

Washington State Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families

Judge Anne Levinson (Ret.) – Co-Chair (Governor’s Representative)

With experience drawn from more than two decades in public service, Judge Levinson serves as an advisor for government, non-profits and foundations. Among her roles in state and local government, she was the founding judge for Seattle’s Mental Health Court, one of the first therapeutic diversion courts in the country, the Chair of the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission, where she led efforts to stop energy deregulation and to improve service for consumers, and Deputy Mayor, Chief of Staff and Legal Counsel for Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, where she led many system reform initiatives, including the City’s first families & education levy.

Judge Levinson served for ten years on the MacArthur Foundation’s Research Network on Mandated Community Mental Health Treatment, studying the effectiveness and policy implications of community mandated mental health treatment. In 2002, she served as Special Counsel to Washington State’s Select Committee on Adolescents in Need of Long Term Placement, developing policy and organizational recommendations for DSHS’ systems for foster care youth with complex needs.

Judge Levinson provides independent oversight on issues related to police accountability for the City of Seattle, consults with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration on establishing therapeutic courts, and is helping improve the effective implementation of laws designed to reduce risk of violence due to firearms. She helped establish and continues to serve as a board member for the Center for Children & Youth Justice, a non-profit created to help lead reforms in Washington’s juvenile justice & child welfare systems, and is currently Vice-Chair of the State Public Disclosure Commission.

Representative Ruth Kagi

Ruth is a small-business owner and represents the 32nd District, including North King and South Snohomish County. She chairs the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee. Nationally, she is the past-chair of the National Conference of State Legislature’s Human Services Committee.

Ruth’s long history of community and public service includes serving as Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Washington, Chair of the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, and Chair of the Seattle Commission on Children and Youth. She received her B.A. from the University of Washington and M.P.A. from Syracuse University.

First elected to the House in 1999, she has focused on improving the quality of early learning and child care, strengthening foster care, and reforming the state’s drug sentencing and truck safety laws.

Ruth has five grown children and lives in Seattle.

Representative Maureen Walsh

State Representative Maureen Walsh is serving her sixth term representing the 16th Legislative District, which includes all of Columbia and Walla Walla counties, and parts of Benton and Franklin counties. She

is the ranking Republican on the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee, and serves on the House Capital Budget Committee.

Maureen's priorities include: empowering parents to be their kids' first and best teachers and making sure all children are prepared and excited about entering kindergarten; protecting seniors and our most vulnerable; creating and preserving jobs; preparing students for a diverse, changing economy; and holding government agencies accountable. In 2014, Maureen received the "Gold Crayon" Award from the Early Learning Action Alliance for advocating on behalf of children and their families. Maureen owns Onion World Restaurant, home of the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Sausage.

She lives in College Place and has three grown children – Shauna, Patrick and Murphy. Learn more about Maureen by visiting her website: RepresentativeMaureenWalsh.com.

Senator Jeannie Darneille

Senator Darneille presents the 27th Legislative District in the Washington State Senate, after having served for 12 years in the House of Representatives. She understands the needs and concerns of families struggling to make ends meet.

In the House, she worked to increase education funding for all learners; expanded health care for children, families, and the disabled; developed a safe environment for children and adults to learn, grow, and thrive; safeguarded civil liberties; and promoted economic opportunities to create living-wage jobs that improve the well-being of families.

Her career has included: a decade working in colleges and universities across four states and over 30 years working in non-profit social service agencies. Each position increased her awareness of issues such as health care, poverty, homelessness, homophobia and mental health. During the interim between sessions, Senator Darneille works and consults with non-profit organizations as they go through leadership transitions.

Senator Judy Warnick

Senator Judy Warnick is serving in her fourth term representing the 13th District, which encompasses all of Kittitas and Lincoln counties, southern Grant County, and a small part of northern Yakima County. Judy, who grew up on a dairy farm in Deer Park, focuses on policies protecting land use, water rights and economic growth. In 2012, she received the Guardian of Small Business Award from the National Federation of Independent Businesses as well as the "Friend of the Farm Bureau" from the Washington Farm Bureau in 2014. Judy is active with the Grant County Fair and Backcountry Horsemen of Washington. She and her husband Roy live in Moses Lake where they operate a small business and own a small farm. They have three grown daughters and eight grandchildren.

