

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 24, 2019

1:31 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Lora Reinbold, Chair  
Senator Mia Costello, Vice Chair  
Senator Click Bishop  
Senator Chris Birch  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Dr. Tamika Ledbetter - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Commissioner, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic  
Development  
Julie Anderson - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

TAMIKA LEDBETTER, Ph.D., Commissioner Designee  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as nominee for commissioner of the  
Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

JULIE ANDERSON, Commissioner Designee  
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as nominee for commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:31:58 PM](#)

**CHAIR LORA REINBOLD** called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Costello, Bishop, Birch, Gray-Jackson, and Chair Reinbold.

CHAIR REINBOLD gave a brief view of her vision for the committee, noting that she strives for a collaborative approach. She emphasized the impact crime has had on businesses in the state and on labor and commerce.

CHAIR REINBOLD asked committee members to introduce themselves.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :**

**Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

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CHAIR REINBOLD announced that the only order of business would be the confirmation hearings of Tamika Ledbetter as commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Julie Anderson as commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

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TAMIKA LEDBETTER, Ph.D., Commissioner Designee, Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), shared her background, experience and vision for the DOLWD, noting her philosophy for a successful life is to serve others. She was raised in New York City in the Bronx where she attended private and parochial schools. She graduated from Virginia Union University with a four-year [Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Political Science. She also earned her Master of Arts in Education and Adult Education and Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership from the University of Phoenix]. Her work ethic and beliefs were formed by her inner-city experiences and her grandmother's belief that education was key. She served in the U.S. Air Force for four years and was deployed to Iraq. She

raised two sons who followed their father's military service by serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. She said her teenage daughter is being home schooled.

DR. LEDBETTER said she has had many opportunities and mentors who recognized her potential. She described her work ethic, formed by her inner-city background and her strong desire to work hard and do her best in each position she has held. She offered her belief that opportunities for youth can change their trajectory in life.

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DR. LEDBETTER reviewed her 12-year work history at DOLWD, where she worked her way from entry level positions to manager of the Mat-Su job center and regional manager of the Mat-Su Economic Region. She conveyed her belief that her dedication, work ethic, and progressive positions within the DOLWD make her well-suited to lead the department. She has served in management for 10 of her 12 years at DOLWD and her colleagues can attest to her dedication and management skills, she said.

DR. LEDBETTER offered her vision for the DOLWD, which is to provide training, worker safety, adequate wages and opportunities for all Alaskans to help them realize their potential. She emphasized that she fully supports Governor Dunleavy's pro-business approach and her intent to convey his message that "Alaska is open for business." That approach means the state must develop industries that will generate income opportunities for residents and eliminate barriers. She must be responsive to business leaders and industry needs. She related her commitment to closing the age gap by promoting awareness of industry opportunities for Alaska's youth. She said when the public calls a state office it is important that they reach staff and that staff is responsive to their inquiry and concern. This means hiring staff who are highly qualified and have appropriate attitudes and skill sets for their job. She emphasized the need to increase public confidence in the department.

[1:51:40 PM](#)

CHAIR REINBOLD commended Ms. Ledbetter's resume and passion. She thanked her for her desire to eliminate barriers and to be responsive to business.

[1:52:01 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON acknowledged that she recently met with Dr. Ledbetter. She asked Dr. Ledbetter how she felt about employees.

DR. LEDBETTER said she loves the front-line worker, noting that when leaders show their employees that they are valued it results in dedicated workers. She suggested that leaders need to do a better job conveying this since work cannot happen without staff. She added that her staff works with her and not for her.

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SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON said she was impressed that Dr. Ledbetter worked her way up through the department, just as she had done. She asked how she felt about organized labor.

DR. LEDBETTER said she does not differentiate between labor types and instead prefers to focus on the worker. She identified her goal is to help Alaskans obtain the skill sets and to provide needed opportunities. She said she considers herself to be pro-Alaska, so all workers are important.

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SENATOR COSTELLO said she was also impressed with Dr. Ledbetter's experience and passion. She highlighted that Alaska struggles with veteran hire and wondered how the state could provide more opportunities for veterans. She explained she must leave today's meeting to briefly meet with constituents who have been impacted by the earthquake.

DR. LEDBETTER explained that the DOLWD was created because of veterans returning from World War II. She reported that the DOLWD has developed priorities for veterans' services, including grant funding and specific programs with allocated funding. The DOLWD's staff regularly visits military bases to outline the department's strategies and services in order to streamline the hiring process for veterans leaving the military.

