CU Boulder Staff Council Resolution: Concern for Mark Kennedy’s Nomination for President of the University of Colorado

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The Boulder Campus Staff Council,

Guided by CU Boulder’s 2030 Strategic Goals that call upon all students, faculty, staff, and community members to, “be leader[s] in addressing humanitarian, social, and technological challenges in the 21st century;” and the Colorado Creed, which states:

“As a member of the Boulder community and the University of Colorado Boulder, I agree to:
   Act with honor, integrity and accountability in my interactions with students, faculty, staff and neighbors.
   Respect the rights of others and accept our differences.
   Contribute to the greater good of this community...”;

Recognizing that the President of the University of Colorado System is the “principal executive officer” of the university, and serves as the “spokesperson for the university and interpreter of university policy,” who is tasked with representing and interpreting “the roles, goals, and needs of the university throughout the state of Colorado;”

Reaffirming the need for executive leadership that has the courage to meaningfully address the systemic inequities that substantially impact the classified, university, temporary, and contract staff members employed at the University of Colorado;

Reaffirming Policy 10P: Diversity, adopted by the University of Colorado Board of Regents on April 20, 1995 and revised August 21, 2008, which states, “the board recognizes and affirms that a respect for diversity requires a sincere willingness on the part of the institution to allow all its diverse stakeholders to share in the decision making process, and that no individual or group shall be marginalized or systematically excluded;”

Recognizing that Mr. Mark Kennedy has been named as the sole finalist for President of the University of Colorado by the Board of Regents;

Noting with concern Mr. Kennedy’s legislative record during his 6-year tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives where he sponsored and voted for legislation reflecting views contrary to the university’s stated values with regard to diversity and inclusion; voted to oppose workers’ protections; opposed scientific inquiry; favored legislation aimed at reducing privacy rights; and blurred the lines between religion and public education, by taking actions which include, but are not limited to:

   i) Co-sponsoring (3) amendments to the U.S. Constitution defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman at the federal, state, and local level, effectively denying tax, insurance, inheritance and other benefits to same sex couples;
   ii) Restricting access to and funding for women’s reproductive health care;
   iii) Preventing national funds from being used for Stem Cell Research which directly impacted research at the University of Colorado and impeded scientific advancement;
   iv) Voting against $84 million in grants for predominately Black and Hispanic colleges;
   v) Denying non-emergency healthcare due to lack of funds for Medicare patients;
   vi) Removing environmental protections for endangered species;
vii) Approving legislation to allow electronic surveillance without a warrant;
viii) Requiring K-12 students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance during class;

Emphasizing the impossible task of meaningfully participating in the decision-making process during the short 14-day waiting period, with only one hour allotted for each campus forum, before the Regents will vote on Mr. Kennedy’s nomination;

Taking into consideration The Open Letter to the Regents which was delivered to the Board of Regents on April 15th, complete with 4,626 signatures from members of our campus community including: 1,869 students, 968 alumni, 434 faculty members, 287 parents, 239 staffers, 182 residents and 647 who didn’t identify their affiliations as well as The Open letter to the University of Colorado Community from Mr. Kennedy authored and released on April 12th;

1. Calls Upon the University of Colorado Board of Regents to seek consent from the remaining top candidates for the release of their names and profiles for consideration by the entire campus community and invites all consenting candidates to take part in forums similar to those Mr. Mark Kennedy is holding at each campus;

2. Strongly urges all students, faculty, and staff to recognize the importance of voicing their concerns during Mr. Mark Kennedy’s forum on April 26th on Boulder’s campus and to participate in the question and answer session during the event as well as the campus conversations being held that day;

3. Respectfully requests that forum attendees be given ample time to ask questions without prior vetting and with the opportunity for follow-up questions or comments;

4. Notes with strong concern University of Central Florida’s Board of Trustees’ decision not to hire Mr. Kennedy as president, citing his divisive political career as an unnecessary level of risk and what has been described as a “funding disaster” at the University of North Dakota;

5. Invites Dr. Brenda J. Allen, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Colorado Denver, nominated by Boulder Faculty Council as an advisor to the presidential search committee, to advise the Board of Regents on how Mr. Mark Kennedy’s appointment would impact CU’s diversity and inclusion efforts;

6. Welcomes efforts made to lengthen the comment and review process by the Board of Regents to enable the campus community to meaningfully participate in the decision-making process;

7. Directs Boulder Staff Council representatives to encourage widespread participation by staff constituents and colleagues at open forums and through feedback processes already in place so that more and diverse voices will be heard, and a wide array of opinions can be shared with the Board of Regents prior to their final vote on this candidate;

8. Calls Upon the University of Colorado Board of Regents to formally withdraw their consideration of Mark Kennedy for President of the University of Colorado.

Resolution passed by the Boulder Campus Staff Council on 18th day of April, 2019.

Jessica Gammey Gardner, Co-Chair
Heather Martin, Co-Chair