

Justice Janine P. Geske (ret.)
Wisconsin Supreme Court
Distinguished Professor of Law/founder of Andrew Center for Restorative Justice
Marquette University Law School
P.O. Box 1881
Milwaukee, Wi. 53201-1881

May 31, 2024

Dear Alderpersons,

I write you to give my enthusiastic recommendation in support of Ms. Paulina Gutierrez's confirmation as the next Executive Director for the Milwaukee City Election Commission. I have known Paulina for the last seventeen years and believe she is a highly qualified candidate for this position.

Let me begin this letter by telling you a little about my background. I have recently retired from my position as a Marquette University Law School (MULS) Distinguished Professor of Law and founder/director of the law school's Andrew Center for Restorative Justice. Before that, I worked as the director of the civil division of the Milwaukee Legal Aid Society and then served as a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge, a Wisconsin Supreme Court justice, an interim Milwaukee County Executive, and an interim Marquette University Law School dean. I am also on many nonprofit boards of directors.

In 2007, our MULS Restorative Justice Initiative was awarded the community engagement portion of a multimillion dollar US Department of Justice Safe Streets grant. I needed to hire two people to work in the community to create, facilitate and evaluate restorative justice approaches to neighborhood conflicts, create safer reentry processes for formerly incarcerated men and women, improvement of police-community relations, and coordination of services with the US Department of Justice, nonprofits, Milwaukee based law enforcement departments, most City of Milwaukee criminal justice stakeholders, Central City churches, etc. We had many wonderful applicants for the restorative justice positions but Paulina clearly stood out as our number one candidate. I was thrilled when she accepted our offer. I trained her in restorative approaches and then sent her out into the community for four years to create the necessary programs. She was a quick study. I learned that Paulina is a hard working ethical leader with many talents.

As a former judge and law professor, I am asked many times to write letters of recommendation. Sometimes that task can be challenging. But in this case, it is not only easy—but it fills me with joy that, Paulina who is professional, experienced and talented has been nominated for this critical position with the Election Commission. As you can see from her curriculum vitae, her extensive public service positions and her

experience with challenging administrative and community engagements have led the way to her very successful career. .

I obviously do not need to state the obvious—that confirming the right person for this position comes at a particularly critical time in our history. One of Paulina's strengths is that she works extremely well with a diversity of people. She has excellent administrative skills. She would be a very skilled representative of the Commission in talking to all groups—from diverse political groups, to community members, to representative of the media and to you as members of the Council.

Without any hesitation, I confidently recommend that you vote to confirm her appointment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. (My phone number is 414-852-3376.)

Sincerely,

Justice Janine P. Geske

Cc .City of Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson