

February 11, 2019

Senate Finance Committee
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
State Capitol Room 518
Juneau AK, 99801

Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to testify to the integrity, fidelity and temperament of Ms. Kelly Tshibaka, the governor's nomination for Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Administration. I have known Kelly and her husband Niki for over nine years, and I can think of no finer candidate to fill this challenging post.

As background, I retired as a Captain from the US Navy in October 2017 after a 27-year career. During my time in service I had the privilege of being assigned to a variety of influential assignments, including commanding officer of a tactical carrier aviation squadron, a Congressional Fellow for a US Senator, a Department of Defense liaison officer at the National Counterterrorism Center, and Director of the Navy and Coast Guard wounded warrior program. I also served as a Department of Defense program manager overseeing multi-million-dollar programs at the US Special Operations Command, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and Navy Installations Command.

My relationship with Kelly has been predominantly within the church setting. We also briefly overlapped in a professional setting when we both worked in the same building under the Director of National Intelligence in 2013. My wife, son, and I have attended The Lighthouse Fellowship in Alexandria, Virginia since November 2009. During this time, Kelly co-pastored with her husband Niki and assumed the role of senior pastor in October 2017. I have had the opportunity to closely observe her conduct within the church setting as well as within their home with how they raise their five children. I have to say that Niki and Kelly are some of the finest people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing and they have modeled for us the art of compassionate leadership.

Over the 12 years that they have pastored The Lighthouse Fellowship they have created a culture that is both inclusive and welcoming. Throughout the years the church has been home to one of the most socio-economically, ethnically, and politically diverse congregations that I have ever been a part of. Despite what might be perceived by outsiders as a challenge, they have fostered a culture that values diversity and mutual respect of other's beliefs. This is a rarity in today's environment, and I believe Kelly will foster that same culture at the Department of Administration. The Lighthouse Fellowship has never been a large congregation due to our mission of identifying and launching people into their God-given leadership roles, but we are recognized as having produced the most licensed pastors per capita within our denomination. The average congregant stays for a couple years and then moves on to other challenges and ministry assignments.

After my retirement I came onboard as a staff pastor at The Lighthouse Fellowship and have worked directly for Kelly in her role as senior pastor. In this capacity I have had the opportunity to observe her in an administrative and leadership setting. I have found that she has a remarkable ability to digest information, quickly formulate a strategic direction, and move everyone out in unity of purpose. This has been especially apparent over the last 18 months as she has successfully led the church through a strategic reimagining that has completely redefined our direction and purpose. During this challenging process she successfully implemented a strategic communication plan that helped our congregation embrace the new vision of the church, and I am happy to say that our attendance has remained stable throughout.

In closing, I would like to offer my strongest possible endorsement for Kelly Tshibaka to fill the post of Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Administration. In the time that I have known her she has remained unabashedly proud of her heritage as an Alaska native and I am confident that she will serve her home state with integrity and distinction. I may be reached at email: brent.breining@gmail.com or cell: 360-969-4544.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brent M. Breining', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brent M. Breining
Captain, US Navy (Retired)
2021 Hoover Lane
Alexandria, VA 22308