

Applicant Review Panel
C/O State Auditor
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: California Redistricting Committee, Letter of Recommendation for Peter Yao, Applicant ID 16250

Section One: *Who I am, and in what capacity I am writing this letter. Introduce who is being recommended and how long I have known that person.*

I have been a professional in the field of Information Technology (IT) for more than thirty five years. For the first ten of these years, my responsibilities with three diverse organizations evolved from technical systems development through computer operations management and then senior management roles including Chief Information Officer (CIO). The past twenty-five years I have been an IT management consultant performing assignments first with a smaller consulting company in Southern California, then with a large consultant company having global presence, and for the past ten years I have had my own independent consultant company with clients primarily in Southern California. My formal education includes bachelors and masters degrees in mathematics. My wife is a physician; we have one son and have lived in Southern California since 1983.

Our family has known Peter Yao and his family since 1990 when our sons began pre-school together, and we have had close family ties continuously through to the present.

Section Two: *Explain the qualities of the person being recommended and to set out their accomplishments. Describe my experience with the person receiving the recommendation.*

Analytical

As I learned to know Mr. Yao, it was clear that his approach to any activity or project displayed consistent characteristics: a willingness to plunge into any task at hand; a sense of commitment and persistence to complete the task; and to have fun doing it with everyone involved. Our interactions ranged from creating a "House of Horrors" for a hugely successful Halloween party for our sons' young classmates to many Boy Scout camping trips and school functions. Furthermore, his intelligence and strong analytical, logical approach were much in evidence. While Peter is clearly an independent thinker, he eagerly solicits opposing points of view and will change his if presented with good rationale and relevant facts. In short, he displays the characteristics that one might expect from someone with Peter's education and a successful career in the engineering industry.

But as Mr. Yao pursued the position of City Councilman in our local government, I had questions as to how effective Peter would be as an elected official after many years in an Engineering company. As a consultant with experience in both government and private industry, I know that many are unable to make the transition from private (and highly technical) industry to local government.

The answers to my questions were quick in coming, and the results are overwhelmingly positive. The situation as Mr. Yao began his first term as Councilman was that the City was chartered to renew its twenty-year plan. Outside experts were summoned to lay out a strategic planning process. Anyone who wanted to participate in developing the plan was encouraged to join a particular team. Having had extensive experience with process and project management, Peter embraced this opportunity and became the acknowledged leader in driving this important planning process forward to a timely and highly successful conclusion.

Impartiality

I personally got involved with a team to determine the use of foothill acreage: whether to leave the area in wilderness, or allow the creation of condominiums by developers already eager to begin. It was in the progress of this team that I appreciated Mr. Yao's impartial approach to a consensus strategy. He began with a leaning toward the business development approach, but after listening to all points of view, contacting other communities in the region with similar issues, researching grant funding, and in other ways thoroughly investigating the problem, Peter changed his point-of-view in favor of conserving the land and maintaining the hillside as a wilderness. Of all councilpersons, Mr. Yao became the most knowledgeable on this issue. Peter then worked diligently over several

years to gain consensus of the landowners to realize fair compensation for their properties to become conservancies or enable acquisition by the City.

Another important example of Mr. Yao's impartiality occurred before he became an elected official. There was a tragic incident wherein a young African American man was fatally shot as a result of a driving infraction. While others in the community voiced alarm and outrage, nothing was done. Peter decided to take action, and as a result of his initiative, the City underwent an investigation of the offense with full disclosure of the outcome. This was the right thing for Claremont to do; Peter's independent action caused it to happen and inspired him to become more involved in local government.

Understanding Diversity

The incident described above highlights one of many areas of diversity in our large and populous State: ethnic demographics with the potential for racial issues. Other geographic/demographic diversities will also be important considerations in the redistricting process. Some of these include: allocation of water resources; coastal vs. inland community needs; agricultural vs. manufacturing vs. technological regions; multi-language vs. English-only; resort towns, financial centers, transportation hubs, and seaports all have unique issues and special needs; etc. This will be a highly complex set of parameters.

Mr. Yao has been a leader in initiating activities to improve the understanding of and addressing regional needs and has recruited me and other citizens from time-to-time to participate.

- A boat ride in the coastal waters dramatically showed the effects of water runoff (or recovery/recycle) and sewage purification (or not!) from the inland communities.
- Several conferences with regional elected officials discussing common vs. unique needs of each city.

Lastly, as a first generation Chinese immigrant, Mr. Yao has lived first-hand the ethnic diversity issues. Since becoming an elected official, he has been a leader in organizing Chinese elected officials in Southern California. He has recruited citizens (including me, a certified WASP) to participate in conferences which demonstrate that he is not seeking power per se for this ethnic group, but rather a responsible role in regional governance for this constituency and the development of close ties and deep understanding among all groups.

Section Three: Summarize the qualities of the person receiving the recommendation; reinforce their positive attributes; actual recommendation.

It is my privilege to recommend Peter Yao for this redistricting project. If selected, Mr. Yao can be expected to provide the following:

- Strong analytical skills gained from his educational background and many years experience in the engineering industry.
- Leadership in embracing the redistricting process and driving forward to an effective conclusion.
- Impartial, independent thinking; he will strive for what is best for the State of California.
- Leadership, brain power, and the will to engage in the highly complex and demanding diversity issues.
- Personable, teamwork, consensus building, integrity. Peter will establish a good working relationship with everyone and develop many friendships along the way.

I make this recommendation with the same confidence as when my wife and I wholeheartedly supported Peter's election to Claremont City Council. We felt secure entrusting the future of our community to his leadership and diligence.

Sincerely,

James E. Long

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