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16 June 2021

Hon. Lucy Bernholz, President  
San Francisco Elections Commission &  
Commissioners Jung, Campbell,  
Donaldson, Jerdonek, and Mogi

Dear President Bernholz and Commissioners:

I've asked that Commission Secretary Martha Delgadillo forward this letter for inclusion in the record of the 16 June 2021 meeting of the Elections Commission.

I was unable to attend the remote meeting of BOPEC on the 9<sup>th</sup> because of technical issues with the WebEx link provided in the issued agenda, and this afternoon, I listened intently on my cell phone to the Commission meeting for over two hours, only to apparently not register with your Secretary, Martha Delgadillo, when I hit \*3 on my cell phone for public comment.

(I look forward to the time, hopefully in the very near future, when meetings can be held in person, and members of the public wishing to testify aren't prevented from doing so due to the vicissitudes of modern technology.)

My name is Christopher L. Bowman and I served for 8.5 years on the SF Citizens Advisory Committee for Elections (1993-2001) and worked with Supervisors Peskin and Newsom in 2001, to help draft and win passage of the ordinance creating the Elections Commission on which you currently serve.

I also was one of the three Mayoral appointments to the Elections Task Force in 1995, which had the mandate to examine the entire spectrum of issues surrounding the election of Supervisors.

The nine-member Task Force represented a broad diversity of San Franciscans including Labor, the LGBTQ community, Asians, Hispanics, African Americans, and one Republican (yours truly) and one member of the Green Party. Gwenn Craig who was elected the Task Force's President and is African American and was the former President of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club, and I was the former President of Concerned Republicans for Individual Rights (which was renamed in 1987 as the Log Cabin Republicans of SF.) So we both wore at least two hats.

Their collective goal was to create a district elections plan which didn't divide or dilute the voting power of Communities of Interest and ethnic groups, and to the greatest extent possible constructed geographically compact districts which followed natural and man-made boundaries such as freeways and major parks, and kept neighborhoods intact and joined

contiguous neighborhoods with common interests into the same district.

Unlike the three previous district plans placed on the ballot by a coalition of progressive activists (to create a progressive majority on the Board of Supervisors) which divided and diluted the electoral influence of Communities of Interest and ethnic groups, were not geographically compact, and lumped neighborhoods together which had nothing in common (such as District 9 which was comprised of the OMI, Sunnyside, Miraloma Park, Glen Park, and Bernal Heights!), and were roundly defeated at the polls twice in 1980 and again in 1987, the district elections plan approved by the Elections Task Force, placed on the ballot by the Board of Supervisors as Prop. G (November 1996), received 56.7% of the vote, and were the districts in which all 11 members elected to the Board in November 2000 ran in. (For the previous 20 years, Supervisors were elected at large, citywide.)

Since then, in 2002 and again in 2011-2012, the lines that were approved by the voters in 1996 were tweaked by the two subsequent Redistricting Task Forces, so that the 2012 plan is essentially 90% the same as the 1996 plan. The major differences are that District 6 shrunk due to population increases, the Mission District was unified from Cesar Chavez to the Central Freeway, and the Portola District which had been divided between Districts 11 and 10, then Districts 11, 9, and 10, was united and placed in its entirety into District 9, where it was joined with Bernal Heights and the Mission.

Due to the inordinate increase of population in District 6 in the past ten years, District 6 will have to shrink even further, or possibly be divided into two districts. In either case, that would create major ripple effects on the surrounding districts (3, 5, 8, 9, and 10), and even affect the boundaries of Districts 4, 7, and 11 on the other side of the City which are composed primarily of homeowner [RH-1(d), RH-1, and RH-2 zoned] neighborhoods.

The Task Force will have its hands full trying to please the Communities of Interest, ethnic groups, and neighborhoods, which have been largely supportive of the current and previous two plans. Thus, it is important that the Task Force members (those appointed by the Commission, Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor), not have any perceived or real conflicts of interest, and in that regard, I believe the Commission didn't set a very high bar on what constituted a conflict of interest, nor did they take those conflicts into consideration when winnowing down the list to three preferred candidates and nine alternate candidates.

Of particular concern to me are those candidates who have been or are currently employed or are members or board members of interest groups which may submit redistricting plans to the Task Force. Rather than members of such groups on the Task Force recuse themselves should that happen, which means it would make it harder for the Task Force to get the five votes needed to approve a final redistricting plan, they shouldn't be appointed and serve in the first place.

After reading through all 32 applications (two candidates' applications were listed twice) of the candidates, and to be honest the only candidates I personally know of the 32 (David Pilpel and Sally Stephens) were not on your finalists list, I was disturbed by the number of

applicants who said that they worked for various candidates for supervisor or sitting supervisors in their campaigns. Whose interest(s) would these potential appointees be serving on the Task Force?

Of the twelve applicants you've winnowed down the list, three applicants appear to have conflicts of interest which in my opinion should disqualify them from consideration, and a fourth applicant may have a conflict of interest as well as an eligibility issue.

