



Elliot Kolkovich

Summit County Prosecutor

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Thursday, October 24, 2024

Prosecutor Kolkovich Provides Fall Report Regarding Reform and Progress in the Summit County Prosecutor's office

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, October 24, 2024) – Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich provided the Office's inaugural Fall Report today regarding reforms within the Prosecutor's Office that he has directed and the progress that the Office has made during the first six months of his tenure.

At the centerpiece of the report is an update about the reorganization of the Office's Criminal Division to prioritize the prosecution of violent offenses, streamline operations, and provide additional stability to victims of crime.

The report also outlines the Office's renewed dedication to rehabilitation for deserving offenders with the hiring of the first-ever Specialty Dockets prosecutor. Finally, the report updates the citizens of Summit County about the work of the Office's Civil/Tax Division, the Child Support Enforcement Agency, and its outreach efforts.

On April 15, 2024, Prosecutor Kolkovich launched the reorganization and established a first of its kind "Major Trial Prosecutor" role in the Adult Felony Unit of the Criminal Division. Major Trial prosecutors exclusively handle high-level prosecutors for homicides, rapes, and other violent offenses.

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“I created the role of Major Trial Prosecutor to focus solely on violent crime impacting our community. Major Trial Prosecutors have significant experience prosecuting the most difficult cases, holding criminals accountable, and standing up for victims of crime,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich. “The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is relentless in its mission of keeping the community safe, and creating the role of Major Trial Prosecutor is closely aligned with that mission.”

Compared to the four months immediately preceding the reorganization, the Office has seen an 18-percent increase in convictions, a 38-percent increase in convictions of felonies of the first and second degrees, and an 11-percent drop in the average length of prosecuting a case.

“The reorganization of the Criminal Division has already improved the the safety of Summit County. Plus, we estimate that our new approach has saved Summit County nearly \$400,000 in court and pretrial detention costs,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich.

The new teams model also includes the hiring of Summit County’s first-ever Specialty Dockets prosecutor who exclusively handles cases assigned to the Court’s drug treatment, mental health, and reentry courts. Through the Office’s collaboration with the Court, there has been nearly a 50-percent increase in deserving offenders being placed in either diversion or intervention in lieu of conviction.

“Placing deserving offenders in rehabilitative programs turns them into productive citizens, ends the revolving door, and saves money for Summit County taxpayers,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich.

The full Fall Report is available online at: <https://prosecutor.summitoh.net>. The highlights of the Fall Report and more details about the reorganization are explained below.

Historic Reorganization of the Adult Felony Unit in the Criminal Division

After reviewing national best practices, Prosecutor Kolkovich directed the reorganization of the Adult Felony Unit. Under the previous framework, assistant prosecutors were assigned to a particular courtroom for a year and then rotated to a different courtroom every year. Additionally, supervisors had to both supervise other assistant prosecutors and handle the Office’s highest-level cases while victim advocates and support staff reported to different supervisors.

Prosecutor Kolkovich created the new “teams” framework to increase the Criminal Division’s effectiveness and efficiency. Under the new model, Major Trial prosecutors, other assistant prosecutors, victim advocates, and support staff all work collaboratively at the direction of one Supervising Attorney. Since the reorganization took effect on April 15, 2024, the Adult Felony Unit has obtained more high-level convictions and disposed of cases in a much timelier fashion. “This new teams approach provides stability for crime victims and their families by assigning Prosecutors, Victim Advocates, and Courtroom Secretaries on a more permanent basis. It also opens more opportunities for senior prosecutors to mentor junior prosecutors and for junior prosecutors to potentially move up to more challenging roles and cases,” added Prosecutor Kolkovich.

As part of this reorganization, Prosecutor Kolkovich named the individuals listed below as Summit County’s first Major Trial Prosecutors. Combined, they have nearly 100 years of experience as attorneys.

Joseph McAleese

- Joseph McAleese has been an assistant prosecutor with the Summit County Prosecutor's Office since 2014, starting in the Office's Child Support Agency. McAleese received his law degree from the University of Akron School of Law. He has been assigned to several divisions while at the Prosecutor's Office, including Child Support, the Civil Division as well as an assignment to the Turning Point Program. In 2018 McAleese was assigned to the Criminal Division where he has prosecuted felony crimes.

"Our team structure has allowed prosecutors to provide each case with the dedication and focus they deserve in order to ensure that the voices of those involved are heard, and justice is reached," said Assistant Prosecutor McAleese.

Dan Sallerson

- Dan Sallerson is a graduate of Cornell University and received his law degree from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. He has worked at the Summit County Prosecutor's Office since 2004.