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SENATOR BIRCH said he was thrilled to have her interested and willing to serve. He asked Dr. Ledbetter to identify some of her five-year goals for the department.

DR. LEDBETTER responded that her primary goal is to focus on young people. She pointed out that Alaska has an aging workforce and employees who retire must pass on their knowledge. College is not the only option as a career path and the department wants Alaskans to know the vast array available to them, she said. Often students have not identified what career to choose so she encouraged elder workers to mentor a high school or college intern.

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SENATOR BIRCH agreed. He said he recently met with the commissioner-designee for the Department of Education about the Anchorage's King Career Center and Fairbank's Hutcheson Career Center. He said he saw a nexus between education and trade and related his own early job training experiences in the trade to illustrate the point.

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SENATOR BISHOP acknowledged he has held several hours of discussions with Dr. Ledbetter. He pointed out that the commissioner wields significant power. He asked for her assurance that the commissioner-designee would apply that power equally.

DR. LEDBETTER agreed to do so.

[2:00:35 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD recognized former Representative Munoz and Gavel Alaska personnel.

[2:01:15 PM](#)

CHAIR REINBOLD opened public testimony and after first ascertaining no one wished to testify, closed public testimony for the confirmation hearing of the commissioner designee, Dr. Tamika Ledbetter, as commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

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CHAIR REINBOLD commented that she is encouraged that Dr. Ledbetter was willing to break down barriers Alaska has faced. She said that people often talk about diversification and mineral development, but breaking barriers in Alaska has proven difficult. She thanked Dr. Ledbetter for her willingness to serve as commissioner. She recapped and commended the Dr. Ledbetter for her goals and ability to define what it means for the state to be open for business.

[2:04:03 PM](#)

CHAIR REINBOLD stated it was her intention to recommend the appointment be forwarded to a joint session for consideration and asked for Senator Bishop to make a motion.

She reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees;

the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[2:04:13 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP stated that in accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointment be forwarded to a joint session for consideration:

Commissioner, Department of Labor & Workforce Development  
Dr. Tamika Ledbetter - Anchorage

[2:04:46 PM](#)

At ease.

[2:04:54 PM](#)

CHAIR REINBOLD reconvened the meeting and asked commissioner designee Anderson to come to come forward.

[2:08:28 PM](#)

JULIE ANDERSON, Commissioner Designee, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) paraphrased written remarks, which read as follows, [original punctuation provided]:

Good afternoon. Madame Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Julie Anderson, Commissioner-Designee for the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

I want to thank the Committee for their time in visiting with me and for this hearing today. I also want to express my appreciation to Governor Dunleavy for his confidence in choosing me for this department.

Let me begin by sharing some of my background and family history. I am a lifelong Alaskan, with my roots on one side tracing back through my father to my Athabaskan grandfather and missionary nurse Grandmother. On my mother's side, my great grandfather followed the 1898 Gold Rush to Eagle, where my mother lives today.

My father, Jules Wright, was born in Nenana, one of seven boys. As a missionary family, they lived throughout the interior. He served in the U.S. Army, worked in construction, owned his own company, mined and built Manley Hot Springs Resort. An entrepreneur

in every sense of the word. In the early 1960s he was president of the Fairbanks Native Association for 3 years, and he served on the Board of Directors of Doyon Ltd.

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Interestingly for this experience today, my father served in Alaska's House of Representatives in the late 1960's, and I remember being in this building as a fourth grader. It is an honor to be here today before this committee.

I would like to provide a summary of my experience:

#### Education -

My master's degree is in International Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona, with a focus on the Asia/Pacific region. My bachelor's degree is in Business from UAF. I also obtained Certification as an Economic Development Professional.

#### Work Experience -

At Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, I managed a team of 200 employees and contractors to successfully deliver contractor management, supply chain functions, facilities, aviation and crisis management operations. I was a member of the Executive Team accountable for safe and effective operation of the Pipeline.

While accountable for an annual budget of over \$60 million, I delivered services under budget every year. My team and I performed an annual analysis of areas where services could be delivered with increased efficiency and implemented with performance tracking mechanisms.

As a member of the Doyon Foundation Board of Directors, we successfully increased the value of the Foundations portfolio by 275% and implemented a structured process to fund scholarship and language programs.

While with the Alaska Energy Authority, I managed stakeholder relationships on the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric project, while working with Alaska Native corporations and other land owners, local communities, and federal and state agencies to ensure full participation in the project's engineering, design and environmental studies.

