

16925 Gebhardt Road  
Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005  
July 6, 2024

BY ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Jose Perez  
Chair of the Steering & Rules Committee  
Common Council of the City of Milwaukee  
200 East Wells Street, Suite 206  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

SUBJECT: Candidacy of Ms. Karen Gotzler for Appointment to the Housing  
Authority of the City of Milwaukee Board of Commissioners

Dear Chair Perez,

I understand that Ms. Karen Gotzler, a long-tenured, accomplished, and successful public servant committed to the interests of the City of Milwaukee and its diverse residents, is seeking appointment to the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority. I write in exceptionally strong and unqualified support of her candidacy and encourage you and your colleagues on the Steering & Rules Committee to act favorably on her application.

I have known about and benefited directly from Ms. Gotzler's thoughtful and productive community engagement for nearly 15 years, beginning with my service as the Presidentially-appointed United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin in 2009. My familiarity with her refined capacities and diplomatic personality derives principally from my direct involvement and coordinated partnership with her since that time, during which she served first as the Executive Director of Urban Strategies and then as the Executive Director of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center.

Throughout that time, I, like other people in similar public service roles and assignments throughout the area, reveled in many opportunities, both formal and casual, to work closely with Ms. Gotzler in identifying community challenges, crafting strategic responses, implementing effective programs, and evaluating relevant outcomes. In all of that and beyond, she uniformly influenced me and her colleagues through her thoughtful vision, animated industry, and refined humanity—all to the improvement and advancement of our diverse neighborhoods.

From the time of my initial engagements with her to my most recent (when her professional skills have been further on display with the Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura, California), Ms. Gotzler has consistently impressed me not only with her acute knowledge of the trappings of government and their practical applications but also with her

abundant savvy in the generation of rational, focused effective methods for addressing the often profoundly difficult positions of our residents—in the areas of housing, employment, economics, and social-familial support.

On many occasions during my term as the United States Attorney, Ms. Gotzler and I worked collaboratively on various programs and initiatives of the United States Department of Justice and of the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development designed and funded to advance the civil and human rights of our shared constituencies—especially in the areas of anti-discrimination, educational opportunities, and access to justice both within and outside our courts. In these and all of her leadership pursuits, she combined intellectualism with pragmatism, advocacy with diplomacy, and spirited vision with warm humanity.

I know that these positive and admiring assessments of her are shared widely by others throughout our community who, like me, see in Ms. Gotzler an articulate, studied, energetic, and people-directed colleague who embodies in ways big and small the finest qualities of a public servant. It is my view that those same, stellar qualities—both professional and personal—would be much on display in her work and activities should you decide to appoint her to this important position of trust and responsibility; she would prove to be precisely the kind of Board Member of whom all residents of the City of Milwaukee would be rightly, supremely proud.

For all of these reasons, I urge and your colleagues you to afford Ms. Gotzler's application all of the attention and examination that it rightly warrants, and I encourage you or a member of your staff to contact me directly at (414) 520-2325 or [jamesantelle@gmail.com](mailto:jamesantelle@gmail.com) as you identify any questions or comments about my words and observations. I also thank you for your consideration of them—and of this exemplary candidacy.

Very truly yours,

*James L. Santelle*

James L. Santelle

c: The Honorable Marina Dimitrijevic  
The Honorable Bob Bauman  
The Honorable Russell Stamper  
The Honorable JoCasta Zamarripa  
The Honorable Scott Spiker  
The Honorable Jonathan Brostoff  
The Honorable DiAndre Jackson

Members of the Steering & Rules Committee  
The Milwaukee Common Council