

**Office of the Cook County  
Compliance Administrator**

69 West Washington  
Suite 1416  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Telephone: 312-603-8905  
www.countyshakman.com

Julia M. Nowicki  
Compliance Administrator  
julianowicki@countyshakman.com

Peter A. Monahan  
Counsel  
pmonahan@countyshakman.com

**For Immediate Release**

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**New Cook County Compliance Administrator appointed as  
Julia Nowicki announces her resignation**

Judge Wayne Andersen has appointed Mary Robinson, former Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Illinois Supreme Court, as the new Cook County Compliance Administrator after Julia Nowicki announced her resignation. Nowicki had been appointed Cook County Compliance Administrator (CA) pursuant to the Supplemental Relief Order (SRO) issued by the federal court on November 30, 2006 to oversee the County's efforts to eliminate illegal patronage from its workforce. After serving as the CA for more than two years, Nowicki announced her resignation effective March 1, 2009.

Nowicki spent her time as the CA studying illegal patronage within Cook County employment pursuant to the SRO. She submitted periodic reports outlining patronage abuses. Her office monitors all hiring at the County, and she oversaw the adjudication of over 200 claims. As a result of the SRO, the County reports many accomplishments, including the use of certification forms in all aspects of the hiring process, changes in the Human Resources Bureau and the passage of an independent board for the Health and Hospital System.

Despite these accomplishments, Nowicki, in a letter to the Board of Commissioners she sent upon her resignation, states that the County has much work to do in order to eradicate illegal patronage in its employment practices. In the letter Nowicki made it clear that she was not charged with responsibility of eradicating illegal patronage practices. She reminded the Board that that responsibility was theirs.

She also made it clear that the Board can enact her recommendations without any further cost to the taxpayers. Nowicki states "[t]he days of the patronage worker being

accountable to his/her ward committeeman are over.” She said that the Board must find a way to make all County employees accountable to them.

To emphasize her point, the letter also related two examples of conduct that needs to change. Nowicki noted that one physician expressed fear that retribution would take the form of being denied needed supplies being denied by his patients. Some years ago another employee was actually fired by the then Cook County Board President after speaking out against illegal patronage at a Cook County Board Meeting. Nowicki tells the Board “[y]ou should be outraged....”

Although Nowicki’s letter cites the hiring of a new non-political Human Resources Bureau Chief as the County’s most significant accomplishment to date, Nowicki expressed her disappointment in the County’s failure to undertake its own investigation of illegal patronage acts. She made a number of recommendations calling for the Board to be directly involved.

Among those recommendations were a complete overhaul of the County’s Human Resources Bureau, which should include adoption of a new hiring plan for the County, thorough evaluation of all existing job descriptions and the required use of performance evaluations for all employees, including Shakman exempt employees. Nowicki notes that the recommendations can be enacted “without expenditure of funds.”

To continue the efforts initiated by Nowicki, Judge Andersen has selected Mary Robinson as the new CA. As ARDC Administrator, Robinson was responsible for overseeing the investigation and prosecution of disciplinary complaints against Illinois attorneys. “Mary Robinson is a dynamic attorney who is determined to carry out the mandates of the SRO,” said U.S. District Judge Wayne Andersen. Nowicki believes that Robinson’s background and experience will be valuable to the County.

Judge Andersen thanked Julia Nowicki for “her intelligent and decisive leadership and her ability to create progress, often by consensus, in the face of a difficult historical pattern of political patronage. I have no doubt whatsoever that Mary Robinson will step in without pause and, hopefully, lead both the Court and the County to a principled and successful resolution of this 40 year old case.”

Robinson anticipates a smooth transition and is hopeful she can assist the County in reaching Substantial Compliance with the SRO within 18 months. “I urge County employees to continue to be forthcoming with any information they have about illegal patronage by contacting the CA’s office as well as the Inspector General’s Office.”

For more information about the Supplemental Relief Order entered under by the federal district court, or how to report retaliation or current patronage, visit [www.countyshakman.com](http://www.countyshakman.com).

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