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In the mid-90's, working with the Commissioners of Community and Regional Affairs, Fish and Game, and Commerce, we implemented the Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program. This program provides 10% of the harvestable fishery resource of the Bering Sea to 57 western Alaskan villages. I also managed the State Rural Development Initiative Fund, a loan program to benefit rural Alaskans in entrepreneurial ventures.

Much of my volunteer time has been invested in supporting our great state through involvement with Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, the Doyon Foundation Board, Anchorage Public Safety Commission and the Alaska Native Advisory board, to mention a few.

Having worked both in DCRA and AEA, and worked with a variety of economic development efforts, I have a good working knowledge of the department, its divisions and programs, with much more to learn.

As we face the challenges of today, I remember the challenges we faced in the pre-Prudhoe, pre-pipeline, honey bucket days. While we face tough choices today, we have resources our forefathers could only dream of. We need to utilize those resource to provide opportunities for Alaskans in all regions of the state. A healthy economy is essential to healthy people and healthy communities. I am eager to take up my duties with Governor Dunleavy and work to better Alaska's economy.

I strongly support the direction the Governor has outlined to improve the State's economy. The diverse experience that I have working within private industry, State Government and Alaska Native organizations will be beneficial in aligning stakeholders to realize the Governor's vision.

The goals of the Governor are ambitious and rightfully so. The key to managing our budget is to grow the economy and remove wasteful spending. I have a proven track record in managing for efficiencies along with delivering successful economic development programs, and I am excited to bring that experience and perspective to work with those at DCCED to make a difference.

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I care deeply about the future of the state and look forward to working with the administration to create economic opportunity for future generations. The Governor has assembled an outstanding, diverse cabinet, and I am honored to be a part of it.

Which brings me to my vision for DCCED. To create economic opportunity requires bringing fresh ideas and new perspectives to both our role in economic development and in administering the statutes that the Legislature has given us to implement.

One of our top goals is to encourage new investment in the state and grow our economy by repealing unnecessary regulatory burdens, by not increasing taxes, and by creating stability. We intend to strengthen key industries while supporting the free enterprise system, building a diverse economy through business assistance, financing, promotion, and public policy. At DCCED, we are working aggressively to break out of government silos and make sure all of our employees and divisions are pulling together for Alaskans.

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We are looking at opportunities to modernize, use existing data and work smarter. An example is an effort underway to link the new Community Database Online in the Division of Community and Regional Affairs with a whole host of other data on business licensing, land ownership, resources and economic development, to help provide region specific information for those looking to invest in Alaska.

We are also intensely focused on jobs and capital - it takes investment to generate jobs, and jobs are what generate healthy people and healthy communities.

We are taking a deep look at what helps or hinders investment that creates jobs, across everything we do.

We need to focus on Alaska's competitive advantages, reduce barriers, and let industry know that Alaska is open for business.

We've met with dozens of local venture capital experts, business owners and industry leaders to explore ways in which the department can help foster Alaska's growth. We are listening to suggestions and seeking their valuable ideas to implement as quickly as possible.

Additionally, our Department is committed to doing a better job administering the statutes that the Legislature has given us to implement. We've reviewed thousands of pages of statutes and regulations with an eye to reducing burdens on citizens and businesses.

We realize that a healthy regulatory environment is necessary for a strong economy. Regulation that is reasonable, balanced and efficient is my solution. We must strike the proper balance between economic development and public safety and protection. One key to doing so is in evaluating risk. We are actively reviewing professional licensing requirements and the best way to fulfill our duty to protect Alaskans while trying to lighten requirements that are barriers to growth.

We continue to work to find this kind of balance across our programs, and are critically for ways to modernize, digitize and streamline so as to make licensing easier to do here than anywhere else.

I realize that these goals are not without their challenges. Perhaps our greatest challenge is to change the perspective of those both within and outside of Alaska. Yes, Alaska can be a challenging environment, but we are capable of visionary thinking and working together to improve the quality of life throughout Alaska.

We are at a point where it is imperative that we focus on our core services at the same time as we grow the economy. I am excited to have the opportunity to help improve how the government encourages business

development and delivers high quality services more efficiently to Alaska's citizens and businesses.

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Having been involved in one of the biggest economic development projects in Alaska's history (the 800 mile Trans Alaska pipeline), my measure of success for these efforts is simple. That project enabled me to attend college and be the first in my family to get a college degree. It has enabled four generations of my family to pursue their interests, be it entrepreneurship, college or technical training. It has raised the standard of living throughout Alaska. I would hope that our current efforts to strengthen and diversify the economy will do the same for at least another four generations.

