

**Chairperson**  
W. Harold Tuck



**President and CEO**  
Rudolph A. Johnson, III

March 17, 2010

C/o State Auditor  
Applicant Review Panel  
Citizens State Redistricting Commission  
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300,  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Email: votersfirstact@auditor.ca.gov  
Fax: (916) 319-9295

**Applicant ID #: 342: Gil Ontai**

Dear Panel Members:

It is my extreme pleasure to recommend Mr. Gil Ontai for the position of Redistricting Commissioner. Since 2007, Mr. Ontai has diligently served on the Board of Directors for The Neighborhood Association (NHA) and as the President and CEO of NHA, I have had the opportunity to work firsthand with Mr. Ontai for the past three years. From the moment Mr. Ontai joined the NHA Board, he has proved himself as a strategic asset to NHA, constantly furthering the advancement of the organization's mission and overall vision.

NHA shares a rich history in the San Diego region and for nearly 100 years has helped thousands of individuals and families in San Diego County improve their quality of life by providing vital social services such as employment, healthcare, child, family and senior services. Through 11 distinct social service programs operating at over 120 facilities throughout the county, NHA has ultimately improved the quality of life in San Diego by not only helping our underserved neighbors, but by also remaining a catalyst for local economic progress and job development. NHA has received national and international recognition for its services to the community and its efforts to help thousands of underserved families. Additionally, NHA remains a champion for diversity as its employee force mirrors the clients it serves in the community and actively provides diverse employment opportunities within the region.

As it stands today, the success and achievements of NHA would not have been possible without the devotion and integrity of Mr. Ontai. In 2007, Mr. Ontai developed and led an effective divestiture of NHA from San Diego Food Bank. Though a complex procedure, Mr. Ontai carried out the initiative from start to finish with efficiency and grace without hesitation. In addition to the divestiture, Mr. Ontai also successfully negotiated a multi-million dollar property deal with the

Letter Of Recommendation  
Gil Ontai – Redistricting Commissioner Applicant  
Page Two  
March 17, 2010

San Diego Food Bank. NHA would not have been able to reach such a beneficial agreement without Mr. Ontai's expert negotiation skills which appeared seemingly effortless on his part. Additional to these particular accomplishments, Mr. Ontai also serves on the NHA Board Finance Committee and Fundraising Committee and has demonstrated a high level of fiduciary responsibility within the organization.

Furthermore, Mr. Ontai is a man of upmost integrity. Time and time again have NHA's Board of Directors turned to Mr. Ontai for both his calming influence on the board as well as his level headed thinking. He is a great listener and always deliberates carefully so he is able to ask detailed and thought provoking questions that would be vital to any organization. Additionally, he operates in a manner that is both sound and fair providing leadership within our own diverse work environment that spans a multitude of ethnic groups and communities.

Additional to Mr. Ontai's service to NHA, for the past 25 years he has worked as an award winning, licensed architect and urban planner and has received national recognition designing low-income housing and educational facilities. His designs include everything from office buildings, shopping centers and high-rise structures to restaurants, apartments, boutiques shops, residential homes, recreational facilities and industrial buildings. Mr. Ontai also serves as a planning commissioner for the City of San Diego where he reviews and approves discretionary permits that help shape the future of San Diego's communities. Prior to joining the planning commission, he served as a Director and Board Treasurer to the Center City Development Corporation. He is also a lecturer at Springfield College where he takes extreme pride in incorporating diversity and cultural understanding into the classroom as essential ingredients for student success in the workplace.

Mr. Ontai's extensive experience and background within the fields of social and community development, urban and economic development coupled with his sound decision making skills across diverse environments make him an exceptional candidate for the position of Redistricting Commissioner. Moreover, his extreme loyalty and dedication to any endeavor he takes on is second to none and would certainly benefit any organization. His efforts with NHA have been irreplaceable and I am confident that he would do the same for the Redistricting Commission making an immediate, as well as long-term, impact.

If I can be of any further assistance to the Redistricting Commission with regard to Mr. Ontai, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Rudolph Johnson  
President and CEO  
Neighborhood House Association