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December 18, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my great pleasure to write to endorse the application of Vincent P. Barabba to serve on the Citizens Redistricting Commission. The principles and goals for the work of this new commission could not better match those that Mr. Barabba has worked to honor and achieve throughout his career.

At the present time, and for almost 17 years, I have served as the Chief Statistician for the United States Government. This position, by design a career appointment to underscore its nonpartisan character, is located within the Office of Management and Budget within the Executive Office of the President. A principal function of my office is to provide leadership for a highly decentralized statistical system that includes agencies and units in every department of the government. Key among the responsibilities of my position is the setting of standards that govern the quality, utility, and integrity of the products of our Nation's statistical system. It has been in this role, and in work earlier in my career that led to my appointment to this position, that I have had the good fortune to work with Vince Barabba for more than three decades.

My first recollection of knowing Vince Barabba's reputation for building coalitions involved the call for his return to service as the Census Bureau Director in 1979. At that most critical time, just months prior to the 1980 Decennial Census, the Census Bureau was suffering from a serious lack of leadership and a corresponding deterioration of staff morale. I was among a small group contemplating how to solve this problem when a colleague said, "it's a shame we can't get Vince to come back ..." That simple statement, which happily led to a call to Vince and his acceptance of President Carter's invitation, speaks legions to the respect he had garnered from the professional community within and outside the Federal Government during his earlier tenure as Census Director under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

Perhaps the single strongest image of Vince's outstanding ability to seek out and listen carefully to diverse opinions that continues with me to this day was witnessing the meeting he called in the Commerce Department auditorium to bring together and hear from representatives of all of the country's minority communities. As April 1, 1980 -- "Census Day" -- drew ever closer, concerns of the previously under-enumerated minority populations grew ever stronger. Vince not only sought out vocal representatives of these communities, but took the

amazing step of bringing them together in one room to listen to their concerns. The image of him standing alone on the stage, graciously and thoughtfully accepting the testimony of the participants, is almost as vivid for me today as it was 30 years ago. This bold initiative on the part of Vince Barabba laid the foundation for regular, ongoing involvement of all minority communities in the Census Bureau's activities.

These examples from three decades ago are offered to underscore Vince Barabba's longstanding dedication to principles and practices of inclusion, impartiality, and integrity that bolster public confidence in his own work and in the activities of organizations to which he lends his talents. Because of his reputation, during the intervening years he has frequently been our participant of choice when we have searched for members of National Academy of Sciences panels, individuals to testify before the Congress, or experts to advise on the statistical work of the U. S. Government. Because of his dedication to public service, Vince has always taken seriously these requests and often agreed to accept these pro bono assignments. While there are many examples that could be cited, I would offer one from recent time. A few years ago, I was asked by the leader of the nascent "State of the USA" effort to recommend three individuals from the statistical community who would lend credibility to the organization as initial board members. Without hesitation I named Vince Barabba as one of three colleagues whose reputation would lend the essential credibility to this non-profit organization that is seeking to raise the American public's knowledge of and appreciation for high quality quantitative information.

As I look back over my 30 plus years of collaboration with Vince Barabba, I can attest that he has been a leader in first seeking, and then objectively evaluating, points of view from constituencies of every social, economic, and political persuasion. A firm believer in our democratic process, he has made it his mission not just to involve, but to actively reach out to, all who have a stake in decisions. From my perspective, the Citizens Redistricting Commission would be exceptionally well served by the incredible energy, the well-established impartiality, and the long-demonstrated integrity of Vincent P. Barabba. It is with the greatest professional respect and personal pleasure that I recommend him for this service to the State of California.

Most sincerely,



Katherine K. Wallman