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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement on the Conclusion of Commissioner Mitch Melis's Service with the Virginia Employment Commission

RICHMOND, VA — January 15, 2026 – After more than two years of service leading the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) through a period of significant transformation, Commissioner Demetrios “Mitch” Melis’s last day with the agency will be Friday, January 16.



During his tenure, Commissioner Melis led VEC’s recovery from unprecedented operational strain following the COVID-19 pandemic. Under his leadership, the agency eliminated a backlog of more than 700,000 work items, clearing 1.7 million items in total and restoring timely benefit decisions and payments for Virginians.

As a result, Virginia now ranks among the top-performing states nationally. Compared with peer states, VEC makes unemployment benefit eligibility decisions faster than any other state and ranks in the top third for delivering first payments to unemployed Virginians.

Commissioner Melis also drove a comprehensive modernization of VEC’s customer experience. The agency rebuilt its [website](#) into a “digital lobby,” making it easier, faster and more secure for Virginians to file for unemployment insurance benefits online. The redesigned platform features identity verification safeguards to protect customers and significantly reduce fraud, while providing an intuitive, step-by-step roadmap in plain language. The rebuilt website is mobile-friendly and features the *askVEC* virtual assistant to guide customers through common questions and processes.

A key innovation during his tenure was the introduction of AI-powered video guides, allowing customers to see and hear step-by-step explanations, bringing a human touch to digital government while expanding accessibility and reducing production costs.

Commissioner Melis also strengthened the agency's long-term resiliency by advancing data-driven operations, promoting cross-training to build agile teams, establishing a Chief Risk function, and leveraging technology to streamline processes and improve efficiency.

"It has been an honor to serve as Commissioner of the Virginia Employment Commission," said Commissioner Melis. "Together, we eliminated historic backlogs, modernized our systems, and improved how Virginians experience unemployment services when they need them most. I am deeply grateful to the dedicated public servants of VEC, and I leave confident the agency is strong, stable and well-positioned for the future."

The Virginia Employment Commission thanks Commissioner Melis for his service to the Commonwealth and wishes him continued success in his next chapter.

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