Pat Lashway, Department of Social and Health Services

Patricia Lashway has served in a variety of positions with the Department of Social and Health Services, beginning in 1988 in the Aging and Disability Services Administration. She came to state service from legal services and has spent her career, including overseas duty as a Peace Corps volunteer, working for

expanded supports and services for low-income and vulnerable people of all ages and walks of life. Patricia is a lifelong student of government and served as the DSHS Senior Director of Government Relations until being appointed to her current post in February 2013.

As Assistant Secretary for the Services and Enterprise Support Administration, Patricia has responsibility for management of daily operations across the Department. She leads the Communications, Diversity and Inclusion, Fraud and Accountability, Human Resources, Indian Policy, Information Systems Services, and Policy and External Relations, and Research and Data Analysis programs.

Patricia was with the Aging and Disability Services Administration for almost nine years as the Director of Residential Care Services. During that time, the program for which she was the chief licensing and regulatory officer grew to 3,000 facilities, including nursing homes, adult family homes, boarding homes and community supported living services involving 55,000 residents each day. Her team was responsible for development of a nationally recognized statewide complaint resolution and investigation unit, serving all longterm care consumers and their families.

Patricia received a bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon, a juris doctorate from Seattle University and is a member of the Washington State Bar Association.

Ross Hunter, Department of Early Learning

Ross Hunter was appointed Director of the Department of Early learning (DEL) by Governor Jay Inslee on September 7th, 2015. Ross' focus is on improving outcomes for all children, and especially on eliminating race as a predictor of school readiness for young learners.

Ross served as State Representative from the 48th District of Washington (the greater Eastside) from 2003-2015. Rep. Hunter chaired the Appropriations committee from 2010 through 2015 and was responsible for negotiating the 2011-13, 2013-15, and 2015-17 state budgets. He also chaired several other committees during his tenure, including the Finance committee, responsible for tax policy, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, and the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council.

Ross served on the Washington Learns K-12 Advisory Committee and the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance and led the effort to re-write the definition of Basic Education in Washington, as well as the successful effort to fund it.

Ross began his career at a small software company on the Eastside that expanded beyond all expectations. He was at Microsoft for 17 years and holds several patents for database and user interface design.

Ross earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science from Yale University in 1983.

Jennifer Strus - Children's Administration

Jennifer Strus is the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children's Administration Assistant Secretary. She was appointed to the role in February 2013, where she spearheads the Administration's work to provide exemplary services to vulnerable children and families, using its guiding principles of collaboration, compassion and respect.

Jennifer returned to DSHS after more than nine years on the Washington State Senate Committee Services' staff, most recently as Senior Staff Coordinator and Counsel for the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee, where her duties included researching, analyzing and drafting legislation related to human services issues. Earlier, she served as Coordinator and Counsel for the Senate Children and Family Services Committee.

Jennifer also has served as Director of Legal Affairs for the Office of Financial Management and as an Assistant Attorney General providing legal representation to the Children's Administration. In the late 1990s, Jennifer was Director of the Division of Program and Policy Development for Children's Administration, where she oversaw development and implementation of statewide child welfare policy. She also represented the administration on various boards and committees and developed and directed Children's Administration's legislative and policy priorities.

Jennifer earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice at Illinois State University and her law degree at Washburn University of Topeka School of Law in Topeka, Kansas.

Patrick Dowd – Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds

Patrick Dowd was appointed as Director of the Washington State Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO) in January 2015. He previously served as deputy director from 2013 to 2015 and also worked for OFCO from 1999 to 2005.

