

Press Release

State of Maryland
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services



DPSCS Communications Office Contacts:

Mark Vernarelli ~ 410-339-5065 ~ mvernarelli@dpscs.state.md.us

Danielle Lueking ~ 410-339-5011 ~ dwilmsen@dpscs.state.md.us

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Gary D. Maynard
Secretary

New Commissioner of Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention and Services Named

Former City Police Commander to Administer Baltimore Jails

Towson, MD (December 21, 2009) – Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) Secretary Gary D. Maynard announced today that Wendell “Pete” France, a 10-year veteran of DPSCS, will take over as Commissioner of the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS) effective January 13, 2010.

Current Acting Commissioner Randy Watson will resume his duties as Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Correction on the same day.

Mr. France currently serves as an assistant commissioner in the central region of the DOC, overseeing administration of 11 correctional facilities. He has held that position since 2006. Prior to becoming assistant commissioner, Mr. France held posts as warden and assistant warden throughout the department. Before coming to DPSCS, he spent 27 years in the Baltimore City Police Department, rising to the level of Division Commander. He holds a Master’s Degree from the Johns Hopkins University.

“I want to thank Randy Watson for his patience and excellent stewardship during the search for our new Pretrial Commissioner,” said Secretary Maynard. About Mr. France, he said: “Given his experience and vast knowledge of Baltimore City’s criminal justice system, and his intimate understanding of the relationship between our pretrial division and the city’s police department, I believe Pete will be a great leader for the state’s complicated detention operations and become an even greater asset to the department.”

DPDS consists of the Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center and the Baltimore City Detention Center. It is responsible for processing over 80,000 arrestees a year, as well as the confinement of an average of 3,900 detainees a month awaiting trial in Baltimore City, including all juveniles charged as adults. Maryland’s DPSCS is the only U.S. state correctional agency to run a local jail facility.

The Baltimore City Detention Center includes housing for both men and women, offering many services and programs for detainees as well. Juvenile offenders go to school daily at the Eager Street Academy.

“As a 27-year member of the Baltimore Police Department, my heart has always been with the city. I look forward to the challenge ahead of me and am grateful for the opportunity Secretary Maynard has given me,” Mr. France said Monday.

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The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services protects the public, its employees and the detainees and offenders under its supervision.