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MAYOR ADAMS APPOINTS LAURA KAVANAGH AS FIRE COMMISSIONER

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced the appointment of, and swore in, Laura Kavanagh as commissioner of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). Kavanagh brings years of experience building a safer and more efficient department and city government to keep New Yorkers safe, previously serving as first deputy commissioner and, most recently, as acting-fire commissioner. As FDNY commissioner, Kavanagh will oversee the day-to-day administration of the agency’s 17,000 employees and \$2 billion budget.

“Laura Kavanagh is a proven and tested leader, and I’m proud to announce her historic appointment today,” said **Mayor Adams**. “No matter her role, Commissioner Kavanagh has always been a leader — from helping to lead the FDNY’s response to the Ebola outbreak in 2015 to steering the ship during the COVID-19 pandemic, to directing a firefighter recruitment program that resulted in the most diverse applicant pool in the department’s history. New Yorkers and New York City’s ‘Bravest’ deserve an exceptional leader and Commissioner Kavanagh has the vision, the skills, and the compassion to lead the FDNY into the future.”

“Commissioner Kavanagh has the expertise needed to lead the FDNY and make this department the best it can be,” said **Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Philip Banks III**. “I’ve had the privilege of working alongside the commissioner this year and look forward to continuing to do so to support our ‘Bravest’ and keeping our city safe.”

“For nearly a decade, I have served, learned from and worked on behalf of the New York City Fire Department. I have seen the sacrifices our men and women make, the talent and training they possess, and the bravery they display saving lives and protecting our city. This is the greatest city in the world and the greatest fire department in the world. To serve both is the honor of a lifetime,” said **FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanagh**. “I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to lead this great department, and I thank the more than 17,000 Firefighters, EMTs, Paramedics, Fire Marshals, Fire Inspectors and civilian personnel for all they do 24/7 to keep our city safe.”

“I count today among the endless examples of history being made one woman at a time — and what a special woman the honorable Laura Kavanagh,” said **U.S. Representative Yvette Clarke**. “To see a lifelong, fearless advocate, and devoted New Yorker such as Ms. Kavanagh ascend to the pinnacle of her field as commissioner of the FDNY not only fills me

with pride as her friend, but instills a deep comfort in me as someone who calls this city home. My most sincere congratulations to her for this well-deserved distinction, and I look forward to every possibility on the FDNY's horizons under her leadership.”

“Laura Kavanagh is a dedicated public servant, crisis-tested leader and outstanding choice to serve as commissioner of the New York City Fire Department,” said **U.S. Representative Hakeem Jeffries**. “I congratulate her on her appointment and look forward to supporting her work to keep New Yorkers safe.”

“Today is a historic day in New York City as Mayor Adams swears in the first female Commissioner in the Fire Department’s 157-year history. Laura Kavanagh brings years of experience and leadership to the FDNY. Her appointment as Commissioner will mean a safer New York and a stronger FDNY,” said **U.S. Representative Ritchie Torres**. “In the aftermath of the deadly Twin Parks Northwest Fire in the Bronx, Commissioner Kavanagh acted with urgency to support our borough and provide thorough investigations. I look forward to working alongside her to support the FDNY in ensuring first-rate fire safety standards.”

“The members of FDNY bravely protect New Yorkers every single day, and they deserve to be represented by the very best,” said **New York Attorney General Letitia James**. “Laura Kavanagh has proven to be a dedicated public servant who is committed to supporting the needs of New York’s bravest and all our communities. Today, our city makes history and all New Yorkers proud by welcoming Commissioner Kavanagh as the first woman commissioner of the FDNY. I applaud Mayor Adams for choosing the best to lead our city forward, and I have every confidence that Commissioner Kavanagh will continue to protect all New Yorkers.”

“Laura Kavanagh’s leadership has already seen the FDNY through some of its darker days, from Ebola to COVID, and I welcome her appointment as FDNY Commissioner today,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “She has long been a champion for our City’s first responders, and I look forward to partnering with Commissioner Kavanagh to ensure our City’s bravest workers are supported in their life-saving endeavors.”

“I commend Mayor Adams’ appointment of Laura Kavanagh to lead the New York City Fire Department,” said **New York State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud**. “Commissioner Kavanagh has established an impressive record of service at FDNY and previously in City Hall and with community institutions across our city.”

