

Lt. Gov. Simon names Kati Phillips new chief of staff

Written by Justin Stofferahn
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CHICAGO – August 14, 2012. Lt. Governor Sheila Simon today announced that Kati Phillips will serve as her new chief of staff effective August 15. Phillips has served as the deputy chief of staff for communications in Simon's office since January 2011 and will continue to fulfill that role. She replaces DK Hirner who plans to work in Missouri.

As chief of staff and communications director, Phillips will work as a senior policy advisor, manage office operations and execute the administration's internal and external communications. She replaces DK Hirner who resigned after successfully re-establishing the office that had been vacant since 2009.

“Kati Phillips shares my commitment to transparency and accountability, and she will serve taxpayers well in this expanded role,” Simon said. “I thank DK Hirner for her leadership in starting the office from scratch, and look forward to working with Kati to move our office and state forward.”

Phillips formerly served as deputy director of communications for State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias. Prior to entering public service, she was an education and news reporter at the Daily Southtown and Star Newspapers in the south suburbs of Chicago and Elmira Star-Gazette in upstate New York. Her watchdog coverage of school districts in Calumet Park and Sauk Village received local and national awards. Born and raised in Bloomington-Normal, Phillips graduated from the University of Iowa and resides in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago.

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"I appreciate this opportunity to serve as chief of staff and maintain continuity in our leadership," Phillips said. "I have great respect for Lt. Governor Simon and am excited to pursue meaningful education and ethics reforms that will make a difference for Illinois students and taxpayers."

Among her accomplishments as chief of staff, Hirner lists the Lt. Governor's Complete College tour of the state's 48 community colleges and the resulting policy report, "Focus on the Finish." As a result of Simon's attention to education reform, Illinois was chosen by the Lumina Foundation to participate in its Postsecondary Productivity Strategy Labs, a network that is providing guidance on performance funding for community colleges and universities and higher education affordability and completion issues.

"Now that the office is fully operational and positioned to make a difference in the education of Illinois children, I feel my work in the Illinois Lt. Governor's office is complete," said Hirner, who previously served as the chief of staff and policy director for former Missouri Lt. Governor Mel Carnahan and deputy chief of staff for former Missouri Governor Bob Holden. "I plan to put my experience to good use in helping my friend of 33 years, Mary Still, in her run for the Missouri Senate. It has been a pleasure serving Illinois, and I wish Lt. Governor Simon and her staff all the best and continued success in the remainder of her term."

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