

Partners Joe Hayden and Brendan Walsh Serve as Special Counsel to New Jersey Legislative Select Oversight Committee

RELATED ATTORNEYS

Joseph A. Hayden, Jr.

Brendan M. Walsh

RELATED PRACTICE AREAS

Criminal Defense

News

6.6.19

Partners Joe Hayden and Brendan Walsh Serve as Special Counsel to New Jersey Legislative Select Oversight Committee; Co-Author Report Concerning the Hiring of Albert J. Alvarez as Chief of Staff at the New Jersey Schools Development Authority

In October 2018, the General Assembly of New Jersey retained PSWH partners Joe Hayden and Brendan Walsh to represent it in connection with the New Jersey Legislative Select Oversight Committee's investigation into the response by Governor Phil Murphy's transition team and administration to Katie Brennan's sexual assault allegation against Albert Alvarez. At the time of the alleged assault, Mr. Alvarez was working as a senior staffer on the Murphy for Governor campaign. He went on to serve as deputy director of personnel for the Governor-elect's transition team and then as chief of staff at the New Jersey Schools Development Authority ("SDA"). Ms. Brennan volunteered on the Murphy for Governor campaign, served on a transition advisory committee, and went on to serve, and continues to serve, as chief of staff at the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

The committee reviewed thousands of pages of documents and received sworn testimony from fourteen fact witnesses and two experts over the course of nine days of public hearings before issuing its Report on June 5, 2019. In its Report, co-authored by Mr. Hayden and Mr. Walsh, the committee concluded that the Murphy transition and administration "seriously mishandled the matter by failing to conduct an immediate investigation and by deciding to place Mr. Alvarez at the SDA without a full understanding of the facts." "Transition leadership should have immediately conducted a thorough and rigorous investigation into the allegation," the Report stated,

adding, “the people entrusted with properly and responsibly handling Ms. Brennan’s complaint failed her at every step of the way.” The committee also concluded that “some witnesses provided evasive or misleading testimony.”

The Report includes nine recommended changes to law and policy, including, but not limited to, amending the Gubernatorial Transition Act to provide added protections to transition workers, providing for civil service oversight of the SDA, granting future transition teams more resources to perform background checks into applicants, creating questionnaires for applicants about criminal charge/investigation against them, and establishing a hotline for discrimination/harassment complainants.

No committee member voted against the Report. The Senate Republicans also issued their own statement joining in the Report, but expressing their view that the committee should have investigated other potentially questionable hiring decisions and employment practices at the SDA generally.

To read a copy of the report - [**CLICK HERE**](#)

Media coverage includes:

- June 10, 2019 | Politico, Matt Friedman | [**Is today override day?**](#)
- June 9, 2019 | Asbury Park Press, Randy Bergmann | [**Gov. Phil Murphy tone-deaf on personnel matters: Editorial**](#)
- June 9, 2019 | NJ.com, Tom Moran, Star-Ledger Editorial Board | [**Is Murphy flat-out lying about the Katie Brennan case? Here’s why it seems likely**](#)
- June 8, 2019 | NJ.com, Star-Ledger Staff Julie Roginsky and Michael DuHaime | [**NJ political analysts dissect Murphy’s fumble of the Katie Brennan case, tax incentives, and Trump’s immigration policy**](#)
- June 8, 2019 | NorthJersey.com, Editorial Board | [**A disturbing portrait of a tone-deaf administration**](#)
- June 6, 2019 | [**Insider NJ’s Morning Intelligence Briefing: 6/6/2019**](#)
- June 6, 2019 | NJTV News, Brenda Flanagan | [**REPORT: MURPHY’S TEAM FAILED KATIE BRENNAN ‘EVERY STEP OF THE WAY’**](#)
- June 6, 2019 | Observer, Observer Politics Team | [**NJ Politics Digest: Report Suggests Officials Mishandled the Alvarez Case**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Bloomberg, Elise Young | [**New Jersey Governor’s Aides Faulted for Bungling Staff Abuse Claim**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Burlington County Times, David Levinsky | [**Panel finds Murphy staff mishandled assault claim response**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | CBS New York | [**Report: Murphy Administration ‘Seriously Mishandled’ Staffer’s Sexual Assault Allegation \(Video\)**](#)

- June 5, 2019 | CBS2 News This Morning | [**N.J. Report On Staffers Sexual Assault Allegations \(Video\)**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Insider NJ | [**Brennan On Oversight Committee Report: ‘Hold Accountable Those Who Failed To Take Action’ In Administration**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Insider NJ | [**The \(Full!\) Legislative Select Oversight Committee Report on the Hiring of Al Alvarez at SDA**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Insider NJ, Edward Edwards | [**Governor’s Press Secretary Post Alvarez Report: Murphy has Long Said ‘We Must do Better’**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Insider NJ, Fred Snowflack | [**Cammarano is Gone, but as Corrado noted, Platkin is Not**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | New Jersey Globe, Nikita Biryukov | [**Select Committee report questions honesty of some Murphy officials**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | New Jersey Globe, Nikita Biryukov | [**Select committee won’t make any criminal referrals**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | News 12 NJ, Alex Zdan | [**Panel: Gov. Murphy’s staff botched sex assault claim response \(Video\)**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | News Radio KYW 1060 AM, David Madden | [**NJ Legislature has scathing report on rape accusation of former Murphy official**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | NJ.com, Samantha Marcus - NJ Advance Media for NJ.com and Matt Arco - NJ Advance Media for NJ.com | [**Murphy’s top staff failed Katie Brennan ‘every step of the way’ after rape allegation, scathing report finds**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | NJ.com, Samantha Marcus - NJ Advance Media for NJ.com and Matt Arco - NJ Advance Media for NJ.com | [**‘Sloppy.’ ‘Embarrassing.’ ‘Disturbing.’ Here are the top Murphy staffers sharply criticized in new report on Katie Brennan’s rape allegation**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | NJBiz, Daniel Munoz | [**Murphy aides responsible for Alvarez hiring, legislative report finds**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | NorthJersey.com, Dustin Racioppi | [**Murphy officials ‘seriously mishandled’ Katie Brennan assault allegation, inquiry finds**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | Politico, Ryan Hutchins and Matt Friedman | [**New Jersey lawmakers blame top Murphy aides in final report on hiring scandal**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | ROI NJ, Anjalee Khemlani | [**Legislative report: Murphy administration failed Katie Brennan, had ‘shocking lack of recognition of the seriousness’**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | The Wall Street Journal, Joseph De Avila | [**New Jersey Governor’s Office Mishandled Sexual-Assault Allegation, Committee Finds**](#)
- June 5, 2019 | The Washington Post, Mike Catalini, Associated Press | [**Panel: Governor’s staff botched sex assault claim response**](#)

- June 5, 2019 | WhyY, Joe Hernandez | **Murphy administration ‘mishandled’ staffer’s rape claim says N.J. Leg. Committee**

