



JACKSON COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State's Attorneys and senior prosecutors from across Illinois gathered Wednesday, April 29, 2015, at the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles to discuss techniques aimed at improving the state's criminal justice system, State's Attorney Michael C. Carr, a member of the committee, announced today.

The Illinois State's Attorneys' Best Practices Committee met to collaborate on issues such as witness and photo identification, custodial statements, post-conviction review, diversion program effectiveness, charging crimes and discretion, plea offer procedures, officer-involved crimes, and working with informants.

Prosecutors from Boone, Champaign, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Jackson, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Sangamon, Tazewell, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties were in attendance.

"It was a great opportunity to talk about these critical issues, and to recognize how to best use them in the pursuit of justice," said Kane County State Attorney Joe McMahon, who hosted the meeting. "This is a critical time for us because police and prosecutors nationwide are struggling with a crisis of public trust. When the guilty are held accountable through the framework of the constitution and the critical lens of fairness to everyone, justice truly is served."

The Best Practices Committee is non-partisan and is built to be effective within the broad demographic of Illinois, from its largest county to suburban counties and Illinois' many rural counties. "I am pleased to be a part of this important work," Jackson County State's Attorney Michael Carr said. "As prosecutors, we should be open to the concept of peer review and willing to examine our practices and examine how we can improve." The Illinois effort, which began in 2013, is a product of the nationwide "Best Practices for Justice" initiative being led by Kristine Hamann, visiting fellow at the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Hamann is a former assistant district attorney in the Manhattan (N.Y.) District Attorney's Office. Haman has worked with prosecutors from 15 states in the formation of committees in: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and Washington. "Our goal is to better protect the innocent while also protecting the community and holding the guilty accountable. As we examine our procedures over time, we occasionally see paradigm shifts. With those shifts, it is important to re-examine our procedures to ensure that we get things right," McMahon said.

The mission of the Illinois State's Attorney's Best Practices Committee is to seek justice by equipping prosecutors with the tools necessary to ensure the full confidence of the communities they serve. "Our role to the public is not merely to convict the guilty but to protect the innocent from charges that cannot be proved. It is critical that prosecutors only file cases where there is sufficient admissible evidence to prove to twelve out of twelve people, beyond a reasonable doubt, that an offense was committed and that the defendant committed it," Carr said.