

Minnesota State Legislature

Minnesota State Capitol

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

St. Paul, MN. 55155

Senator Kari Dziedzic;

I am writing to you to respectfully request that you and your fellow Senators either unanimously confirm or hold an open and public hearing for Commissioner select Larry Herke. I have had extensive experience in my 45 plus years of service to our state and nation as member of the United States Army and the Minnesota National Guard. As you know, I served as the Commissioner of the Department of Military Affairs and also the Adjutant General. I was selected by a Republican Governor and served for a majority of my time under a Democratic administration. I fully understand the process that you and your colleagues are working your way through, but I would trust that political positions and strategies not enter into the decision for the position of Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. I do not know, nor care, as to the political affiliation of the current incumbent.

I can, and without reservation, fully and wholeheartedly endorse and give my full support to Larry Herke. I have known him professionally for the majority of his career. I was his direct supervisor for his last assignment in the Minnesota National Guard when he was the Director of facilities Management in control of hundreds of millions of assets and supervised a large cadre of military and civilian professionals. He is a truly superb caring leader, and has the innate ability to think long term, build consensus, and get programs completed. I have seen and worked with administrators and leaders in government. He is a LEADER. He is a seasoned strategic thinker and has been tested as a combat veteran having served in Iraq during the longest deployment of any military organization during the war. Larry Herke has always been fully accountable and responsible for his actions, budgets, organization outcomes and has always sought to improve any formation or unit he has commanded. He is the epitome of selfless service and brings these traits and leadership qualities to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Through his leadership and counsel as a volunteer on the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum Board



of Directors, located at Camp Ripley, Little Falls, MN., he initiated changing the 4-decade old name to include Veterans in its name. He is a true visionary and outcome-based leader. He has been instrumental in his connections to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC in his tireless efforts seeking funding for Veteran Homes throughout the State for the critical care of this aging population. Commissioner Herke has made it his mission, his agency and that of the Governor to end homelessness for our Veteran population in Minnesota and has made incredible strides in the last 4 years, and I have total confidence that with Legislative support over the next 4 years, we will achieve this worthy cause.

I have experience with previous MDVA in my over 4 decades of service, appointed by Democratic and Republican Governors and during his short time in office, I have not seen as much positive movements and initiatives take place than what Commissioner has enacted for our over 300,000 veterans and their families. He truly cares for veterans, not just in his public comments, but by his actions. He has what all appointees should have in the executive branch, personal, professional and moral courage. In addition, he has what superb leaders strive to achieve in difficult positions, that is he has candor, commitment, competence, and confidence that truly has always inspired his subordinates and superiors alike. He should serve as an example for the Senate as a benchmark as you evaluate others in the confirmation process.

Larry Herke has the proven qualities earned through many years and without failure, that should be celebrated, acknowledged and now confirmed by Senate and then supported as he continues working for current and future veterans, their families and employers. We need Commissioner Herke to work for our Veterans in Minnesota.

Thank you for your service as Senator to our state and unwavering support for our service members and veterans.

With respect

Lieutenant General Bvt. (Ret)

Richard C. Nash