“I am thrilled that Mayor Adams has appointed Laura Kavanagh as commissioner of the New York City Fire Department,” said **New York State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick**. “Her years of dedicated service is emblematic of the commitment all New York City firefighters and their selfless service to our great City. It is a remarkable step forward for the Department and I congratulate Commissioner Kavanagh and applaud the Mayor on making this historic appointment.”

“I congratulate Laura Kavanagh on making history as the first woman to become fire commissioner in the department’s 157-year history,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar**. “Whatever the challenge — be it COVID-19, implementing new technology or diversifying the FDNY ranks — Laura Kavanagh has risen to the occasion and delivered for the Department and for our City. As Commissioner, Kavanagh will be what she has always been

— an outstanding leader for the brave firefighters who put their lives on the line every day, courageously entering the most dangerous situations. Thank you to Mayor Eric Adams for continuing to appoint eminently qualified people to help lead the City, including a record number of women in top posts.”

“Commissioner Laura Kavanagh has dedicated herself to serving the public and the brave members of the FDNY— her record and long-time commitment speaks for itself,” said **New York State Assemblymember Nily Rozic**. “I know she will continue to succeed all while reminding millions of young girl, women, and all New Yorkers that representation matters.”

“Laura Kavanagh epitomizes leadership, compassion, and class. For years, Laura has served the FDNY and our city with dedication and grace, and I could not be more confident in her ability to lead the FDNY as commissioner — a role she has filled admirably in an acting capacity,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “I look forward to growing my office’s already fruitful partnership with Commissioner Kavanagh to keep Queens families safe and support our first responders.”

“Laura Kavanagh is quite simply one of the most talented public sector leaders I have ever worked with,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “She has put her heart and soul into the FDNY over the past nine years, and is an outstanding choice to serve as commissioner at this critical moment. I applaud this historic appointment.”

“I want to congratulate Laura Kavanagh on her historic appointment and swearing in as the first female commissioner to lead the New York City Fire Department,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “I have worked closely with Laura during my time as an elected official and she has demonstrated overwhelming commitment, compassion and dedication for not only her staff but all New Yorkers. In the Bronx, we understand firsthand the importance of fire safety and I look forward to working with Commissioner Kavanagh in her new role to ensure the FDNY receives the support they need to continue to operate efficiently and on recruitment efforts to ensure the FDNY reflects the beautiful diversity of our borough and city.”

“Ms. Laura Kavanagh has distinguished herself as a fierce leader for all New York City firefighters, from our meeting with members of the local firehouse in my district following the untimely death of Fire Fighter Jesse Gerhard to her commitment to advocate for equity in our firehouses,” said **New York City Council Majority Whip Selvena N. Brooks-Powers**. “I know Commissioner Kavanagh will continue to serve with distinction as she assumes the role of commissioner of New York’s Bravest. Wishing much success as she assumes this appointment.”

“I’d like to congratulate New York City Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh on her appointment,” said **New York City Councilmember Joann Ariola, chair, Committee on Fire and Emergency Management**. “Commissioner Kavanagh has proven herself to be a leader that has been on the ground with firefighters through some of their worst times. She has the knowledge and vision that will carry the department forward. As chair of the New York City Council Fire and Emergency Management Committee, I look forward to working with Commissioner Kavanagh to pass legislation that will ensure the safety of our fire fighters and our city’s residents.”

“As the former Chair of the Committee on Fire and Emergency management, I spent four years

working alongside Commissioner Kavanaugh during some of the toughest days in the fire department's recent history,” said **New York City Councilmember Joseph Borelli**. “I have absolute confidence in her abilities and know she will serve the city well for years to come. She knows her stuff and she cares, and we are lucky to have her.”

“Laura Kavanaugh has demonstrated great presence as acting FDNY Commissioner, and I am delighted that she is being appointed to lead the hard-working men and women of the department,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer**. Ms. Kavanaugh is a problem-solver at a time when this skill is in great demand. I look forward to continuing to work with her.”

“Laura is an inspired choice for the role of fire commissioner,” said **New York City Councilmember Lincoln Restler**. “Exceptionally bright, savvy and effective — she will continue to be a great leader for FDNY.”

“Representation matters and I am thrilled at the appointment of Laura Kavanaugh as the first female commissioner of the New York City Fire Department,” said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman**. “This is a well-deserved historic promotion at a time when New York is being led by its first female majority-led City Council.”

