



# **NEWS RELEASE**

**New York State  
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas  
Chief Administrative Judge**

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## **Court of Claims Judge Seth Marnin Appointed Co-Chair of Unified Court System's Permanent Commission on Access to Justice**

**NEW YORK**—With his intensive focus on problem-solving justice—and seeking to incorporate the broadest range of perspectives and experiences in line with this approach—Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson today announced the appointment of New York Court of Claims Judge Seth M. Marnin as co-chair of a statewide panel charged with narrowing New York's access to justice gap. Judge Marnin, the nation's first openly transgender male jurist, will join Co-Chairs Hon. Christina Ryba and Janet Sabel, Esq. in leading the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, a diverse group of judges, legal practitioners, academics and other experts, in furthering this crucial mission.

"Tens of thousands of New Yorkers unable to afford to hire a lawyer, are forced to navigate our complex civil justice system on their own, in matters that determine whether they have somewhere to live, something to eat, somewhere to work, or somewhere to learn. The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice leads our efforts to assist such people in their attempts to secure those basic necessities of life," said Chief Judge Wilson. "I have the utmost confidence that Judge Marnin, with his depth of experience, knowledge, and passion, will boldly lead the Commission in its varied efforts to secure funding for civil legal service providers, develop and expand volunteer attorney and non-attorney programs, and implement technology and self-help services, so that we can work towards building a robust and equitable civil justice system that serves the needs of all New Yorkers."

"Judge Marnin has spent much of his career bringing together stakeholders, often with competing interests, to achieve common goals—an ability that, along with his many other skills, will serve the Commission well," said Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas. "We look forward to working with him as he assumes this important leadership role."

"The Commission's vital work is so close to my heart, which today is filled with pride and excitement upon this historic appointment," added Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina G. Richardson. "Judge Marnin is an energetic leader

whose deep commitment to equal justice, collaborative leadership style, and distinctive vision will serve to advance the Commission’s mandate to eliminate barriers to justice.”

Judge Marnin became the nation’s first openly transgender male judge upon his 2023 appointment to New York’s Court of Claims, which has jurisdiction over claims against New York State. Previously, he worked in Columbia University’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. He began his legal career representing individuals and classes of employees in employment discrimination, harassment, and wage and hour cases and later served as a civil rights director at a national Jewish organization, where he expanded coalitions with Muslim and Christian partners and other groups. Before embarking on a legal career, he served as Director of LGBTQIA+ resources at the University of Connecticut.

Judge Marnin has spoken nationally and internationally on LGBTQ+ rights, hate crime laws, civil rights, religious liberty, the First Amendment, and academic freedom. He has co-authored friend-of-the-court briefs in numerous cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and federal and state appellate courts and published dozens of articles and op-eds on social justice and legal issues, particularly on the intersection of LGBTQIA+ and Jewish identities. He has served in leadership roles both within and outside the LGBTQ community and as a mentor to college and law school students and novice lawyers across the country.

“As someone who became a lawyer to advocate for ‘real people’ and marginalized communities, I am grateful for this unique leadership opportunity,” said Judge Marnin. “I eagerly and enthusiastically join Commission Co-Chairs Judge Christina Ryba and Janet Sabel in spearheading efforts to ensure meaningful access to the courts and legal assistance for all New Yorkers, regardless of identity, ability, economic status, or where they live.”

Judge Marnin’s appointment as the Commission’s downstate judicial co-chair is effective immediately. He succeeds Hon. Shahabuddeen Ally, who was recently designated to serve as the Administrative Judge of New York City Civil Court.

“I am deeply thankful to Judge Ally for his hard work and steady leadership throughout his tenure over the past year as Commission co-chair,” said Chief Judge Wilson.



Hon. Seth M. Marnin