



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
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August 24, 2021

**FROM:** Cheryl Strange, Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Assistant Secretary of Prisons Announcement

I am excited to announce the appointment of Mike Obenland to the Assistant Secretary of Prisons for the Washington State Department of Corrections, effective September 1, 2021. I came into the department just as the long-standing prisons director Rob Herzog retired and appointed retired leader Pat Glebe to step in as interim Assistant Secretary of Prisons while the department conducted a nationwide search, including several out of state applicants.

I want to thank Pat for coming out of retirement and stepping up to ensure that our agency had a stable leader in the interim. Pat was a known commodity, and a trusted leader which was critical while we searched for our next Assistant Secretary.

This role requires someone with a wealth of knowledge in prisons, including someone that understands the importance of safe and humane prison operations and the importance of preparing individuals in our care and custody to return to the community. This includes listening and learning and having a thirst for continuously improving, something I know Mike brings to the table. Mike's leadership has been invaluable in all of the roles he has held for the department and I know he will continue to excel in his appointment as Assistant Secretary of Prisons.

Mike has been with DOC for 32 years and in this time has earned the respect of his team and those in our care and custody. Mike started his career in 1989 as a correctional officer at Clallam Bay Corrections Center. He served in a variety of leadership roles at five different facilities, including Superintendent of Clallam Bay Corrections Center and Superintendent of Monroe Correctional Complex.

Mike has a vast knowledge of prison operations and emergency response and most recently, in his role of Prisons Deputy Director, has been also working with the Department Incident Management Team supporting the COVID-19 response. Mike's leadership has been invaluable in all of the roles he has held for the department and I know he will continue to excel in his appointment as Assistant Secretary of Prisons.