

Christie picks Constable for DCA position

Resident would move from Labor Department if nomination approved

By John Zucal
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In announcing several moves within his Cabinet, Gov. Chris Christie said he had nominated Orange resident Richard Constable to lead the state Department of Community Affairs.

Constable, a 39-year-old East Orange native, is deputy commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. He came to the position in 2010 after moving from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark, where he worked under Christie.

Constable's nomination is to be forwarded to the state Senate for its approval. He would begin his new duties Jan. 2 if confirmed.

In a press event to announce his intention to have Constable replace Lori Grifa as DCA commissioner, Christie said personal experience had much to do with the selection.

"Rich has been among my trusted advisors through the years. He has been a most capable individual in all that he pursues," said Christie. "I look forward to having him in this new, vital role, where I expect he will carry through with my government reform agenda with determination and skill."

Christie credited Constable with the creation of the labor department's Fraud and Risk Prevention Unit. Christie said that since April more than \$60 million

in fraudulent unemployment payments had been prevented.

Another money-saving project by Constable, said Christie, was in leading the department to issue more unemployment benefits through debit cards than by paper checks. Christie said about \$8 million was saved through debit cards.

While he worked as an assistant U.S. attorney, Constable served in the Special Prosecutions Division, which handled public corruption cases.

It was through the Special Prosecutions Division that former Mayor Mims Hackett Jr. was charged and eventually served a prison sentence as one of the dozens of public officials from

whom the division secured guilty pleas or verdicts in corruption cases.

Prior to any charges being filed against Hackett, Constable was among the leaders of a failed 2007 effort to recall the mayor.

Through his state position, Constable serves as a member of the state Ethics Commission. He is an adjunct professor at Rutgers Law School and Fordham University School of Law.

After he graduated magna cum laude from the University of Michigan in 1994, Constable clerked for Alan Page, the retired Minnesota Viking lineman who has served nearly two decades on the Minnesota Supreme Court.



Richard Constable