



June 24, 2020

**In Reference to the re-Appointment of Griselda Aldrete as
Executive Director of the Fire and Police Commission**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honor to write in support of the re-appointment of Ms. Griselda Aldrete to the position of Executive Director of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission.

I am an elected Director of the Milwaukee Public School Board, but I write to you as a citizen and long time resident and activist in this city. My civic involvement extends itself for over 50 years. While my primary focus has been education, I have been significantly and extensively involved in the community in general and in particular in the Latino community both here and at the national levels.

I started in the early 1970's as a young person engaged in changes to the Milwaukee Police Department. I was involved in the early actions for civil rights reforms in coalitions between the Black and Latino communities; as Coordinator for the Teacher Corps for Corrections Program at U-WM; one of the founders of Bilingual Education in Milwaukee and the state; and as Coordinator in the Midwest National Origin Desegregation Center. I also taught at UW-Milwaukee and served as Provost of MATC. For many years, and up to the tenure of the former Chief of Police, I served in the Milwaukee Commission on Police and Community Relations. I am also the recipient of the City's Frank Zeidler award for social justice and civic accomplishments and the Martin Luther King award for social justice. In addition, I am the recipient of many other awards for social justice locally, nationally and internationally. The latest is the 2020 OTHLI award given by Mexico to a citizen of the US that fights for social justice for Latinos and others; and I am no stranger to police and community issues.

It is with the in-depth knowledge of community and police issues, both here and nationally, that I strongly recommend the re-appointment of Ms. Aldrete, an individual I have known for close to twenty years and who still values my advice. Actually, she worked under my supervision teaching at risks youth at the Aurora Weier Educational Center early in 2,000. It was there that I learned of her rigorous work ethics and commitment to kids and the community. Then, I followed her throughout the years as she continued her personal growth, her schooling and her community involvement. When she started as the Executive Director of Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee, her office was at Centro Hispano (I was then its Executive Director). I saw her almost daily, working hard to build that organization and leading it to become one of the most successful, vocal, visible, and influential entities in the City –a position that connected her to the top philanthropies and politicians in the city, state and elsewhere, and where her leadership skills shined, and she became highly respected.

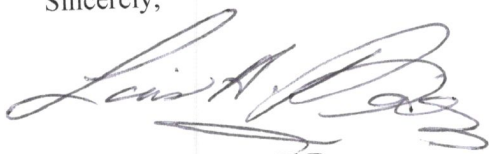
We need a person like Ms. Aldrete in this position. Over the past few years, the FPC has been through too many executive directors, who had very short tenures. Surely, this is a very political position affected by the usual ambivalences of political instabilities and whims. I have learned something in my years as a civil rights activist. I suggest we need stability in positions that help us work effectively on the many complexities of police-community relations. We need to give those who we entrust in such positions the time to mature on the job, cone skills for the position and its concomitant politics, and further relationships with all those involved in a trusting and morally grounded manner.

I believe you have such a person in Ms. Aldrete. The quest for equity, justice and inclusion --leading to a better democratic process-- requires that leaders like her engaged in a learning and growth that can only be attain with years on the job. Someone with her educational preparation, her community know how, her visionary approach to social justice and social change, her careful consideration of the issues, and her commitment and hard work is very necessary. The fact that she is a well-known Latina woman, a person of color who understands very well the inequities that come with racial injustice, the fact that she is amazingly and skillfully multilingual, a devoted reader and forever a student of humanity makes her your best choice.

I urge you to re-appoint Ms. Griselda Aldrete as the Executive Director of the FPC. We are yet to see the many things she will be able to do in this position to make Milwaukee better for democracy and for all of us.

Please feel free to contact me for any other information. My cell: 414-688-7000. My personal email: tonybaez0903@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Luis A. Báez".

Luis "Tony" Báez, PhD.