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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES BRANDIE KNAZZE TO SERVE AS
COMMISSIONER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced Brandie Knazze as the next Commissioner of the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS). Knazze is a skilled leader in public policy, process re-imagining and organizational design. Since 2017, Knazze has served as the First Deputy Commissioner of DFSS.

"As our city begins to reopen and double down on its socioeconomic supports for our most vulnerable residents, Brandie's appointment as DFSS's next commissioner couldn't have come at a better time," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Brandie is an exceptional leader who has led Chicago and helped to protect our residents through several difficult moments—including the infamous 2019 Polar Vortex. I am thrilled to formally welcome her into this new role and am beyond confident that she will make Chicago a better, more equitable place for those who have been struggling long before a pandemic ever hit our city."

As First Deputy Commissioner for DFSS, Knazze managed the daily operations for seven program divisions that range from birth through the senior years (Children Services, Domestic Violence Services, Homeless Services, Human Services, Senior Services, Youth Services, and Workforce Services). Day to day, she helped teams navigate client needs, comply with funder requirements, measure program impact, and respond to stakeholder requests. In addition, she was responsible for ensuring that DFSS's 27 client-facing sites are operational to serve clients safely and effectively.

As she officially steps into the lead role, Knazze will be charged with delivering social service programs and resources to more than 400,000 Chicago residents per year. This includes early learning opportunities for Chicago's children; summer employment opportunities and after-school programs for youth; supportive services, shelter and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals; safe accommodations and support services for victims of domestic violence; a wide array of life-enrichment opportunities and care services for Chicago's seniors; guidance



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and aid for our veterans; and job training and assistance for ex-offenders looking for a second chance to re-enter the workforce.

“I am truly honored and humbled to be chosen by the Mayor to lead the Department of Family and Support Services,” said Commissioner Knazze. “For over six years now, I have worked to offer tangible solutions to the real-life problems facing many Chicagoans every day. This important work has become even more necessary in the City’s successful response to the Covid-19 pandemic and I could not be more excited to continue this journey.”

Prior to her most recent role as First Deputy, Knazze served as the Deputy Commissioner for IT, Contracts and Program Monitoring. In this role, she was able to expand the network of contracted community-based organizations to 360 organizations that represented over 1,600 contracts through strategic Request for Proposal (RFP) development, contract awarding, active contract management and monitoring, training, and resource development.

Knazze is a graduate of Emory University where she earned her B.A. in Economics and Women’s Studies, as well as Carnegie Mellon University where she earned her M.S. in Public Policy and Management/Regional Economic Development and Planning. Additionally, she is a 2016 graduate of the University of Chicago Civic Leadership Academy.

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