



KDCR Partners Adds HHS, House Alum Leslie Zelenko

Washington, DC (October 10, 2023) – [Kountoupes, Denham, Carr & Reid](#), a premier bipartisan government affairs firm, today announced that Democratic strategist Leslie Zelenko will join the team starting October 23. Zelenko has more than a decade of experience working in the Biden administration and in the House of Representatives where she served as Legislative Director for House appropriator and former Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair Mark Pocan (D-WI-2). Joining the firm as a principal, Zelenko will provide the firm’s clients with invaluable insight and strategic counsel.

“Leslie will be an incredible asset to the KDCR Partners team,” said Lori Denham, chief operating officer and partner at KDCR Partners. “The scope of her health policy experience and relationships through the administration and across Capitol Hill coupled with her appropriations work will provide immediate value to all our clients. We couldn’t be more excited to welcome Leslie to KDCR Partners.”

Zelenko most recently served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services, where she worked with Congress and throughout the administration on the full range of health care priorities, including the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and its subsequent implementation. Her propensity for collaboration and strategic thinking was instrumental as she worked across the Executive Branch as well as with Congressional leadership, healthcare committees and rank and file offices on both sides of the aisle in the House and the Senate.

Additionally, Zelenko’s portfolio at HHS included some of the most pressing issues in the health care industry, such as efforts to lower healthcare and prescription drug costs, the PREVENT Pandemics Act & Preparedness All-Hazards Prevention Act (PAHPA), the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and ARPA-H.

Prior to joining the administration, Zelenko had more than a decade of experience in Congress starting her congressional career with now-Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). She served for nine years in a variety of roles, including legislative director, for Congressman Mark Pocan (D-WI-2), who serves on the House Appropriations Committee as a member of the Labor-HHS and Financial Services Subcommittees. During her tenure with Rep. Pocan, Zelenko led the Congressman’s legislative team while Congressman Pocan served as Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and Co-Chair of the Equality Caucus.

“Leslie has a powerhouse combination of political acumen, policy expertise, and coalition building, all of which made her a tremendous asset to my team and to my constituents,” said Congressman Pocan. “Her dedication and work during the COVID-19 pandemic was invaluable, and par for the course based on her entire tenure in my office. I know she will excel at this new endeavor at KDCR Partners, and I wish her all the best.”

Zelenko, who joins the firm during a period of sustained growth, will join KDCR’s health care and appropriations practices.

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About Kountoupes, Denham, Carr & Reid

Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid is a bipartisan, results-driven firm that offers clients invaluable counsel and partnership in navigating the legislative and political landscape in Washington, D.C.