



## News Release

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### **Michele M. Leonhart Confirmed by Senate as DEA Administrator**

**DEC 22** -- (Washington, D.C.) - On Dec. 22, 2010, the United States Senate unanimously voted to confirm Michele M. Leonhart as the 10th Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration. She is the first female DEA Special Agent to rise through the ranks of the agency to become its Administrator, and only the second woman to lead the agency. In fact, she is the first career female federal agent to ever lead a federal law enforcement agency.

Upon confirmation, Administrator Leonhart said:

"I am extremely humbled and honored to have the opportunity to continue to lead the world's premier drug law enforcement organization. DEA is an incredible organization comprised of the most talented men and women in law enforcement. I am dedicated to meeting the challenges that DEA faces, from disrupting and dismantling extremely violent Mexican based drug cartels; to defeating narco-terrorists operating in Afghanistan and around the world; and doing all we can to reduce prescription drug abuse, our nation's fastest growing drug threat. I will devote all of my energy and experience to guide DEA as we enforce the nation's drug laws and take the lead in the global fight against drug trafficking."

"I applaud the unanimous confirmation of Michele Leonhart, and agree with the strong bipartisan consensus validating her proven qualifications and effectiveness to lead the Drug Enforcement Administration," said Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. "Administrator Leonhart's extensive law enforcement background, coupled with her understanding of the importance of our efforts to reduce the demand for drugs in the United States, has been and will continue to be invaluable assets in DEA's work to protect public safety."

"Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE) applauds the confirmation of Michele Leonhart as the next Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration," said WIFLE President, Margaret Moore. "We are confident that the newly confirmed Administrator will uphold the finest traditions of DEA and provide the constant guidance and leadership for this outstanding law enforcement agency."

Administrator Leonhart has more than 30 years of law enforcement experience. After serving with the Baltimore Police Department, she joined DEA in 1980 with her first DEA duty station being Minneapolis, Minnesota.

As Administrator Leonhart rose through the ranks, she held a variety of DEA operational and administrative posts around the country including St. Louis, Missouri; San Diego, California; Los Angeles, California, and Washington D.C. Her duties included assignments as a Group Supervisor, Staff Coordinator, Special Agent Recruiter, Inspector in the Office of Professional Responsibility, and Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge in Los Angeles. She became the first woman to lead a DEA field division as a Special Agent-in-Charge when she directed the DEA's San Francisco Field Division in 1997, and later commanded DEA's Los Angeles Field Division.

Administrator Leonhart served as Acting Deputy Administrator of DEA in 2003, and was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate for that position on March 8, 2004. She has been DEA's Acting Administrator since November, 2007. She was nominated to be the DEA Administrator by President Obama on February 2, 2010.

Administrator Leonhart was raised in Minnesota and received her B.S. degree in Criminal Justice from Bemidji State University. She is married and has two sons.

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Available: <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/pr122210.html>