

To: Members of the Redistricting Commission

From: Maria Blanco, Applicant and Slate

Date: December 14, 2010

Re: Concerns raised by Mr. Librot about my inclusion on the slate of 6 persons to be voted on by the sitting commissioners.

Upon reading Mr. Librot's letter my first inclination was to not respond because I did not want to be involved in a tit for tat situation, and I felt that I had already responded to an earlier comment that raised similar concerns. On second thought I have decided to respond because I feel that my credibility and integrity are being called into question in a very public manner.

In essence, Mr. Librot's comment, as well as the earlier one by Ms. Blicharz, come down to one criticism or concern: that my civil rights work and my work at MALDEF enforcing the Voting Rights Act in the last round of redistricting (against a Democratic incumbent by the way) makes me biased rather than impartial.

I take this concern very seriously; therefore I must answer it at a personal level rather than as an applicant. If anyone were to ask me what I consider to be one of my strengths I would answer that I am never dogmatic and I have a sense of fairness that is engrained in my DNA. And I mean fairness across the board, not just for a certain set of people. It is this quality of open mindedness that has allowed me (with great pride) to work with persons across the political, geographic and racial spectrum. I am confident that if asked, anyone who has worked with me for a significant period of time would also point to that quality.

In the concerns about my impartiality I sense that what is being said indirectly is that a career dedicated to racial civil rights issues, and on behalf of Latinos while at MALDEF, constitutes a form of political bias. I can only respond that, on the contrary, my work was always driven by concerns of inclusion and fairness for all members of our society. I also believe strongly in the idea that "to whom much is given, much is expected."

As to being a new resident of Los Angeles, that's a fact. I would note, however, that I have many friends and colleagues in Los Angeles that I have known for a very long time.

As for the comments on my behalf, I do not take credit or responsibility for their eloquence or lack thereof.