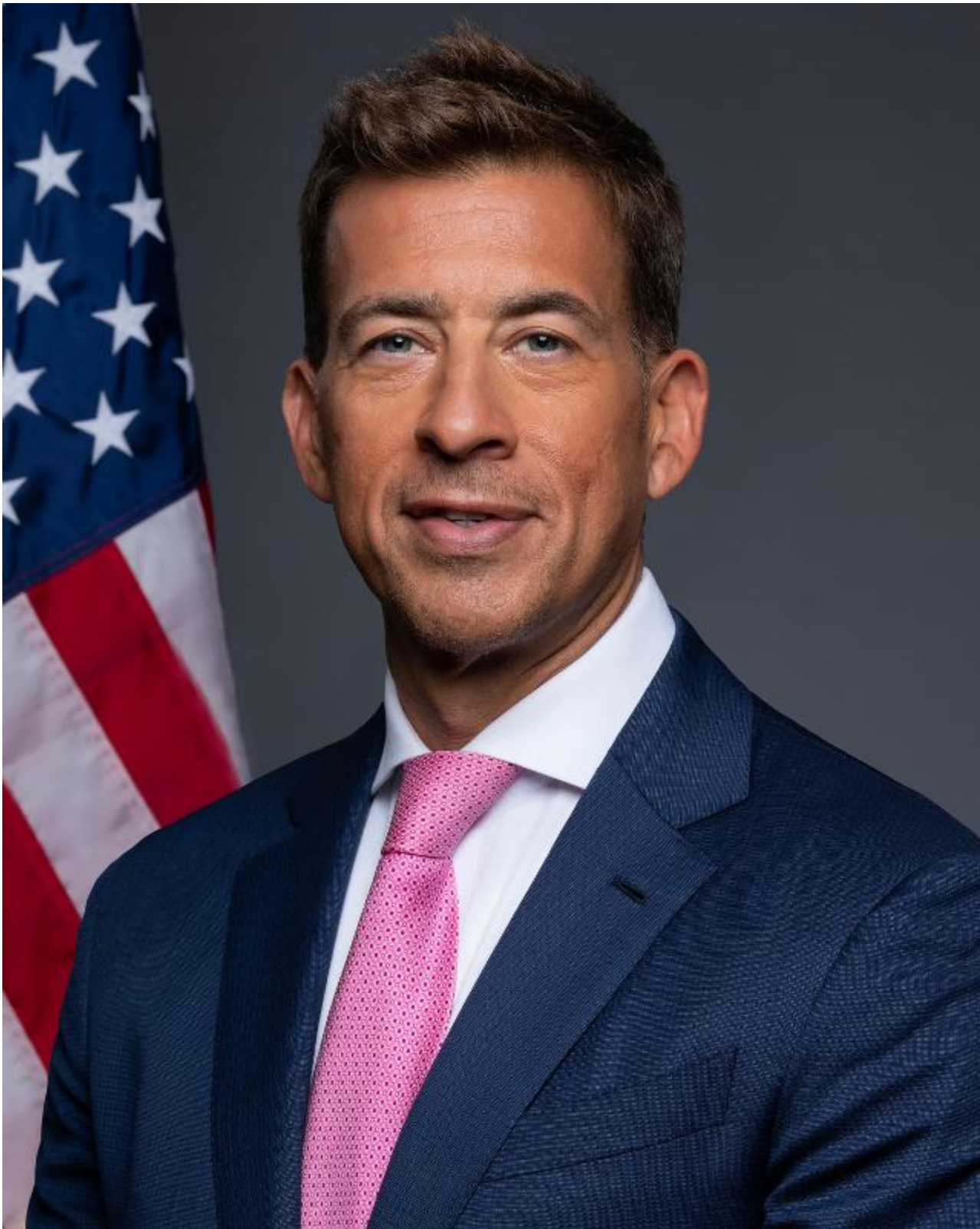




Giannoulas Hires Secretary Of State's First-Ever Diversity, Equity And Inclusion (DEI) Officer

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SPRINGFIELD - Fulfilling a campaign promise, Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulas has established the first-ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer position in the Secretary of State's office.



Dr. Margaret “Margie” Lawler, who joins the office today, will fill this important inaugural role, Giannoulas announced.

Dr. Lawler brings significant experience, most recently serving as Blackburn College’s inaugural DEI Officer. She has been engaged in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts

for over 12 years at institutions of higher learning, including key roles at Illinois Central College and the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. She also brings private sector experience from her years with Caterpillar, Inc. in Peoria.

“I want to ensure the Secretary of State’s office implements equitable hiring strategies and promotes an inclusive culture that will improve interactions with customers and the public,” said Giannoulas. “This is a top priority of my administration and filling the new DEI Officer position with someone like Dr. Lawler – a leader in the field who brings both passion and outstanding credentials to the role – is a strong first step.”

“I’m excited to join the Secretary of State’s office and serve as the office’s first-ever DEI Officer,” Dr. Lawler said. “I look forward to using my years of experience as a DEI Officer in higher education to bring about robust and inclusive strategies that infuse the Secretary of State’s office with top talent that diversifies the office. I appreciate the confidence Secretary Giannoulas has placed in me, and I share his passion for fairness and equity.”

In addition to serving as DEI Officer, Dr. Lawler will serve as deputy director for training in the Secretary of State Springfield Personnel Office. In this capacity, she will revive and refresh the office training for all employees, especially managers.

Dr. Lawler obtained her Ed.D. from Ferris State University in Michigan, her master’s from the University of Central Missouri, and her B.A. from Western Illinois University.

The Illinois Secretary of State’s office employs approximately 4,000 people, spanning 25 departments with responsibilities ranging from issuing driver’s licenses and ID cards to registering and titling vehicles, maintaining state records, incorporating businesses, managing the state’s Organ and Tissue Donor Registry and serving as the state librarian and state archivist.