

February 12, 2019

Dear Senate State Affairs Committee;

I am writing this letter of professional reference for Kelly Tshibaka, nominee for Alaska State Commissioner for the Department of Administration. By way of background, I am a rising Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, where I am a practicing cardiologist, medical educator, and published biomedical researcher. I completed all of my medical training at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, graduating at the top of my class with multiple awards. It was during my time in Baltimore that I first met Kelly, and I have been her close friend for the last 16 years.

Although we work in varying fields, I feel well suited to speak to Kelly's professional and personal qualities, as both her friend and as a professional woman. I have observed Kelly not only in the intimacy of her home and family, but also in the context of her natural leadership roles. Over the years, we have spoken at length about how to face and overcome challenges in the professional workplace, and I have seen Kelly's career develop and blossom. It is my great honor to write this letter in strongest and unequivocal support of Kelly as a professional, a leader, and as a compassionate human being.

There is no doubt as to Kelly's superior intellect, sharp mind, superb analytic capabilities, and her remarkable ability to quickly learn the nuances of any topic/field. What makes these skills all the more effective, however, is her intellectual humility and willingness to learn. Many extremely capable people naturally assume they are right; Kelly, on the contrary, is always willing to accept a different perspective, new information, and seeks continual growth. This marriage of impressive skill with honest humility and openness make her a particularly excellent leader, especially in new roles or situations. Kelly quickly assimilates available information, assesses and analyzes the data, charts a course of action, and seeks input from team members and her own leaders to continually course adjust as the winds and conditions dictate. She is the opposite of dogmatic, but she is also no push-over. Like a straight, tall shoot of bamboo, she is both strong and flexible, allowing her to grow and excel in any field of work.

Kelly is a servant-leader. This means that her express goal is to promote and champion the people she leads. Instead of seeking to self-promote, Kelly actively looks for opportunities to let her team grow and shine. This style of leadership (which I have also seen reflected in her parenting) is actually more work than the typical top-down management; instead of doing everything herself, she will take the time and effort to teach or allow for growth in her staff. She realizes that while this may take longer or be less efficient the first time around, in the long run it leads to a high-performance team with members whose skills are expansive, allowing for efficient and effective functioning.

I count myself truly honored to call Kelly one of my closest friends, and to be one of the small handful of people who know her personality and character best. Over the past 16 years, I have watched Kelly in every imaginable situation, good, bad, and mundane. I have seen her

character and resolve tested, and I can truly say that Kelly is a woman I admire, respect, and seek to emulate. In every season of life, she is reliably motivated to do good on behalf of others, even when the cost to herself is great. She seeks justice and peace, and she is willing to do the hard work in pursuit of both. Whether deciphering how best to parent her children with different personalities, caring for friends in deep crisis, offering wisdom during crucial moments of decision in my own life, or deciding how best to approach her co-workers, Kelly does what is right and does it with great love. While her faith is a strong motivator for Kelly's actions, her faith is not a wall to segregate or to cower behind. Her faith brings greater love and unity with her fellow human, rather than separation.

I have rarely met so capable, talented, and wonderfully complex a person as Kelly Tshibaka. I have witnessed her up close and personal, and I am no stranger to a workplace with high stakes, high ethical standards, and high intensity. I can say with total confidence and no reservations whatsoever that Kelly Tshibaka is the highest caliber of professional, leader, and human being that I have had the privilege to know. Any organization she is a part of is made better because of her. Any person privileged to serve with her will grow, be challenged, and ultimately be promoted beyond what they thought possible. She is loyal. She is talented. She is wise. She is the real deal, and I am honored to know her.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance in this process, or if I can further endorse this remarkable woman.

Sincerely,

Lorrel E. Brown, M.D.  
Rising Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Louisville School of Medicine  
Program Director, Cardiovascular Fellowship Training Program