



For Immediate Release

Monday, January 7, 2019

Press Contact: [Zachary Cohen](#)

Governor-Elect Ned Lamont Nominates Vanessa Dorantes to Lead the Department of Children and Families

Hartford, CT – Governor-elect Ned Lamont today announced that he is nominating Vanessa Dorantes to lead the Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF provides child-centered, family-focused, community-based programs and services to families throughout Connecticut. Dorantes' career with DCF spans more than 25 years. She currently serves as a Regional Administrator, a post she has held since 2014.

"Vanessa Dorantes has devoted her entire professional career to improving the safety, permanency and well-being of Connecticut's children," **said Lamont**. "Vanessa's own experience as a case worker will help support and guide those who have direct care responsibilities working with families involved with DCF, and her strong relationships with the child welfare system, the juvenile, probate and family court system and community provider groups will help her effect change at a department that must never waiver in its support of some of the most vulnerable among us. I know that Vanessa has the respect, admiration and support of her colleagues at DCF as she takes on this new opportunity, and I look forward to working with her."

"I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to continue my career at DCF as its next commissioner. As the agency continues to evolve, our number one focus must be to ensure the protection and care of every child for which DCF is responsible, period," **said Dorantes**. "We need to work together as a community – inclusive of state government and DCF, advocates, families and other stakeholders - to create a pathway for children to have the best life possible. I look forward to ensuring this agency approaches its work in an open and collaborative way."

Dorantes currently serves as a Regional Administrator in the Department of Children and Families, where she is responsible for the leadership and development of 475 professional and support staff members in a 43-town area in northwest Connecticut. Over the course of her career with DCF, she has played an integral role in promoting workforce development, change management and continuous quality improvement in the child welfare arena. Dorantes currently chairs the DCF Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup, which is charged with cultivating and sustaining an environment in which employees, families and DCF partners feel safe to discuss the impacts of racism, power and privilege on agency practice and their personal lives. Dorantes is also an adjunct professor of Social Work courses at Central CT State University where she has taught the next generation of social workers for over 14 years. In 2016, Dorantes was named "DCF Mentor of the Year" in 2016 by the DCF Academy for Workforce Development. Dorantes received her bachelor's degree from Teikyo Post University and her master's degree in social work from the University of Connecticut in 1998. She currently resides in Bristol and is DCF's first African American Commissioner.

Dorantes will begin serving as the Commissioner-designate on January 9, 2019. Her nomination will be sent to the General Assembly for its advice and consent.

###