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Applicant Review Panel:

My name is Penelope Spiekerman and I am writing this letter in support of candidate Jodie Filkins Webber (applicant #21683) for a commissioner position on the Citizens Redistricting Commission of California. I am a general dentist currently practicing in Illinois, but grew up in Riverside, California. I have known Jodie for more than 25 years. We met in 1984 during our sophomore year at Rubidoux High School when her family moved to California from Oregon. We were in the same college prep classes together, played sports and participated in student council together, and through these activities, quickly became close friends.

The first thing I noticed about Jodie when we met in high school, was that she commanded attention with her presence both physically (she is 6 feet tall) and verbally (she is very outspoken). I had never met anyone before who was not afraid to voice her opinion and speak her mind the way Jodie did. She held strong to her convictions and principles, even if it meant going against the norm. This is not an easy task when youôre a teenager trying hard to fit in and be accepted by your peers.

In high school, Jodie knew she wanted to become an attorney. It was through her involvement with student council that her leadership skills excelled and assertiveness blossomed. She was a female Huck Finn: able to persuade students to take part in performing the most menial tasks (like sticking thousands of paper flowers onto the Senior Homecoming float at two oôclock in the morning or copying car wash fliers and distributing them around town) and have fun while doing so. Because Jodie genuinely enjoyed what she was doing, her enthusiasm rubbed off on everyone. Being able to speak effectively and get her points across, she was able to positively influence the decisions of others for the greater good of the school. She was instrumental in planning and implementing the student mentoring and adopt-a-teacher programs which benefitted both the student body and the school as a whole.

Jodie and I were on Prom Committee together. She was not the chairman, but due to her efforts, the committee was able to raise enough money to have our prom at the Disneyland Hotel. She was highly effective at getting students together to plan and coordinate bake sales, car washes, dances, and various fundraisers with the ultimate goal of each senior being able to attend prom without the large expense. It was the first time this goal was ever achieved, and both staff and seniors were impressed and grateful to Jodie for making it possible. She was also the Reunion Chairperson for our ten and twenty year class reunions. A record number of alumni attended both events due to Jodieôs valiant efforts.

Although not a big city like Los Angeles or San Diego, Riverside is a unique place to live. It is suburban with a bit of urban influence. I lived on Dalley Way in the town of Glen Avon and the area was zoned for agriculture. On our IJ acre lot, we raised chickens, ducks, and many types of birds. At any given time, you could find hogs, sheep, cattle, or horses in any of my neighborsô backyards. Riverside offers rural farm-style living right in the heart of the city.

Geographically, Riverside is centrally located in Southern California, making weekend getaways or day trips easy to fulfill. Jump in your car and within an hour you can be transported to any number of destinations. To the west are the beaches, to the east are the mountains, to the north are Disneyland and Edison Park, and to the south are the wineries of Temecula and the desert.

After graduating from Whittier College of Law and passing her California Bar exam in 1994, Jodie began her career as an attorney for insurance dispense with a focus on workmanôs compensation for employers all over the Southern California area. Perserverance and a strong drive allowed Jodie to become only the second female junior partner at the law firm of Hollins-Schechter. In 2002, she was one of the lead defense attornies for a class-action lawsuit in Los Angeles County involving the mishandling of human remains in racially segmented cemeteries.

Professionally, Jodie experiences the diversity of California first-hand as she represents clients transversing the state, from San Diego to Modesto. As an attorney, she must demonstrate impartiality on a daily basis when interviewing clients, taking depositions, and during courtroom proceedings. It is this impartiality that is essential in enforcing the legislative mandates set forth by the Commission which would benefit Jodieôs future clients, the citizens of the state of California.

After 3 years of law school in Los Angeles, Jodie moved back to Riverside County and now resides in Norco. She is a member of COVRA (California Offroad Vehicle Recreation Association) and spends many of her weekends camping and riding recreational ATVs in Palm Desert. She has taken road trips to every major area in California. Jodie loves photography and and has captured the natural beauty of the Golden State on film.

I have known many people throughout my life, but nobody has lived up to the high standards that Jodie has. She is fair and just, open and honest, intelligent and hardworking, loyal and trustworthy, but most of all, she is true to herself and her beliefs. It is with the strongest conviction that I recommend Jodie Filkins Webber (applicant #21683) for a commissioner position on the Citizens Resdistricting Commission. I am confident that she will be a valuable asset to the commission.

Sincerely,
Penelope R. Spiekerman, DDS