It is time to close and to take your questions. While I will do my best, I will note that having been on the job just seven short weeks, weeks, I am learning more every day!

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CHAIR REINBOLD said the Ms. Anderson has an impressive broad-based resume. She congratulated her on her ability to deliver services under budget while at Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC). She emphasized that [onerous] regulations were the number one concern in her district, so she was happy to learn the department's goal to repeal unnecessary regulatory burdens.

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SENATOR BIRCH, speaking as a former pipeline employee in the 1990s, said that he appreciated the effort and initiative that has been undertaken. He recalled the size of APAC's workforce has been reduced from 2,200 employees to 800 over time. He said he always uses APSC as a case study on how to structurally organize a company. He offered his belief that Ms. Anderson brings to the department a broad range of qualifications. He asked whether Ms. Anderson has had an opportunity to meet with other department heads and if she has had time to identify opportunities.

COMMISSIONER DESIGNEE ANDERSON said she has met informally with other commissioner designees and she plans to meet soon with Dr. Ledbetter and the commissioner designee for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). She hoped to identify bottlenecks in

state government and work with other departments to streamline efficiencies for those who conduct business in Alaska.

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SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON said she was impressed with Commissioner Designee Anderson's resume. She recalled an earlier discussion she had with Ms. Anderson with respect to the Municipality of Anchorage's (MOA) "angel fund," which is \$8 million [in federal funds] to provide low-interest grants to entrepreneurs. She asked if Ms. Anderson would look for other ways to assist entrepreneurs at the state level.

COMMISSIONER DESIGNEE ANDERSON agreed that finding ways to bring capital to Alaska to help small businesses and all Alaskans would be a key focus of the DCCED. She stated that the rural communities suffer as well, and her goal was to make it easier for them, too.

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CHAIR REINBOLD highlighted her office has received numerous complaints from individuals who have experienced delays in obtaining licensure, including health care providers and veterans. She characterized the delays for the medical community as significant ones. She related her intent to hold a hearing to identify reasons for bottlenecks in licensure, especially for doctors and veterans.

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SENATOR BISHOP disclosed that he knows Ms. Anderson's family well and acknowledges her entrepreneurial skills. He said the state has a lot of room to grow in terms of tourism and he hopes Ms. Anderson will amp that up. He heard her remarks that Alaska is "open for business" and he understands that statement. He recalled that he previously served with former commissioner Emil Notti and acknowledged what a pleasure it was to serve with him. He highlighted problems rural areas face, including that some rural communities still have "honey buckets" and high unemployment. He said he was encouraged that Ms. Anderson will lunch with incoming commissioner Ledbetter to discuss how to leverage assets. He closed by highlighting that he understands that Ms. Anderson is familiar with the 30-year Trans-Alaska Pipeline System Reauthorization that required a 20-percent Native hire, which was met. He recalled this was met because the company worked with the "crafts." He expressed hope that the two departments would work together to continue to put Alaska Natives, women and minorities to work in the workforce in the state. He advised her to work on the [Susitna-Watana] project if

she wanted to grow the economy since it is vital to have cheap energy to do so. He said that cheap energy could grow the economy of Alaska faster than anything else.

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CHAIR REINBOLD asked to piggyback onto what Senator Bishop said, noting that it is important to identify barriers in rural Alaska. She suggested it might be even possible to reduce the Department of Health and Social Services budget if good jobs could be created in all areas, but particularly in rural Alaska. She further stated she was open to the idea of holding hearings during the legislative interim to address crime, labor and commerce, or any area of hindrance to the development of the workforce.

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CHAIR REINBOLD opened public testimony and after first determining no one wished to testify, closed public testimony for the confirmation of Julie Anderson, commissioner designee for the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

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CHAIR REINBOLD asked for final comments and after hearing none, stated it was her intent to move Ms. Anderson's name forward to a joint session for consideration.

CHAIR REINBOLD asked Senator Bishop for a motion.

[2:30:51 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP stated that in accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointment be forwarded to a joint session for consideration:

Commissioner, Alaska Department of Department of Commerce,  
Community and Economic Development  
Julie Anderson - Anchorage

SENATOR BISHOP stated that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

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CHAIR REINBOLD reviewed the upcoming committee schedule.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Reinbold adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 2:31 p.m.