

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JOSH STEIN  
GOVERNOR

January 6, 2025

The Hon. Phil Berger  
President *Pro Tempore*  
North Carolina Senate  
16 W. Jones St., Room 2007  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Senator Berger:

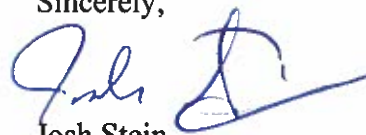
Consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-9(a), this letter serves as formal notice of the following cabinet secretary appointments, as announced December 16 and 17, 2024. All appointees are prepared for confirmation hearings. I sincerely appreciate your due consideration of their qualifications in the Senate.

- **Gabriel Esparza has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Administration.** Esparza has over 25 years of experience leading both public and private entities. He was previously the Associate Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration and has served as a Commissioner on the Civil Service Commission. He was Vice President of Global Business Development at American Express and a senior executive at an innovative tech start-up. He is currently a Trustee at Central Piedmont Community College. He is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Business School. Esparza lives in Charlotte with his wife and two teenage children. He will be North Carolina's first Latino cabinet member.
- **Leslie Cooley Dismukes has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Adult Correction.** Dismukes was the Criminal Bureau Chief at the North Carolina Department of Justice. She previously served as Chief of the Criminal Division at the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina and an Assistant District Attorney at the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office in Charlotte. Leslie is a graduate of Duke University School of Law and UNC Chapel Hill. She lives in Raleigh with her husband and daughter.
- **Lee Lilley has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Commerce.** Lilley has served Governor Roy Cooper as Director of Economic and Pandemic Recovery and as Director of Legislative Affairs. Lee also advised a variety of corporate clients at an international public affairs firm and was legislative director for Rep. G.K. Butterfield. Lee is a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill, is a native of Williamston, North Carolina, and lives in Raleigh with his wife and daughter.

- **D. Reid Wilson has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality.** Wilson has served as Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources since 2021. He previously served as the Department's Chief Deputy Secretary, as Executive Director of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, as a public affairs consultant to national environmental groups, in leadership roles at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and as National Political Director of the Sierra Club. Wilson earned his undergraduate degree at Grinnell College in Iowa. He and his wife live in Raleigh and are the parents of two adult children.
- **Devdutta Sangvai has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.** Sangvai, MD, JD, MBA is professor of family medicine, pediatrics, and psychiatry at the Duke University School of Medicine. He recently served as president at Duke Regional Hospital and vice president for Population Health Management at Duke University Health System. Dr. Sangvai has served as president of the North Carolina Medical Society and has been a member of the North Carolina Medical Care Commission. He is currently president of the North Carolina Medical Board. Dr. Sangvai is a graduate of the Ohio State University and earned his M.D. at the Medical College of Ohio, his J.D. from North Carolina Central University, and M.B.A. from the Fuqua School of Business. Dr. Sangvai lives in Durham with his wife and two children, both studying at Duke. He will be North Carolina's first Indian American cabinet member.
- **Teena Piccione has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Information Technology.** Piccione has worked at Google as the Managing Director for Cloud and Customer Engineering over Telecommunications, Media, Entertainment and Gaming, at RTI International as Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, at Fidelity Investments as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and at AT&T as Vice President and leader of the Big Data Center of Excellence. She and her husband have two daughters and live in Wake County.
- **Jocelyn Mitnaul Mallette has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.** She is an attorney and Air Force veteran. A third-generation service member, Mallette served on active duty in the United States Air Force for ten years. She served as an intelligence officer and a prosecutor in the Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps. Following her military service, Mallette clerked for the Honorable Barbara A. Jackson of the North Carolina Supreme Court and was a partner at an international law firm. She is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy and UNC School of Law. Mallette currently serves on the North Carolina Real Estate Commission and as the Chair of the Advisory Board of the Southeast Raleigh YMCA. She is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and the Junior League of Raleigh. She lives in Raleigh with her husband and two children.

- **Pamela Cashwell has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.** Cashwell has served as secretary at the North Carolina Department of Administration since 2021. Cashwell previously served as Senior Policy Advisory and Chief Deputy Secretary for Professional Standards, Policy and Planning at the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, as Assistant Director at the North Carolina State Ethics Commission, and as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division and the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Virginia. Hailing from the Coharie and Lumbee tribes of North Carolina, Cashwell is the first American Indian woman to head a cabinet department in North Carolina. Cashwell earned her undergraduate and law degrees from UNC Chapel Hill. She lives in Wake County with her husband and two sons.
- **Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr. has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Public Safety.** Buffaloe has served as secretary of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety since 2021. He previously served as a law enforcement officer for 30 years, most recently in a dual role as Elizabeth City's interim city manager and director of the Elizabeth City Department of Public Safety. He also has worked in a sheriff's office, as a correctional officer, and as a law enforcement instructor. He was a member of the North Carolina National Guard for 10 years. He also served as President of the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police. Buffaloe has earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Mount Olive and a master's degree from Grand Canyon University.
- **McKinley Wooten, Jr. has been appointed to serve as Secretary of the Department of Revenue.** Wooten is the Assistant Secretary for Tax Processing, Research & Equity at the North Carolina Department of Revenue. He has over 30 years of public service, including serving as a Civil Magistrate in Wake County, Inspector General at the North Carolina Department of Justice, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Administration, and Director and Deputy Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. A native of Kinston, Wooten earned his undergraduate degree from Morehouse College and his law degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law. He is married to Laura H. Wooten, who served 30 years in North Carolina state government. They are parents of a young adult son and daughter.
- **Joey Hopkins has been appointed to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Transportation.** Hopkins has served as Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Transportation since 2023. He has worked at the Department of Transportation for more than 30 years, including as chief operating officer, deputy chief engineer, and division engineer. Hopkins is a graduate of North Carolina State University and lives in Garner with his wife and their two sons.

Sincerely,

  
Josh Stein