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[New insurance commissioner says politics won't guide her decisions](#)

By

Terrence Stutz/Reporter

New Texas Insurance Commissioner Eleanor Kitzman sought to assure a Senate committee Tuesday that politics will not be a consideration as she leads the state agency that regulates the insurance industry. Questioned by some senators about her previous stint as director of the [South Carolina](#) Department of Insurance and her subsequent race for lieutenant governor of that state, Kitzman replied, "My reputation as insurance commissioner in South Carolina was not one of partisanship or undue favoritism." Kitzman lost the [GOP](#) primary for lieutenant governor of South Carolina last year.

Kitzman, appointed by Gov. [Rick Perry](#) as insurance commissioner in July, also was asked by Sen. [John Whitmire](#), D-Houston, about her interview with the governor before she received the appointment. Specifically, the Democratic senator wanted to know if the two talked about the political implications of the post. "In my conversations with the governor, politics did not come up at all during the meetings," Kitzman said during a hearing of the Senate Business and Commerce Committee. "We discussed family a lot and primarily he was interested in my business background and experiences." Kitzman also offered that when she ran lieutenant governor, her main focus was on education and literacy - not insurance.

Asked whether she favored making the insurance commissioner's post an elective office, Kitzman said she had no position, noting that most top insurance regulators in the country are appointed rather than elected. Regarding her background in the insurance industry - she once headed an insurance agency - Kitzman said, "I hope to use my knowledge of the industry and my relationships with the industry to make all the pieces fit together for the consumers of this state." She also said she is closely reviewing a recent proposal by State Farm to require a high deductible for homeowner policies. "Their rates won't go up, but consumers will get less coverage" because of the higher deductible on claims, she noted. State Farm is seeking a minimum deductible of 1 percent on all policies sold in Texas.

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