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# Legislative Staff Week: Snapshots

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## VIRGINIA

### Steve Pike

*Chief of Police, Division of Capitol Police*

**What's your role in the legislature?**

My division is responsible for the public safety services to state agencies, state employees and elected officials.

**How are you staying resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic?** I feel my resiliency pales in comparison to the people battling against this virus, as well as the doctors and nurses on the front lines saving lives. They're the resilient ones.

**What do you find most rewarding about your job?** I have the honor and privilege to meet hundreds of visitors each year at our Capitol. And, I'm responsible for leading the nation's oldest police force.

**When you're not working, what might we find you doing?** I enjoy photography and visiting the spectacular national parks across the United States.

*These interviews have been edited for length and clarity. You can find the full-length versions of these and other staff profiles at [nsl.org/magazine](https://nsl.org/magazine).*



## NEVADA

### Megan Comlossy

*Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau*

**What's your role in the legislature?**

I assist legislators by researching issues, analyzing policy options and helping to develop legislation.

**How are you managing during the pandemic?** It's important to have "work time" and "family time," so I can focus my attention on my boys or my work. Keeping in regular communication with colleagues—through phone and video chats and instant messaging—helps maintain as much "business as usual" as possible.

**What's most enjoyable about your job?** In a time when information is more available than ever, I am excited to be in a position where I get to provide "just the facts" and to have the opportunity to help policymakers filter facts from the noise and make educated decisions based on objective, accurate, nonpartisan information.

**When you're not working, what might we find you doing?** Running, hiking or skiing in the mountains of Lake Tahoe, my home; going to the beach, playing outside or riding bikes with my almost 2-year-old son.



## GEORGIA

### Tara Boockholdt

*Budget and Policy Analyst, House Budget and Research Office*

**What's your role in the legislature?**

I staff several committees and, as non-partisan staff, answer questions from our representatives related to topics in those committees, such as Medicaid, public health and graduate medical education.

**How are you dealing with the pandemic?** The COVID-19 pandemic started two weeks after I gave birth to my second daughter. We would not be surviving without our daily walks, evenings in the backyard, and taking time to cook meals together. We're trying to look on the bright side and appreciate the family time we've been given.

**What has been your greatest work challenge?** It can be frustrating to work hard on collecting research and developing recommendations for an issue that is then either dropped for political reasons or morphed into something different than envisioned.

**When you're not working, what might we find you doing?** Hanging out at home or at a park with my husband and our daughters and three dogs. It can get a little chaotic, but I love it.



WASHINGTON, D.C.

## Emmanuel Brantley

*Director of Communications, Council of the District of Columbia*

**What’s your role in your job?**

My primary duties are to manage my councilmember’s social media platforms, foster healthy relations with the local press corps, maintain the official website, and help to coordinate and execute related outreach activities. There is a lot of great work to be done at the local level.

**How are you staying resilient during the pandemic?** I am intentionally eating very healthily, making time to clear my reading/movie lists (topics include media relations, World War I, comedy and black history) and doing 30-minute bike rides in the evening.

**What work are you proud of?** In an outreach capacity, I led our office to adopt a public middle school as part of the D.C. Public Schools’ Adopt-a-School Program.

**When you’re not working, what might we find you doing?** Working on one of my many creative writing projects, studying an Adobe Creative Cloud program or listening to new (or old) music. I also enjoy serving at my church and hanging with friends and may even try to sneak in a web search for cheap flights!



OREGON

## Alethia Miller

*Legislative Analyst, Legislative Policy and Research Office*

**What’s your role in the legislature?**

I staff legislative committees and provide nonpartisan, objective research for legislators and their staff.

**How have you managed during the pandemic?** Our leadership team has structured optional daily all-staff check-ins that provide another opportunity to connect with my colleagues.

**Why did you choose to work at the legislature?** I knew while working for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission that I wanted to work more directly with legislators. One of my goals was to learn all facets of policy development; the legislature offered the next step.

**When you’re not working, what might we find you doing?** Since the legislature requires such an intense time commitment during session, I’ve really enjoyed taking an annual weeklong vacation exploring a part of the globe I’ve never seen.



IDAHO

## Michelle O’Brien

*Special Projects Coordinator, Idaho Legislative Services Office*

**What’s your role in the legislature?**

I am responsible for the Capitol Tours Program, coordination of all facilities and security services, and oversight of the gift shop and information center staff and the dining room vendor.

**How have you stayed resilient during the pandemic?** I continue to maintain daily phone conversations with the Capitol building maintenance technicians and security staff. It is imperative to me that these “boots on the ground” staff feel supported and appreciated during the crisis.

**Why did you choose to work at the legislature?** Growing up near the birthplace of Harry Truman and visiting his home as a young child made a huge impression on me. Each day when I left school, I could see our Capitol just down the boulevard and I knew that I wanted to work there one day.

**What’s most rewarding about your job?** To hear constituents say “thank you,” whether it’s for helping them find information or for steering them through the legislative maze.