



Composite photo from video of then newly appointed NYC DOC Commissioner Joseph Ponte, left, Mayor de Blasio, and then newly appointed Mayor's Office Criminal Justice Senior Advisor Vincent Schiraldi, right, at the March 11, 2014, announcement of new additions to the administration's public safety team.

Joseph Ponte and Vincent Schiraldi appointments announced by Mayor

NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio on March 11, 2014, announced key criminal justice appointments to his administration, including Joseph Ponte as Commissioner of NYC DOC and Vincent Schiraldi as Senior Advisor to the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. Years later Schiraldi would be named Probation Commissioner and still later Correction Commissioner..

"These [four] leaders have the depth of experience and knowledge necessary to reduce recidivism, increase public safety and lower incarceration rates – and I'm confident

that under their leadership, we will reform outdated practices and guide these city agencies into a new era," said Mayor de Blasio. "Together, these appointees will bring about a cohesive, community-focused criminal justice policy for the City of New York."

In his forty-year corrections career, Joseph Ponte has earned a national reputation as a successful reformer. Currently the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections, Ponte has a broad range of experience that offers a unique perspective and deep understanding of corrections system management. Ponte has served as a correctional officer, a warden, and as director and commissioner of numerous corrections systems around the country, and understands the challenges each member of the corrections community faces. As Commissioner of the Maine DOC, Ponte instituted reforms that reduced the use of solitary confinement by two-thirds, and completely eliminated the use of disciplinary segregation for people identified as mentally ill. He will be charged with overhauling the city's corrections system: ending the overuse of solitary confinement, curtailing officers' use of excessive force, and improving resources to handle the mentally ill.

"Every resident of this city deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. From schools to hospitals to prisons, we cannot let our commitment to safety and fair resources falter for a single member of our society. We need to end the culture of excessive solitary confinement and unnecessary force, and bring a new mentality of respect and safety to our wardens, officers and inmates alike," said incoming Department of Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte.

### **About Joseph Ponte**

A native of Massachusetts, Joseph Ponte has more than 40 years of experience working in the corrections field. During his distinguished career in corrections, Ponte has served as a correctional officer, a warden, and as director and commissioner of corrections systems.

Ponte comes to New York City from Maine, where, since 2011, he served as Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections. As Commissioner of the Maine DOC, Ponte has instituted reforms that reduced the use of solitary confinement by two-thirds and reduced both officers' use of force and the number of violent incidents. Ponte has also served as Director of the jail in Shelby County, Tennessee (which includes Memphis), where he led one of the largest jails in the country – helping transform the violence-prone jail while supporting its staff – and eventually led the jail successfully through accreditation by the American Correctional Association. Additionally, Ponte has served as a warden in jails and prisons in Nevada, Florida, Tennessee, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Ponte, a Marine Corps veteran (1965-1969), holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Bridgewater State College.

### **About Vincent Schiraldi**

Vincent Schiraldi has led the New York City Department of Probation for the past four years. Prior to serving as Commissioner of DOP, Schiraldi ran Washington, D.C.'s newly-created Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, where he directed all facets of the city's juvenile and delinquent youth agency. Prior to that, Schiraldi founded and ran, as Executive Director, two separate progressive organizations – the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, a nonprofit Schiraldi directed for 11 years, and the Justice Policy Institute, a nationally-recognized think tank that works collaboratively on criminal and juvenile justice issues with a variety of state governments.

Prior to founding and running those organizations, Schiraldi was the Western Regional Director for the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA). He previously worked for NCIA in New York City. Schiraldi also worked for the New York State Division for Youth and, in San Francisco, for the Human Services Agency.

Schiraldi earned his Bachelor of Arts from Binghamton University and his Masters in Social Work from New York University.

Vincent Schiraldi has led the New York City Department of Probation for the past four years, overseeing significant programmatic innovation and reforms in the agency. From organizing community resource fairs for probation clients to founding the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, Schiraldi has consistently used innovative solutions throughout his career to tackle the unique challenges facing young adults in the criminal justice system. As Senior Advisor to the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Schiraldi will build upon his extensive track record to continue supporting young adults. Working with key city agencies and outside partners, he will focus on the unique challenges posed by young adults in the criminal justice system. In addition, he will work with the city Department of Education, the NYPD and other entities to improve school safety and reduce the number of students who get suspended and arrested.

"I've been honored to lead the Department of Probation, and I look forward to serving the young adults in this city's justice system under the new administration. Mayor de Blasio has made it clear that we must value our children's future if we want this city to succeed – and I'm fully committed to bringing this ethos of dedicated support for our youth to this city's criminal and juvenile justice system," said incoming Senior Advisor to the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Schiraldi.

###