

November 2, 2021

Tracy L. Chase, Esq., Acting Executive Director
Kim Wallin, CPA, CPM, CFM, Chair
Brian Duffrin, Vice Chair
State of Nevada Commission on Ethics

Please accept this letter as my full and enthusiastic support for Ross Armstrong to be selected as the Executive Director of the State of Nevada Commission on Ethics. I worked with Mr. Armstrong for almost six years, and he was my direct supervisor for two and a half of those years when I was fortunate to serve on his leadership team as the Deputy Administrator of Quality and Oversight at the Division of Child and Family Services. From my time with Mr. Armstrong, I can speak to his abilities in the oversight of the Division including four public-facing systems (child welfare, juvenile justice, children's mental health, victim services), and my experience being supervised by him and serving on his leadership team.

In my years at DCFS I witnessed the skill with which Mr. Armstrong interacts with Division partners, including community partners, service providers, federal and county partners, and other state agencies. I was constantly impressed at his ability to maintain professionalism in every situation, regardless of the expectations placed on him or the type of attention that was being directed at the Division, or on him as the leader of the Division. He regularly receives accolades for his ability to provide information and clarification on the spot during meetings, for committing to action based on activities and decisions made at meetings, for ensuring follow-through on action items, and for ensuring DCFS staff and resources are provided to support the work of a variety of commissions, consortia, committees, and subcommittees. In meetings staffed by DCFS, Mr. Armstrong paid close attention to ensure effective agendas and steady progress, all while adhering to Open Meeting Law.

As DCFS Administrator, Mr. Armstrong maintained a sharp focus on equity, taking tangible steps to improve equitable practices within the organization, and in the services the Division provides to the community. He participated in the development of the DCFS Vision: Safe, Healthy, Thriving Kids in Every Nevada Community, and ensures DCFS staff and community partners understand that "community" means more than geographical community, it also means communities of color, tribal communities, LGBTQ communities, and any other community that might benefit from specialized attention.

Mr. Armstrong displayed unquestionable integrity during my time at DCFS. He is dedicated to his staff, available to all staff, not just management and leadership. He is attentive to internal and external issues, even at early stages, and quickly acts to defuse situations, from personnel issues and grievances to issues with service delivery in the community whether at a facility level or at the level of an individual child. He is forward-thinking; he sees every error or crisis or oversight as an opportunity for improvement in a system or process, and ensures that efforts are made towards those improvements.

As my supervisor, Mr. Armstrong cultivated a strong, tightly knit, collaborative, trusting, and supportive leadership team at the Division of Child and Family Services. He ensured frequent, structured communication through weekly leadership meetings which were used for project updates and strategic planning. In turn, Deputy Administrators were expected to hold regular supervisory meetings with our own staff, and to facilitate regular meetings within our programs. Mr. Armstrong is committed to communication and transparency at every level, regularly sending all-staff emails with important information relating to the pandemic, the Legislative Session, or other Division- or state-specific information; and regularly holding webinars and town halls to provide important information and to give all Division staff the opportunity to ask questions or provide comments on Division activities.

As a Deputy Administrator, I felt very fortunate to be supervised by Mr. Armstrong. As a new state employee, his leadership in learning how to research and interpret statute and regulations, how to effectively represent the Division at the Legislative Session and other Legislative and public bodies were invaluable. Beyond helping me learn to complete the functions of my position, he provided the context, the history, the connections, the legal foundation and/or implications, and interesting facts about state government. His historical knowledge of the state, the law, and the government made for a more robust learning environment and a better picture about where we fit in as DCFS, and the role we played in Nevada. As an aside, I brought a deck of Nevada trivia cards on a road trip with Mr. Armstrong and another colleague to meet with community members in Ely, Nevada, and he answered just about every single question correctly!

Above all, Mr. Armstrong displays a passion for the State of Nevada and a steadfast belief that government can and should provide an invaluable service to the State of Nevada, and that state employees have the honor and obligation to serve Nevadans. I am confident that Mr. Armstrong would bring the same passion and dedication to the role of Executive Director of the Commission on Ethics.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kathryn Roose, Ph.D.

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for Ross Armstrong as a candidate for the position of Executive Director of the Nevada Commission on Ethics.

I have worked with Mr. Armstrong for the last two years. In his current State position as Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (“DCFS”), Mr. Armstrong oversees a large division within the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. DCFS is one of the clients I serve as a Deputy Attorney General in the Nevada Attorney General’s Office. I provide employment law guidance to DCFS, which requires me to regularly work closely with Mr. Armstrong to handle difficult personnel matters and manage administrative appeals and litigation for the Division. I have also been working with Mr. Armstrong to implement the COVID-19 vaccination mandate that became effective November 1 for employees at certain state facilities operated by DCFS.

Although the matters I handle for DCFS are often time-consuming and complex, it is always a pleasure to work with Mr. Armstrong. I appreciate the thoughtful and respectful manner in which he handles all matters we have worked on together and it is evident he is respected by his peers at DHHS and his DCFS team.

I have watched Mr. Armstrong successfully navigate through some very challenging issues for DCFS. His departure from DCFS will be a loss for the State and I will miss working with him. However, DCFS’s loss can be your gain. I am excited to think that my prior coworkers at the Ethics Commission might have the pleasure of working with Mr. Armstrong. I think he is an ideal fit for the Ethics Commission and hope you will agree.

Sincerely,

Judy Prutzman