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To Whom It May Concern:

I write to voice my unqualified support for the non-partisan, neutral, and expert manner in which Karin MacDonald has served as the Director of the Statewide Database, the redistricting database for the state of California. For over a decade, I have worked with MacDonald as a colleague in the study of state elections, and have worked closely with her and her staff to obtain data from the Statewide Database. Even in that long experience, I cannot honestly say that I know her partisan affiliation or political ideology. What I do know is that she has led the work that has made the Statewide Database the gold standard for demographic and political data in California, and the leading such resource in the American states.

Let me comment first as a co-editor of the journal *State Politics and Policy*, the official journal of the American Political Science Association's State Politics and Policy Section. We have published articles both describing and using state data resources such as the Statewide Database, and it is clear that there is no resource as rich, comprehensive, and user-friendly in the country. This database has been used by many authors and greatly contributed to the study of state politics. MacDonald's role in leading it is nationally recognized, and my co-editors and I have relied on her as a peer reviewer for manuscripts that look closely at precinct-level data or electoral mechanisms. She has consistently impressed all of us with her expertise and rigor.

Now allow me to speak as a researcher who has worked with MacDonald and her staff to obtain precinct-level data on census information and electoral participation. She has been unfailingly helpful to me and to my collaborators, consistent with her broad reputation, and the data (which we have compared with data from consulting firms and county-level census data) is always spot on. Never in the course of my research did MacDonald or anyone at the Statewide Database ask me what substantive use the data would be put to or attempt to control the conclusions of our study. They played it completely straight, as of course they should do.

Finally, let me speak as a former student of Prof. Bruce Cain, who is also affiliated with the Statewide Database. He is indeed a Democrat, but his leadership in the study of California politics and training of scholars goes far beyond any partisan affiliation. He has trained scholars such as Kenneth P. Miller, a co-editor of mine who is now Associate Director of the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College and who served as a witness in the trial to defend Proposition 8. While I was a student of Cain's, I published a report on campaign finance with the Cato Institute, which is not notably tied to the Democratic Party. He helped to make the Institute of Governmental Studies a welcoming environment for students, academics, and policymakers of both parties, bringing Dan Schnur (former communications director to Pete Wilson and John McCain) in to teach courses and bringing many Republican leaders to the IGS Board. The Statewide Database obviously benefits from his expertise in this policy realm, and Cain and MacDonald have used the resource not to pursue any partisan agenda but to provide honest, transparent data relevant to redistricting to scholars, activists, policymakers, and the general public. If I can provide any more information regarding this matter, please contact me at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED].

Sincerely, Thad Kousser