



Left: Bristol County acting attorney general, Thomas Quinn. Right: Aaron Hernandez. (Photos: Associated Press)

## Aaron Hernandez prosecution may have been derailed unknowingly by new Massachusetts governor

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The new governor of Massachusetts, Republican businessman Charlie Baker, may have dropped the ball and derailed the prosecution of former New England Patriots tight end, Aaron Hernandez, for the murder of Odin Lloyd.

Not that he necessarily meant to.

Last Friday, the day after being sworn in at the Massachusetts State House in Boston succeeding the Democrat Deval Patrick, Baker sent a letter to the Secretary of State, William Galvin, according to the Boston Globe. The letter voided "any and all appointments" made by Patrick between Christmas and Jan. 8.

One of the 61 appointments at issue, it turned out, was Bristol County District Attorney Thomas Quinn, the chief prosecutor in Hernandez's trial, which began the jury selection process on Monday.

Patrick appointed Quinn on Jan. 2, and Baker immediately tried to reverse the action.

"Governor Baker agrees with Governor Patrick that Attorney Quinn should and will continue to serve as acting Bristol County District Attorney until such time that the governor makes a final decision on this appointment," Baker spokesman Tim Buckley said in a written statement, according to the Globe.

"Both the Patrick administration, the appointing authority, and Governor Baker have been clear that Mr. Quinn is serving in an 'acting' capacity, and as such is not subjected to Governor Baker's order to rescind some recent appointments."

But Galvin, a Democrat, isn't playing ball.

"The letter speaks for itself," he told the Globe. "The governor's letter last Friday states 'any and all' appointments."

For his part, Quinn is taking a business-as-usual approach.

"My focus has been and will continue to be solely on the important day-to-day work at the Bristol County District Attorney's Office," he told the Globe in an e-mailed statement. "The decision is Governor Baker's to make, and I fully respect that fact."

While it isn't unusual for incoming Massachusetts governors to rescind last-minute appointments dished out by their predecessors, Baker was unique in not doing it on a case-by-case basis.

Buckley told the paper that the governor wrote the "any and all" letter when his staff was unable to find background information on the appointees.

However the situation works out, it could provide an opening for Hernandez's defense, the Boston criminal attorney Martin G. Weinberg believes.

Weinberg told the Globe, "These are profound and important issues as to whether or not the case can proceed in face of the risk of a judicial action that could question the current authority of the prosecutor."