

Testimony on Behalf of the Confirmation of Linda Kim Kovol, Commissioner-Designee, Department of Family and Community Services – March 19, 2023

My name is Bill Galic, ACSW. I am a retired social worker who was a front-line supervisor with OCS in the Kenai Field Office for 19 years, and also retired as an assistant professor with the UAA School of Social Work. Commissioner-Designee Kim Kovol was a student in two or three of my master's-level courses, including a course on social policy.

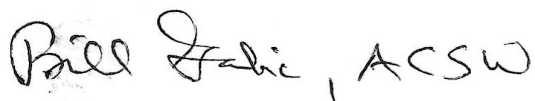
Kim had a full career in the social service field before returning to school for her Masters', in a variety of settings. Perhaps her most outstanding achievement prior to obtaining her MSW degree was the arranging of a massive shelter facility for homeless persons in the Sullivan Arena during the COVID pandemic in 2020. In addition to her experience in the social work field, in both direct service and leadership posts, she also has a background managing business in the private sector, and so she understands both the needs of clients, as well as the problems and costs associated with providing services.

I was Kim's MSW field supervisor as she interned on the Governor's staff in both years of her field placements. She was clearly in her element in that role - and as you are likely aware, the Governor eventually appointed her as a special assistant, whose focus was to be upon programming in a vast array of social work and social service areas. As a part of this assignment, she assisted in the development of the Governor's People First Initiative in 2022.

Beyond the experience that she brings to her present role as Commissioner-Designee, Kim has both the personality and work ethic that suits her well to this very important leadership position. I've always been impressed with what seems to be her boundless level of energy, as she entertains a very healthy array of interests, both in the field and outside of it. You can rest assured that no moss will grow under this Commissioner's feet!

Since assuming this role in an Acting position last year, Kim has comfortably and enthusiastically reached out on behalf of the Department, to community members, to its employees, and to our community providers all over the state. I know her well enough to tell you that her heart is always in her work.

She sees the big picture. Her perspective balances an understanding of both the possibilities and the limitations of what the state can achieve in its work on behalf of clients. While no one can solve all of the problems that this Department will face, she is well-prepared for this appointment. I wholeheartedly recommend that you confirm Kim Kovol as Commissioner.

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