



March 26, 2010

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Ms. Elaine M. Howle
California State Auditor
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Letter of recommendation for Ms. Maria Blanco to California's first Citizen's Redistricting Commission.

Dear Ms. Elaine Howle,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to strongly recommend Ms. Maria Blanco to California's first Redistricting Commission. I cannot think of a better person to fill this important position. Maria has devoted her career to public service and has a wealth of knowledge regarding the diverse demographics and dynamics of California. I have no doubt that she will make every effort to represent the best interests of the population in designing districts with equal and fair representation.

I have known Maria for 15 years and have witnessed her strong analytic skills, ability to be impartial, and her deep commitment for diversity. Maria's experience as a renowned lawyer who has worked on state and federal policy issues has fine-tuned her outstanding analytic skills. As an attorney working on complex cases, I firsthand observed her exceptional ability to gather and evaluate information. During my time as President for the Mexican-American Legal Defense Educational Fund (MALDEF), Maria worked as National Senior Counsel where she played a key role in passing legislation that provided in-state tuition for undocumented students to attend state universities and colleges. Her ability to navigate this complex legal issue is a testament to her keen intellect, which would be an invaluable asset for the Commission.

Maria's appreciation and knowledge of California's diverse demographics would also serve as a vital asset for the Commission. As the current Executive Director for the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity, Maria is a leading expert on the demographics of California's ever evolving population. Given the critical need for the Commission to have a thorough understanding of our population, I have no doubt that Maria would provide in-depth expertise on this topic to ensure fair representation for all Californians in redistricting.

Finally, since the time I have known Maria, I have greatly respected her intellect, common sense and most importantly, her humanity. She combines a deep commitment to people with an understanding of government, allowing her to create meaningful engagement in our communities. She is determined, personable, and diplomatic.

I hope that you give Maria your highest consideration for the Citizens Redistricting Commission. I would be more than happy to answer any questions and can be reached at [Redacted] or via email at [Redacted]

Sincerely,

Antonia Hernández
President & CEO