



**Testimony of Michelle H. Gilman  
Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services  
Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee  
January 31, 2023**

Good morning, Senator Duff, Representative Concepcion, Senator Kelly, Representative Yaccarino, and distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Michelle Gilman, and I currently serve as the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services (“DAS”). It is a privilege to serve Governor Lamont and the State of Connecticut, and my honor to ask for your support of my renomination today.

During a time of great challenge and opportunity, I am incredibly proud of DAS’s accomplishments and the impact we have had on our state since assuming the position of Commissioner just under a year ago. If re-confirmed, I look forward to a continued partnership with the General Assembly and all our stakeholders throughout my term.

**Background on DAS**

As you know, DAS has an expansive mission to support Connecticut’s residents, state agencies, municipalities, businesses, and others while driving continuous innovation, cost-savings, and efficiencies across government. Fundamental to our mission is a commitment to collaboration, transparency, equity, and accessibility.

DAS oversees a multitude of distinct programs that comprise the business functions of state government, including human resources, information technology, procurement, and construction services. During this time of innovation, our collective work has driven successful outcomes in talent recruitment and retention; small and minority business outreach; greener government; and digital equity efforts.

Across all DAS initiatives, our primary goal is to deliver impactful, cost-effective, and efficient services to make Connecticut a model for the nation.

**Commitment to the State Workforce**

One of DAS’ top priorities is growing a diverse, Executive Branch workforce and retaining our talented team through advancement, training, and development. Recruitment has been a challenge for a myriad of reasons: a competitive economy, the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a shrinking workforce nationally, a statewide retirement cliff, and continued inflation.

Throughout this time, the benefits of a modernized and centralized Human Resources team cannot be understated. Most notably, our pace of hiring is at its highest level in at least a decade. Connecticut’s workforce is stable, and even growing in some areas, due to targeted recruitment efforts for high need positions and strong collaboration with partner state agencies. Our team’s strategic recruitment efforts have resulted in a workforce of almost 31,000



employees as can be seen on the newly launched Executive Branch Workforce Dashboard, found on the Open Data Portal.

While we are proud of our success, the DAS team will continue to utilize creative strategies, turning over every stone, and collaborating with agency partners like OPM, DOL, OWS, educational institutions, and community stakeholders to ensure we are attracting and retaining a talented and diverse workforce to meet our emerging needs.

### **Technology Innovation**

Through optimization of our IT services, our ability to drive technology faster and more efficiently has grown exponentially. In fact, Connecticut was nationally recognized by the Center for Digital Government with an A-grade rating as a leader in digital government. Notable accomplishments include the new service platforms at DMV and DOL; the business one stop platform, and ongoing work with our human services agencies.

Under optimization, the DAS Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS) team has implemented a comprehensive cybersecurity plan, permitting us to respond more quickly to threats, and to keep state programs online. Optimization also allows us to rollout software more consistently and efficiently across the Executive Branch, creating cost-savings on procurements and more seamless interactions for the public who rely on state services. This new model also creates important opportunities for staff members to grow their talents within the agency.

Through the work of the Commission for Educational Technology (CET), we are leading the nation in Digital Equity efforts to ensure all our residents have the access, skills and means to participate in the digital economy. Continuing down the path to an all-digital government brings many benefits to both those who easily use technology and those who may need some assistance. Just in the last year over 16,000 teachers and professors in the state used GoOpenCT.org to write, curate and share free, digital, high-quality learning materials, saving time for our educators. We also expanded public Wi-Fi access through CEN to 154 locations in the state, serving over 83,500 people and prevented 537 cyber-attacks against our state agencies, schools, and towns. With the recent award of a federal planning grant, our team is well positioned to expand upon its footprint in the digital space.

### **Procurement Opportunity and Growth**

Our Procurement Division is charged with the purchase, lease or contract for supplies, materials, equipment and contractual services for executive branch state agencies and the purchasing, leasing, and contracting for all information system and telecommunication system facilities, equipment, and services for state agencies. It currently administers over 900 active contracts associated with over 2500 suppliers. Within the division, we administer the set-aside program (also known as Supplier Diversity Program), the state and federal surplus programs, the construction contractor prequalification program, and the Purchasing Card (P-card) program. Efficiencies have also been captured by introducing smart technologies and focusing on spend management, cost reduction, and streamlined processes that achieve savings for the entire state.



Attracting small and minority owned businesses to do business with the state remains a priority and breaking down barriers prospective vendors might face in that process is crucial to attaining that goal. DAS certified approximately 946 Connecticut owned small and/or minority business during the last year, consisting of 421 SBEs and 525 MBEs, however there is more work to be done. DAS is working with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to support an independent Disparity Study of the state's contracting practices and procedures – such a study has not been undertaken in over twenty years. The study will utilize a quantitative analysis, among other things, to determine whether women and minority-owned businesses are underutilized in state contracting relative to the actual impact and role of Small and Minority Businesses (SBE/MBE's) in Connecticut's economy. The study will also provide updated and relevant information to better inform programs such as the Supplier Diversity Program and the Construction Prequalification Program

### **Efficient Management and Sustainable Development**

The Real Estate and Construction Services (RECS) Division is charged with managing a wide variety of state assets, and at the same time making sure that state government infrastructure and operations are greener and more sustainable as we look forward to the future.

A few highlights of the team's work include:

- Keeping our state fleet – consisting of approximately 3,500 light-duty vehicles that log more than 30 million miles a year – on the road, while simultaneously working to convert that fleet to 50% electric vehicles by 2026;
- Managing a portfolio of approximately 1,801,737 square feet of office, courthouse, and storage space for 50 state agencies;
- Overseeing the design and construction of State facilities;
- Administering the operations, maintenance, and security of state-owned buildings; and
- Administering grant administration and design review for all public-school construction projects seeking State School Construction Grant reimbursement, payment of vendors for CTECS projects and administration of the new school HVAC grant program.

This team has shown great leadership on achieving greenhouse gas reduction goals listed in the Governor's Executive Orders 1 and 21-3 by leading our DAS sustainability efforts, including by conducting energy audits across 35 state buildings, conducting state property evaluations for electric vehicle charging stations and related electric infrastructure upgrades, collaborating with the Connecticut Green Bank on solar power projects, and working with an inter-agency group to study decarbonization of state assets, including the Capitol Area System (CAS) Plant. These projects will reduce energy costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and work toward our environmental justice goal of improving air quality in the greater Hartford region, and beyond.

Once again, thank you for your consideration of my nomination. It is an honor to serve this Administration, to support the extraordinary team at DAS, and to work in partnership with all of you to make a difference for the residents of our great state. I look forward to any questions you may have for me today.