

For Immediate Release
October 21, 2015

Contact: Jennifer Clarke, Public Interest Law Center, 267-546-1302, jclarke@pilcop.org

**NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPERT
TO JOIN THE CUDDY LAW FIRM**

Philadelphia, Pa. – The Public Interest Law Center and The Cuddy Law Firm P.C. announced today that nationally-recognized special education lawyer Sonja D. Kerr will be leaving the Law Center in early January, 2016 to join Cuddy as National Director of Impact Litigation. Cuddy is a parent-side firm devoted to special education with offices in Auburn, New York; White Plains, New York; Austin, Texas; with others planned in the near future. Kerr will be resident in the Austin, Texas office.

According to Kerr, “I’ve enjoyed my time at the Law Center and the opportunity to not only litigate through class actions and individual cases, but to work with others of like minds to push forward key improvements in special education. I know the Law Center and its colleagues will continue to hold the Commonwealth and other entities responsible to ensure children receive the services they need. It has been a long time goal of mine to foster a new generation of lawyers to help parents and to create a national firm for parents of children with disabilities, particularly children in urban areas. As this has been a dream of mine for many years, I’m very excited about the opportunity.”

Andrew Cuddy, the firm’s founding member, explained the firm’s growth plan. “The firm is expanding to other states as there is such a dire need for attorneys in this area of practice. The addition of Sonja to the team adds to the depth of experience within the firm, and the impact litigation work will allow us to positively affect the lives of more families across the country,” Cuddy said.

Jennifer R. Clarke, Executive Director of the Law Center said, “Sonja has been a fierce, creative force for children with disabilities here in Philadelphia and across the country. We will miss her, but we will continue to partner with her and The Cuddy Law Firm in the ongoing struggle to secure the rights of children with disabilities to a free and appropriate public education.”

Kerr has more than 28 years of substantial and unique experience in special education and disability matters. Ms. Kerr, a 1987 graduate of Indiana University School of Law joined the law Center in March of 2009. Ms. Kerr has litigated special education cases, including class actions, on behalf of students with a variety of disabilities, in nine different states, four circuits and various federal district courts, gaining a national reputation for groundbreaking litigation on behalf of children with disabilities. Recent cases include a class action against the State of Pennsylvania to ensure funding for an impoverished school district and a successful class action on behalf of students with autism in the School District of Philadelphia requiring parental participation in school placement decisions. In addition to litigation, Ms. Kerr is committed to collaborating with both private and public sector advocates and providing information and training to all persons involved in the Individualized Education Program, or IEP, process,

including parents, advocates and attorneys. Kerr frequently speaks at local and national conferences about special education legal issues.

#

The Public Interest Law Center uses high-impact legal strategies to improve the well-being and life prospects of vulnerable populations by ensuring they have access to fundamental resources including a high-quality public education, access to health care, employment, housing, safe and healthy neighborhoods and the right to vote. For more information visit www.pubintl.org or follow on Twitter @PubIntLawCtr.