“As President of the Uniformed Firefighters Association, I would like to congratulate Laura Kavanaugh on her appointment to commissioner of the Fire Department of the City of New York,” said **Andrew Ansbro, president, Uniformed Firefighters Association (UFA)**. “During her tenure and throughout the whole COVID-19 pandemic she has been a stabilizing leader whose accessibility has fostered an open dialogue between the UFA and the FDNY. We intend to maintain this strong working relationship with Commissioner Kavanaugh and wish her the best of luck leading the greatest fire department in the world as we protect the lives of New York’s eight million residents and untold millions of commuters and tourists.”

“We are happy that Mayor Adams has selected Laura Kavanaugh as commissioner,” said **Oren Barzilay, president, Uniformed EMS, Paramedics, & Fire Inspectors Local 2507**. “Laura has a strong record advocating for members of EMS FDNY. We look forward to continued success in working with her.”

“The United Women Firefighters Association congratulates Laura Kavanaugh on her historic appointment as the first female commissioner of the Fire Department of the City of New York,” said **Jackie-Michelle Martinez, president, United Women Firefighters (UWF)**. “Women have bravely served in the FDNY since 1982. This appointment of Laura Kavanaugh highlights the ability, dedication and service which women demonstrate everyday to the people of New York. Commissioner Kavanaugh’s leadership abilities and managerial skills will serve the FDNY well. The UWF looks forward to working with Commissioner Kavanaugh in the future. As the number of female firefighters increase, there will be continued interest in ensuring and creating a fair and amicable work environment. We anticipate working with her as we have done in her previous roles within the department.”

“We are very pleased with the mayor's decision to appoint Laura Kavanaugh to FDNY commissioner,” said **Vincent Variale, president, Uniformed EMS Officers Association, Local 3621**. “She has been supportive, caring and demonstrates strong leadership

abilities. We look forward to continue working with her on the many issues that affect our members and their ability to provide the vital lifesaving services to the people of New York City.”

“We congratulate Laura on this well-deserved and historic appointment,” said **Henry Garrido, executive director, District Council 37**. “She is a dedicated civil servant who cares about working people, and we’re confident in her leadership of the FDNY.”

“I have a good relationship with Commissioner Kavanagh and we have accomplished a lot together as she served as First Deputy Commissioner and Acting Commissioner,” said **Dellon Morgan, president, FDNY Vulcans Society**. “There is a lot of work to be done, but I’m looking forward to continuing this progress with her as commissioner.”

“The National Association of Hispanic Firefighters applauds Mayor Adams’ appointment of Ms. Laura Kavanagh as the first female fire commissioner for the FDNY, said **Dr. Manuel Fonseca, president, National Association of Hispanic Firefighters**. “Her appointment signifies the beginning of a transformational change in the culture of the fire service. Moreover, it sends a clear message that the fire service will continue to strive to increase inclusion, diversity, equity, acceptance, and leadership in its recruiting and promotional processes. We congratulate both Mayor Adams and Fire Commissioner Kavanagh.”

“A big congratulations to our new fire commissioner, Laura Kavanagh,” said **Reverend Dr. A.R. Bernard, pastor, Christian Cultural Center**. “She has the wisdom and moral courage to preserve the greatness of the past and lead the possibilities of the future for FDNY.”

“I expect great things from Laura Kavanagh,” said **Reverend Jacques DeGraff**. New Yorkers can feel safer with her at the helm. She understands leadership, inclusion, and collaboration. This is an historic and timely appointment by Mayor Adams.”

About Laura Kavanagh

Commissioner Kavanagh has been a key leader in the agency’s response to major incidents, including the Ebola outbreak of 2015 and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as spearheading key policy initiatives for the FDNY. Kavanagh directed the firefighter recruitment campaign that yielded the most diverse applicant pool in the department’s history and has led to more women serving as FDNY Firefighters than ever before.. She also paved the way for technology innovation through the development of applications that provide situational awareness to frontline members, created a fire safety program that installed and distributed smoke alarms in the most at-risk neighborhoods, and has advocated for first responders at all levels of government.

Before serving at the FDNY, Kavanagh worked at City Hall as a special assistant to Mayor de Blasio. Previously, she worked in management and campaign consulting with non-profits, community-based organizations, and unions to advance their organizational goals. In that time, she held senior roles on presidential, mayoral, congressional, and local campaigns.

Kavanagh is an alumnus of the Executive Leaders Program at the Naval Post Graduate School’s Center for Homeland Defense and Security and the Stanford Graduate School of Business’ Summer Institute. She has a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations from Whittier

College and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

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