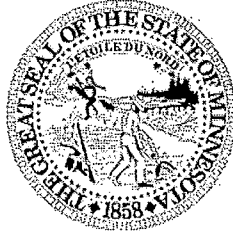


STATE OF MINNESOTA
Executive Department



Governor Tim Walz

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

Matt Varilek

Because of the special trust and confidence I have in your integrity, judgment, and ability, I have appointed you to the office of:

Commissioner

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Effective: June 20, 2023

Expires: January 4, 2027

This appointment carries with it all rights, powers, duties, and emoluments granted by law and pertaining to this position until this appointment is superseded or annulled by me or other lawful authority or by any law of this State.

Signed and sealed May 31, 2023.



Handwritten signature of Tim Walz in black ink.

Tim Walz
Governor

Handwritten signature of Steve Simon in black ink.

Steve Simon
Secretary of State

Replacing: Kevin McKinnon

Filed May 31, 2023
Office of the Minnesota
Secretary of State
Steve Simon

Matt Varilek

SUMMARY

Senior leader based in Greater Minnesota with experience as President Obama-appointed Chief Operating Officer at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), a federal agency with a mission similar to that of DEED. In my prior regional role at the SBA, and as a US Senate staffer and candidate for US House, I organized and participated in hundreds of public meetings with diverse community-based stakeholders, helping to generate positive earned media. As President of the Initiative Foundation, I've further demonstrated successful organizational leadership ability, growing assets, increasing employee satisfaction, forging new partnerships with sovereign Native Nations, communities of color, leaders from across the political spectrum, and in both rural and urban settings. I start with a solid knowledge of DEED resulting from multiple active collaborations with the Department, and alignment of goals related to inclusive economic growth, workforce development, child care, clean energy transition, and more.

EXPERIENCE

President, Initiative Foundation, Little Falls, MN (December 2016-present)

- Lead rural community foundation and economic development organization focused on strategic priorities related to inclusive entrepreneurship, workforce development, childcare, nonprofit development, and local generosity.
- Expanding lending and training for social entrepreneurs, lower-income entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs of color, among others. Serve as lone in-region provider of Islamic-acceptable small-business financing.
- Directly engaged in fundraising, grantseeking, helping to grow total organizational assets over 50%, from \$66 million to over \$100 million in six years. Perfect track record of clean audits.
- Efficiently distributed over \$20 million in COVID-relief grants to small businesses and other recipients, in partnership with DEED, often returning a portion of unspent administrative fees.
- Led diverse coalition of nine urban and rural Minnesota partner organizations such as LEDC, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, Saint Cloud State University, et al., in collaboration with staff at the Minneapolis Fed, as the lone 9th District cohort in the Philadelphia Fed's 2020-21 Reinventing Our Communities program, which advances entrepreneurship as a tool for wealth-building and reduction of racial inequity.

Chief Operating Officer, U.S. SBA, Washington, DC (March 2015 – December 2016)

- Promoted from prior regional role to manage national operations across Cabinet-level Agency with more than 2,000 employees, supporting programs and services related to small-business lending, venture capital and private equity, entrepreneurial training, government contracting, and disaster recovery.
- Managed staff of approximately 180. Supervised direct reports including heads of offices of Human Resources, Information Technology, Digital Services, Facilities, Grants Management, Diversity and Inclusion, Enterprise Risk Management, and Executive Correspondence.
- Directed organizational change initiatives including Office of the Chief Operating Officer restructuring, IT infrastructure refresh, creation of Chief Digital Officer and Digital Services team, and establishment of new Office of Personnel Security for pre-employment suitability evaluation.
- Served as chairman of Lender Oversight Committee, monitoring and managing risk across the agency's loan guarantee programs.

Regional Administrator, U.S. SBA Region VIII, Denver, CO (May 2013 – February 2015)

- Managed staff of approximately 60 as senior presidentially appointed agency official in six-state area including Colorado, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah.

- Promoted SBA programs and Obama Administration small business priorities via numerous public speaking engagements, TV, radio, and print media interviews.
- Developed and implemented new initiatives related to Small Business Investment Company program for venture capital and private equity funds, as well as enhanced partnership with SCORE volunteer organization.
- Designated as first non-D.C. successor to SBA Administrator in case of catastrophic event. Top Secret security clearance.

Candidate for Congress, At-Large District of South Dakota (Dec 2011 – Nov 2012)

- Challenged incumbent U.S. House member. Won primary election (72%-28%). Lost general election (43%-57%).
- Raised contributions totaling approximately \$960,000. Recruited and hired team of paid campaign staff, media, mail and polling firms, along with unpaid volunteers.
- Participated in numerous TV, radio and print interviews, as well as live debates, along with numerous other public speaking engagements.

Economic Development Director and Speechwriter, Offices of U.S. Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson, Washington, DC and Sioux Falls, SD (April 2004 – Dec 2011, Nov 2012 – May 2013)

- Advised Senate Minority Leader and Senate Banking Committee Chairman on issue areas including small business, community development, disaster recovery, technology research, infrastructure, appropriations.
- Served as liaison to community organizations such as CDFIs and economic development corporations, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), local elected officials, and small businesses across the state.
- Wrote and revised Senators' speeches, press releases, memos, and correspondence.

Director of Policy and Research, Natsource LLC, New York City, London, and Washington, DC (Nov. 1999 – March 2004)

- Built new advisory services business unit within over-the-counter brokerage of energy-related commodities including electricity, natural gas, coal, and emission allowances, as well as related derivatives.
- Project manager, lead author, and/or editor of energy and environmental market and policy reports, articles, and papers on behalf of the firm and its electric utility brokerage clients, as well as governmental agencies. Delivered presentations in the U.S. and at numerous international events.

EDUCATION

MPhil., Environment and Development, University of Cambridge, England (2001-2)

- Fully funded by Gates Cambridge Scholarship, established by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Degree awarded with distinction for overall performance.
- Since 2008, invited annually by Gates Cambridge Trust to serve as panelist selecting new U.S.-based Gates Cambridge Scholarship recipients.

MPhil., Economic Development, University of Glasgow, Scotland (1998-9)

- Fully funded by Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship from Rotary International Foundation.
- Awarded Class Prize for best overall degree performance and Gerry Muller Prize for best dissertation (related to clean energy projects in less developed countries).

B.A., Philosophy (major), Environment and Technology Studies (concentration), Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota (1993-7)

- Overall GPA 3.70, Major 3.90, Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude. Awarded distinction in major and on senior thesis.
- Vice President of Carleton Student Association, Chairman of Budget Committee.