"It is an honor to be part of the Major Trial Team. It allows each of us to stay with our cases from beginning to end giving continuity and single voice to our victims. We meet our victims and their families when they are dealing with what may be the worst event in their life and this continuity allows a rapport to be built and avoids victims and their families to have to keep repeating their stories to new and different people while we pursue justice for them," said Assistant Prosecutor Sallerson.

Jamila Mitchell

- Jamila Mitchell received her Juris Doctor from the University of Akron Law School in 2003 and has worked as an Assistant Prosecutor in the Summit County Prosecutor's Office since 2017. Jamila has several years of experience working on high level criminal cases in the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, the Richland County Prosecutor's Office, and the Stark County Prosecutor's Office.

"It is an absolute honor to seek justice for those who have been victimized," said Assistant Prosecutor Mitchell.

Seema Misra

- Seema Misra received her law degree from the University of Akron School of Law in 2009 and has worked in the Summit County Prosecutor's Office for over 14 years. Seema has worked in several divisions, including the Civil Division, Juvenile Division - Child Protection Unit, and most recently, the Criminal Division. During her time with the Criminal Division, in addition to handling general felony cases, Seema has been assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit, the Gun Violence Unit, the Human Trafficking Taskforce and now the Major Trial Unit.

"I am honored to be selected to this team of talented and experienced prosecutors. As part of the Major Trial Unit, we can focus our efforts and time to prosecute some of the most serious and high-profile offenses in our county," said Assistant Prosecutor Misra.

Kevin Mayer

- Kevin Mayer graduated from the Ohio Northern University College of Law in 1993. After passing the Ohio bar, Mayer worked as a public defender in Seneca County from 1995-to-2000. Mayer joined the Summit County Prosecutors Office in June 2000 and worked on several units within the office for the past 24 years including the gang unit, meth unit, violent crimes unit and with the gun violence reduction task force unit. Mayer also teaches search and seizure law at several police academies.

“It’s an honor to be a member of the newly formed Major Trial Unit. All five members are seasoned veterans in the courtroom and do their best to work with and improve the skills of our younger prosecutors,” said Assistant Prosecutor Mayer.

First-Ever Specialty Dockets Prosecutor

In addition to the newly reformatted Adult Felony Unit, Prosecutor Kolkovich collaborated with the Summit County Court of Common Pleas to create a Specialty Docket Assistant Prosecutor position. The Specialty Docket prosecutor focuses on ensuring accountability for defendants who are involved in the Court’s various diversion and rehabilitation programs, including Hope Court, Turning Point, Valor Court, and Re-entry Court. Samantha Lisy returns to the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office in this role.

- Samantha Lisy is a graduate of Ashland University and the University of Akron School of Law. She has worked in various divisions within the prosecutor’s office and has previously served as a public defender in Stark County.

“As the dedicated Specialty Docket Prosecutor, I am an integral part of the treatment court team, providing participants consistency and continuity. Our hope is this stability will help increase participants’ successful completion of court programing and give them a second chance at becoming productive members of our community,” said Assistant Prosecutor Lisy.

Progress in the Office’s Juvenile Units

Since Prosecutor Kolkovich’s appointment, the Juvenile Delinquency Unit and the Child Protection Unit have handled over 1,000 matters to keep children safe and to hold juvenile offenders accountable. The Delinquency Unit has handled 609 delinquency matters, including four bindovers of the worst juvenile offenders for prosecution as adults, including three who are charged with murder. Meanwhile, the Child Protection Unit has initiated over 400 abuse, neglect, and dependency matters to reunify families in safer environments.

The Office’s Civil/Tax Division Effectively Handles Hundreds of Matters

The Office’s Civil/Tax Division serves as the law firm for all of Summit County’s governmental agencies, townships in the County, and public libraries. Since January 2024, the Civil/Tax Division has issued 185 prosecutor opinions regarding contract approval and the statutory duties of its clients. The Division has also handled 129 litigation matters in both state and federal court as well as in administrative settings.

The Child Support Enforcement Agency Continues its Award-Winning Ways

In addition to its legal responsibilities, the Office serves as the locally-designated child support enforcement agency. Through August 31, 2024, CSEA has continued to oversee 38,474 cases and collected over \$46 million to support the children of Summit County. Assistant prosecutors in CSEA have also obtained 54 felony nonsupport convictions, which has facilitated the collection of over \$1.7 million in support collections.

The Office's Outreach Team Proactively Prevents Crime

Prosecutor Kolkovich remains committed to proactively preventing crime before it even happens. To that end, the Office's Outreach team has provided safety information, scam avoidance tips, and self-defense classes throughout Summit County. Since January 2024, Summit County Prosecutor's Office representatives have engaged with over 1,000 citizens at hundreds of events. The Office has been grateful to partner with various county agencies, the courts, and community leaders to get these important tips to as many people as possible.

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