



Public Hearing: Protecting Pennsylvania - Accountability and Justice in Second-Degree Murder Sentencing

The purpose of this hearing is to examine how Pennsylvania can establish a statutory second-degree murder sentencing framework that holds offenders accountable, protects the public, and gives victims' families a meaningful voice.

September 17, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

Hearing Overview

- **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Welcome**
- **Opening Remarks**
 - Chairman David H. Rowe
 - State Representative Brett Miller
- **Testimony from Invited Experts**
- **Member Discussion with Testifiers**
- **Closing Comments & Adjournment**

Testifiers

- **F. Lee Francis**, Assistant Professor of Law, Widener University Commonwealth Law School
- **Travis Anderson**, First Assistant District Attorney, Lancaster County District Attorney's Office
- **Deanna Weaver**, Director of Victim/Witness Services, Lancaster County District Attorney's Office
- **Honorable David L. Ashworth (Ret.)**, Former President Judge of the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas

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Chairman David H. Rowe
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About the Testifiers



F. Lee Francis

F. Lee Francis, Esquire, is an Assistant Professor of Law at Widener University Commonwealth Law School, where he teaches Constitutional Law, Criminal Procedure, and Evidence. He previously served as an Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Center at Mississippi College School of Law. Professor Francis also has experience as a federal prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney's Office and as an active-duty Army JAG officer; he currently serves as a Captain in the Army Reserves. His scholarship focuses on constitutional law, particularly the Second Amendment and firearms law, and his work has been cited by federal courts.



Travis Anderson

Travis S. Anderson, Esquire, serves as First Assistant District Attorney for the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office, a position he has held since January 2024. He previously served in the office from 2013 to 2022, including as First Deputy District Attorney, where he supervised trial attorneys and handled major criminal cases. Anderson has extensive prosecutorial experience, including homicide and other violent-crime cases, as well as appellate work in state and federal courts. Prior to returning to the District Attorney's Office, he served as an administrative hearing officer with the Pennsylvania Department of State and previously worked as Assistant Counsel for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and his law degree from Widener University Commonwealth Law School.



Deanna Weaver

Deanna Weaver serves as Director of Victim/Witness Services for the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office. She has more than 30 years of experience in victim services, including work with victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, homicide, and other major crimes. Weaver joined the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office in 2006 and became Program Director in 2021 after previously serving as Deputy Director. In her current role, she leads a team that provides information, support, advocacy, restitution assistance, and access to victim compensation services for crime victims and witnesses.



Hon. David L. Ashworth

Honorable David L. Ashworth served as a judge on the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas from 1999 until his retirement in January 2026. He served as President Judge from 2020 through 2025, overseeing the court's administrative operations while continuing to preside over Criminal, Civil, Drug, and Discovery Motions Court. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Ashworth practiced as a trial attorney for more than 20 years. He earned his bachelor's degree from Gettysburg College and his law degree with honors from Widener University Delaware Law School. He has also been a senior adjunct professor at Franklin & Marshall College and has been recognized for his leadership in treatment courts and community service.