



Good morning. Thank you for coming.

I'm proud today to introduce my new commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs: Jeffery Olson.

Jeff is taking over for Bernie Melter, who is retiring after decades of public service, including the past 10 years as Veterans Affairs commissioner.

Thank you Bernie, for all your hard work. Jeff has some pretty big shoes to fill, but I know he can do it.

Jeff has been deputy commissioner at Veterans Affairs for 17 years, and one of the things I love about that department is they just do their work. You don't hear much about them, but the thousands of veterans they help know they're an extremely important part of this administration.

Jeff has been instrumental in making the Veterans Affairs department so vital. He has shown a strong commitment to Minnesota's veterans during his years as deputy commissioner and as a county veterans service officer. I know he'll be a tremendous advocate for veterans at the legislature and an active liaison to veterans organizations across the state.

He's a member of pretty much all those organizations, so he's tuned into their needs.

He has a great background in managing the department, and in getting its message out to veterans and their dependents.

AND because I pick my commissioners based only on their qualifications, I'm not going to hold it against Jeff that he's an Army guy.

Let me introduce Jeff Olson, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs.