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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **VEC Announces Melissa Smith as New Commissioner Appointed by Governor Spanberger**

**RICHMOND, VA — February 3, 2026 —** The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) announces today Melissa Smith will serve as the agency's new Commissioner. Smith was appointed by Governor Abigail Spanberger.



"I am honored by the Governor's confidence and grateful for the opportunity to lead the Virginia Employment Commission alongside Virginia Secretary of Labor Jessica K. Looman," said Smith. "My career has been driven by a commitment to public service and to helping government work better for the people it serves. I look forward to bringing that focus to VEC as we continue strengthening programs that support Virginians during times of job loss and transition."

Smith brings more than 20 years of experience in public policy and government leadership, with a career focused on improving service delivery across large public systems. She has held senior leadership roles at the White House, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Commerce, and the Strada

Education Foundation, where she built a strong record of connecting policy development with operational execution.

As the former Director of Policy, Legislation, and Regulation for the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), she led national implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and supported reemployment policy initiatives across the country. Smith also brings extensive regulatory experience from the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, where she managed complex rulemaking related to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and the Immigration and Nationality Act.

"VEC's work supports Virginians during some of the most difficult times in their lives, and I am committed to working alongside staff to ensure benefits are delivered with accuracy, efficiency, and compassion," Smith added.

Smith holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Oklahoma College of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Oklahoma State University. As Commissioner, Smith will oversee the administration of Virginia's unemployment insurance program and lead continued efforts to strengthen service delivery, program integrity, and customer experience for Virginians who rely on unemployment benefits during periods of job loss.

For more information on unemployment insurance benefits and VEC services, please visit. [www.vec.virginia.gov](http://www.vec.virginia.gov).

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