KDCR PARTNERS

KOUNTOUPES DENHAM CARR & REID

Leslie Zelenko

PRINCIPAL



PRACTICE AREAS

- Appropriations
- Health & Employment
- Technology & Telecommunications

EDUCATION

- BA, Political Science & Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Master of Public Policy, George Washington University

PRIOR POSITIONS

- Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health & Human Services
- Legislative Director, Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02), Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus

Leslie joined KDCR in 2023 after 11 years working in the Executive Branch and House of Representatives. Though she primarily works with the firm's health care practice, Leslie uses her policy and political expertise to advise clients on a range of issues, including the annual appropriations process.

She most recently served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services where she led the Department's legislative strategy and engagement for public health. In her two and half years working in the Department she worked on policy and legislation relating to public health preparedness, including during the Covid-19 response, and the PREVENT Pandemics Act & Preparedness All-Hazards Prevention Act (PAHPA). Leslie also steered the agency's legislative strategy on the development of ARPA-H, the expansion of mental health care for children and families, reform of the organ procurement system, and drug pricing and drug shortage issues.

Prior to her role in the Biden-Harris administration, Leslie served nine years in Congress as Legislative Director for Congressman Mark Pocan (WI-02). In this role, she managed his Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee portfolio. Leslie also spearheaded the Congressman's health policy work in his role as co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Leslie received her Master of Public Policy from the George Washington University and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.