Chema Hernandez Gil who currently is a political organizer for SEIU Local 1021, was the political coordinator for the SF Rising Alliance (which has lobbied heavily for him and Jeremy Scott Lee to be appointed by the Commission to the Task Force),

Jeremy Lee, who not only was a campaign staffer for Jane Kim for Mayor (for five months according to LinkedIn not three months as he stated in his application), but previously served as an intern in the District 6 Supervisor's office in 2017 and as a Campaign Fellow for Supervisor Kim's campaign for State Senate in 2016.

Professor Jason A. McDaniel of SFSU in his application mentioned that he is a member of the SF YIMBY Housing Advocacy Group. SF YIMBY has in effect declared war on the single family zoning in the western and southern neighborhoods of the City. Given that McDaniel also stated that as a renter in the Western Addition. . . (his being appointed would constitute) a counter balance to the over-representation of homeowners on the City's Boards and Commissions. I'm not certain that he is correct in his assessment of the composition of most of the City's Boards and Commissions – certainly that hasn't been the composition of the Elections Task Force or the subsequent Redistricting Task Forces, but it does raise a possible animus he may have towards the homeowner neighborhoods of the western and southern parts of the City, and a desire to dismantle their districts In favor of a higher "social good".

Additionally, we were unable to find a Jason A. McDaniel registered to vote in the City. Perhaps he was registered under a slightly different name. If he is registered outside the City, he is ineligible to serve on the Task Force, and it is incumbent of the Department of Elections staff to determine his residency and notify the Commission of their findings before the next meeting of the Commission.

SEIU Local 1021, the SF Rising Alliance, Former Supervisor Kim or her allies, and SF YIMBY may submit to the Task Force either individually, or in conjunction with other organizations or individuals, their redistricting plans.

Vikrum Dave Aiyer may also have a conflict of interest given his position as the Deputy Director of the ACLU (and formerly the ACLU's Vice President of Public Policy). The ACLU is welcome and encouraged to testify before the Task Force on its views on current Voting Rights Acts or redistricting case law, but should the ACLU later become unhappy with the redistricting plan the Task Force approves or is about to approve and sues the Task Force and the City, would Aiyer have to recuse himself from further deliberations?

It should be noted that the City Attorney's office and the Task Force's consultant, Karin MacDonald, who served as the consultant for the 2002 and 2011-2012 Redistricting Task Forces are more than capable of providing legal advice to the Task Force on line-Drawing and Voting rights, so Aiyer's presence on the Task Force would be redundant.

I would argue additionally, that the Commission's focus on wanting to appoint candidates who are steeped in statistics and manipulating data, is also unnecessary because of MacDonald's more than two decades of expertise on such matters.

Rather, I believe the Commission should be looking in addition to Raynell Cooper and Ditka Reiner being appointed to the Redistricting Task Force to seriously consider appointing Chris Chang (the memo from Commissioner Donaldson misspelled his last name) as the Commission's third appointee. Chang is a neighborhood activist who not only co-founded IDEATE SF SF and who serves as a HOA President on Rincon Hill., is educationally qualified having received his undergraduate degree in Business at UC Berkeley and his MBA at Wharton (University of Pennsylvania), but he is also exceptionally qualified to serve because of his work as a managing director of City Oak Capital, and formerly as a strategy and Management Consultant at Deloitte, and finally, his representation of his community as a member of the San Francisco-Taipei Sister Cities Committee.

Additionally, as only three of the twelve remaining applicants are women, I would recommend that the Commissions list Katherine (Kate) Stewart Anderson as their first runner up. Anderson has a Masters degree in Geography from SFSU, has been a professional surveyor For over twenty years, and is actively involved with the SF Women's Political Caucus and The SF League of Women Voters.

Finally, members of the Commission expressed their concerns about the apparent lack of Geographic diversity among the finalists. I agree. A friend of mine, went through the Master Voter File of the City, and we discovered the following:

Four of the twelve applicants reside in District 6, and two more reside in District 5. There Were no finalists in Districts 4, 10, o4 11.

The findings are as follows:

|                       |            |                           |
|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Raynell Cooper        | District 5 | Lower Haight              |
| Ditka Reiner          | District 2 | Lower Pacific Heights     |
| Chesa Hernandez Gil.  | District 6 | Not yet a U.S. Citizen    |
| Andrew Sun            | District 1 | Middle Richmond           |
| Kameisha James        | District 8 | Diamond Heights           |
| Vikrum Dave Aiyer     | District 6 | Mid Market                |
| Chris Chang           | District 6 | Rincon Hill               |
| Jason A. McDaniel     |            | Unable to find on the MVF |
| Katharine S. Anderson | District 5 | Cole Valley               |
| Chasel Lee            | District 7 | Sunnyside/Glen Park       |
| Jeremy Scott Lee      | District 6 | Civic Center              |

Matthew Castillon

District 3

Golden Gateway

That concludes my input to the Commission at this point.

I look forward to monitoring your next meeting and this time being able to provide live testimony when the call is made for public comment.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Bowman

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