

Assembly California Legislature



KRISTIN OLSEN
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWELFTH DISTRICT

January 12, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to recommend Karen Y. Zamarripa.

I have known Karen for more than a decade and worked with her in several different capacities. We first met when I was the Assistant Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs at CSU Stanislaus. After I was elected to the Assembly, we continued to work together in my capacity as both the Assembly Republican Leader and as a member of the Higher Education Committee. In our many dealings, I have found Karen to be a consummate professional – focused, knowledgeable, hard-working, and effective.

Karen is a well-known and well-respected member of the higher education community. Most recently, she served as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advocacy and State Relations for the California State University. In this position, Karen worked directly with elected officials and gubernatorial, legislative, and agency staff on policy and budget matters involving the CSU. She also oversaw alumni and community relations and played a central role in developing a system-wide approach to campus advocacy and strategic communications. Prior to joining CSU, Karen represented K-12 schools as an advocate for the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and also worked for two members of the California State Senate.

Outside of work, Karen has been a strong advocate of women in leadership roles. She served as president and board member of Capitol Network, an organization committed to helping female legislators, government appointees, and lobbyists while raising money for state and local charities serving women, children, and families. She also served for seven years on the board of directors of Leadership California.

Karen's professional and volunteer experience has provided her with a tremendous understanding of California's education system (kindergarten through Ph.D.) and the personalities and dynamics that drive the development of public policy. She is extraordinarily well versed in the myriad of issues that fall under the umbrella of "education" – student and faculty needs, testing, admissions, labor, certification, financing, siting, construction, and the list goes on. Further, Karen is keenly aware of the seismic changes taking place in education that are being driven by technology and open source approaches. While many claim to be an expert in education, Karen legitimately is one.

On a personal level, Karen is smart, engaging, fun, and forward-thinking. She is diligent about staying current and able to see the road ahead. In short, Karen is one of the finest, most dedicated, and hardest-working education professionals with whom I have worked. I recommend her without reservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristin Olsen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

KRISTIN OLSEN
Assemblymember, 12th District