case.

*"Since becoming the Public Defender, I have been committed to providing holistic legal services that extend beyond the four walls of the criminal courtroom to help our clients address the underlying reasons for being in the criminal court system, as well as minimizing the collateral consequences that stem from being court involved. The Immigration Unit is another step towards realizing this vision. Thanks to the support of President Preckwinkle, the Cook County Board of Commissioners and the Pritzker Foundation, we can now do more than just give notice; we can*

*assist our non-citizen clients in alleviating the immigration consequences that may result from their criminal case. I'm hiring a team of lawyers, paralegals and caseworkers who have experience in immigration law to ensure we can provide our clients with the very best representation.*" -- Amy Campanelli, Cook County Public Defender

Deputy Connie Jordan, who will oversee the new unit, noted: *"This Unit will help to strengthen our holistic representation of clients by providing security, assistance and hope beyond the charges they are accused of. We will no longer have to rely on the mercy of private attorneys for advice concerning issues of immigration, nor worry that our clients will be alone when faced with deportation. We will have our own experts to advise the clients. This Grant will not just help our clients but will help their families to continue to be united. This Grant will help to ensure that in Cook County, free representation does not end at the steps of the criminal courthouse, but extends to whatever courthouse that could end our client's freedom here in the United States."*

The Public Defender Immigration Unit officially launched on September 28, 2020, when Hena Mansori assumed her new role as the Immigration Unit Attorney Supervisor. Ms. Mansori has significant experience representing detained individuals in immigration removal proceedings, having managed the Detention Project at the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC).

*"I am very excited to join the Public Defender's Office as the first Immigration Unit attorney supervisor. I strongly believe that strengthening the Public Defender's Office's ability to provide Padilla advice to non-citizen clients is crucial to protecting the due process rights of these clients."*

The Public Defender's Office would like to thank Cook County Commissioner Alma Anaya (7<sup>th</sup> District), who represents the district with the largest immigrant population in Cook County and who led the effort to garner support for the Immigration Unit throughout the local community and among her colleagues in the Cook County Board of Commissioners. In addition, the Public Defender's Office received significant advocacy support from the Defenders for All Coalition (D4A), which represents over 30 organizations that have supported the creation of a dedicated immigration unit within the Public Defender's Office with the purpose of protecting immigrant families from separation and deportation. The advocacy efforts of the coalition generated endorsements for the new Unit from numerous community and faith-based organizations, as well as several Cook County Commissioners and elected officials from the Illinois General Assembly.

More information about the D4A coalition can be found on the Public Defender's website:

[www.cookcountypublicdefender.org](http://www.cookcountypublicdefender.org)