WISCONSIN OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE BIOGRAPHIES

Nathan Houdek has served as **Commissioner of Insurance** for the State of Wisconsin since his appointment by Governor Tony Evers in January 2022. He previously served as Deputy Commissioner of Insurance for three years under former Commissioner Mark Afable.

Commissioner Houdek serves as the state's chief regulator of insurance and oversees the operations of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance. He is also vice chair of the state Group Insurance Board and a board member of the Wisconsin Insurance Security Fund, the state's guaranty fund.

As a member of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), Commissioner Houdek currently serves as chair of the Financial Condition (E) Committee, and as a member of the Life Insurance and Annuities (A) Committee, the International Insurance Relations (G) Committee, and various task forces and working groups. He is also vice chair of the Governance Committee of the Interstate Insurance Product Regulation Commission.

Having spent over 20 years working in state legislative and regulatory affairs, Commissioner Houdek has extensive experience finding solutions to complex public policy and regulatory challenges across all lines of insurance. He has held several senior-level roles in the public and private sectors, including serving as a principal at one of Wisconsin's largest public affairs and business consulting firms and as chief of staff to a former minority leader in the Wisconsin State Senate.

Commissioner Houdek grew up in northern Wisconsin and earned his BA and MBA degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Rebecca Easland is the **Deputy Commissioner of Insurance** at OCI. As Deputy Commissioner, Rebecca is responsible for the overall operations of OCI and actively participates in NAIC activities and engagement with stakeholders. In her work with the NAIC, she chairs the NAIC Aggregation Method Implementation (G) Working Group.
Before OCI, Deputy Commissioner Easland served as Senior Policy Advisor with the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS). During her time with IAIS, she assisted in the development of the global Insurance Capital Standard, worked with the Macroprudential Committee, and provided project management support to the Policy Development Committee. Prior to joining IAIS, Deputy Commissioner Easland worked at OCI for over 15 years as a Financial Examiner and the Director of the Financial Analysis and Examination Bureau.

Lauren U. Van Buren was appointed **Chief Legal Counsel** in January 2023. She previously served as an attorney at OCI for more than five years ensuring compliance with insurance laws and consumer protection standards with a focus on prosecuting administrative actions involving financial advisor fraud, securities fraud, and life insurance suitability.
As Chief Legal Counsel, Lauren takes a pragmatic approach to regulation, emphasizing thoughtful problem-solving and effective enforcement while providing legal and strategic guidance on complex regulatory issues, overseeing enforcement actions, and ensuring regulatory compliance across all lines of insurance. Within the Legal Unit, she prioritizes mentorship and collaboration, fostering a legal team that is engaged, informed, and responsive to emerging challenges in the insurance industry.

Lauren has played a key role in shaping insurance regulation through the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). She was instrumental in developing the NAIC's accelerated underwriting guidance, helping regulators navigate the growing use of data and algorithms in life insurance underwriting. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the NAIC's Annuity Suitability Working Group, working to ensure annuity sales practices align with consumer protection standards.
Originally from Honolulu, Hawai'i, Lauren earned her degrees from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Sarah Smith is the **Director of Public Affairs** at OCI. She is responsible for overseeing communications, public outreach, and legislative affairs.
Before joining OCI, Sarah was the Communications Director for Senator Patty Schachtner and has previously served as the Chief of Staff to State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski.
Sarah earned a Bachelor of Arts in History as well as a Master of Science in Educational Policy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Timothy Cornelius has served as the Deputy Chief Legal Counsel at the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) since February 2023. In his current role, he is responsible for supervising all OCI staff attorneys, participating in the NAIC, and providing legal and policy advice to OCI senior management and staff on wide range of issues. Prior to his current role, Tim was the P&C staff attorney at OCI and also provided legal services to the Agent Licensing Section. Originally from Madison, Tim earned his Bachelor and Law degrees from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. He also holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of Michigan.