He is a licensed attorney with public defense experience and served as a managing attorney with the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD) Parents Representation Program from 1999 to 2005. Through his work at OFCO and OPD, Mr. Dowd has extensive professional experience in child welfare law and policy. Mr. Dowd graduated from Seattle University and earned his J.D. at the University of Oregon.

Kitty-Ann van Doorninck - Superior Court Judge

Pierce County Superior Court Judge since 1998.

Active in the Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA):

- SCJA Board member 2002-2005
- SCJA Legislative Committee, member and chair since 2009
- SCJA Family and Juvenile Law Committee, Chair 2009-2011, still member
- SCJA Commission Children in Foster Care, Member on behalf of SCJA since 2009

Pierce County Superior Court Family Court Judge 2003-2007, returning in 2016.

Pierce County Juvenile Presiding Judge 2011-2014

Barbara Carr – Juvenile Court Administrator

Barbara Carr is the Juvenile Court Administrator for Jefferson County, Washington and has served in this capacity since 1997. Barbara's contributions to juvenile justice work include serving for 10 years as the chair of the Washington State Community Juvenile Accountability Act Advisory Committee which promotes, advises and oversees the expansion, quality control and outcome research of state funded evidence-based programs in Washington's juvenile courts.

She is currently serving as Co-Chair of the Civil and Dependency Committee for the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators, the WAJCA Finance Committee, and also serves on the Washington State CASA Board. Barbara's other areas of professional involvement include membership in the Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State; participation in the evolution of therapeutic courts in her local community as well as at a statewide level; and working collaboratively with other stakeholders to improve productive communication and processes for court participants involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare system.

Liz Mueller - Tribal Representative

Liz Mueller has served for the past twenty two years as the Chair Indian Policy Advisory Committee to DSHS and the Indian Child Welfare Committee to Children's Administration. Her commitment for the protection of Indian children can be viewed in her work in the development of the Indian Child Welfare Case Review Model, (the first in the country) and the Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act. She has been appointed to serve on many Federal/State committees in her ongoing work on behalf of Indian Children.

Mel Tonasket - Tribal Representative

Mel appreciates being at the table and having tribal representation on commissions like these. Tribes weren't given that opportunity with the establishment of regional support networks or the behavioral health organization integration. Mel has worked on implementing the Indian Child Welfare Act and has concerns about developing something new. He will be able to provide the commission with the knowledge of how we got to where we are - the history.

Bryan Samuels - Child Welfare Expert

Bryan Samuels is the Executive Director of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. He has spent his career building the capacity of child welfare systems to produce positive outcomes for children, integrating empirical evidence into public policy and service delivery, and streamlining management and operations in government agencies.

Before coming to Chapin Hall, Samuels was the commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to his work at ACYF, Samuels served as chief of staff at Chicago Public Schools. He managed the day-to-day operations of the nation's third-largest school system, reviewed all proposed policy changes recommended to the Chicago Board of Education, and monitored implementation of new initiatives. Previously, Samuels also served as the director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the nation's third-largest child welfare agency.

Lawrence Berger - Economic Issues Expert

Lawrence (Lonnie) Berger is Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty and Professor and PhD Chair in the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research

focuses on the ways in which economic resources, sociodemographic characteristics, and public policies affect parental behaviors and child and family wellbeing.

Micah Kurtz – Washington Federation of State Employees

Micah Kurtz currently serves in King County as a Child and Family Welfare Services supervisor through Children's Administration with more than eight years of direct child welfare practice. Mr. Kurtz is also a Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program graduate from the University of Washington where he received his Master of Social Work degree. Mr. Kurtz also holds a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary.

Mr. Kurtz recently testified at Representative Kagi's House Early Learning and Human Services Committee to address social worker recruitment and retention within Children's Administration.

Mr. Kurtz believes in a servant leadership model that empowers and prioritizes the connection between direct-service workers and their clients. Mr. Kurtz practices this in the community as well; he is the current Tukwila Food Pantry Board President and is working for local food justice through his church in South King County.

Mr. Kurtz is a single father of one soon-to-be sixth grade boy.