



2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission | APPLICATION

Application for Neal Robert Fornaciari

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Initial Application

Below is the initial application for the Citizens Redistricting Commission. In this section of the application you will be asked to provide personal information that will assist the Applicant Review Panel in processing your application.

You do not have to complete the entire application at one time. At any point, you can save your application using the "Save Application" button. After the application has been saved, you can return to this site to complete the application using your email and password if you choose to set one. Be sure to submit your initial application on or before August 19, 2019.

All fields with * are required to submit the application.

Identification Information

First Name*:

Neal

Middle name:

Robert

Last Name*:

Fornaciari

Suffix (Sr., II, Esq., etc.):

Physical Address

City*:

Tracy

State (if temporarily residing outside of California):

CA

Zip/Postal Code*:

95304

County:

San Joaquin

Country (if temporarily residing outside of the United States):

Mailing Address (If different than Physical Address)

City:

State (if temporarily residing outside of California):

Zip/Postal Code:

Country (if temporarily residing outside of the United States):

Gender

Gender*:

- Female Male Nonbinary

Racial or Ethnic Background

Select the circle that best describes your race/ethnicity*

Latino Group

- Cuban
 Mexican/Mexican American
 Puerto Rican
 Other Hispanic/Latino Groups

Pacific Islander Group

- Guamanian or Chamorro
 Hawaiian
 Samoan
 Other Pacific Islander Group

Asian Group

- Asian Indian
 Cambodian
 Chinese
 Filipino
 Japanese
 Korean
 Laotian
 Vietnamese
 Other Asian Group

Other Groups

- Aleut
 American Indian/Native American
 Black/African American
 Eskimo
 White
 Other Racial Group

If other please specify:

The Voters FIRST Act is designed to produce a Citizens Redistricting Commission that is reasonably representative of the state's diversity. This information is required to help the Applicant Review Panel identify a diverse pool of the most qualified applicants. Although your specific date of birth will remain confidential, your age may be calculated from your date of birth and made public.

Economic Status

What was your total household income during the past 12 months?*

- Under \$35,000
 \$35,000 - \$74,999
 \$75,000 - \$124,999
 \$125,000 - \$250,000
 Over \$250,000

Eligibility Information

If you are uncertain about your prior voting registration, voting record, or party affiliation, we suggest that you contact the county clerk or voter registrar in the county in which you resided during the period of time in question. The contact information and address for California's county elections offices can be found at <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>.

1. Have you been continuously registered to vote in the State of California since July 1, 2015?*

- Yes No

2. With what party are you registered?*

- No Party Preference (Formerly known as Decline to State)
- American Independent Party
- Democratic Party
- Green Party
- Libertarian Party
- Peace and Freedom Party
- Republican Party
- Other

If other, please specify:

3. Has your political party affiliation remained the same since July 1, 2015?

- Yes No

4. Indicate in which of the last three statewide general elections you voted, (check all that apply)*:

- November 2014 (Gubernatorial)
- November 2016 (Presidential)
- November 2018 (Gubernatorial)

Conflicts of Interest

The Voters FIRST Act (Act) is designed to produce a Citizens Redistricting Commission that is independent from legislative influence and, therefore, disqualifies from service any person having a *conflict of interest* as defined by the Act. The information below is required to help the State Auditor and the Applicant Review Panel identify any conflicts of interest you may have.

5. Have you done any of the following **within 10 years of the date you submit this application**:

5a. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application been [appointed to](#), elected to, or a [candidate](#) for a California congressional or [state office](#) (*Appointed* means appointed by the Governor, a member of the Legislature, or a member of the State Board of Equalization; or served at the pleasure of the Governor, a member of the Legislature, or a member of the State Board of Equalization)?*

- Yes No

5b. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application served as an officer, employee, or [paid consultant](#) of a California [political party](#), or of the [campaign committee](#) of a [candidate](#) for a California congressional or elective [state office](#)?*

- Yes No

5c. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application served as an elected or appointed member of a [political party central committee](#) in California?*

- Yes No

5d. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application [been a lobbyist registered with the State of California or a California local government](#)?*

California local government:

Yes No

5e. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application [been a registered federal lobbyist](#)?*

Yes No

5f. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application [served as a paid California congressional, legislative, or State Board of Equalization staff](#)?*

Yes No

5g. Have you within 10 years of the date you submit this application [contributed \\$2,500 or more to any California congressional, state, or local candidate for elective public office within any single calendar year?](#)([This amount has been adjusted using the California Consumer Price Index.](#))*

Yes No

6. Are you currently serving as [staff](#) or as a [consultant](#) to the Governor of California, a member of the California Legislature, a California member of Congress, or a member of the State Board of Equalization?*

Yes No

7. Are you currently under contract with the Governor of California, a member of the California Legislature, a California member of Congress, or a member of the State Board of Equalization?*

Yes No

When answering questions 8 and 9, *immediate family* means your parents, step-parents, spouse, registered domestic partner, children, step-children, siblings, step-siblings, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, and sons- and daughters-in-law with whom you have done the following:

- [Cohabitated with for a period or periods totaling 30 days or more during the past 12 months](#) or
- [Shared ownership of any real or personal property having a total value of \\$1,000 or more during the past 12 months](#) or
- [Provided or received a financial benefit totaling \\$1,000 or more during the past 12 months](#)

8. Do you have an immediate family relationship with the Governor of California, a member of the California Legislature, a California member of Congress, or a member of the State Board of Equalization?*

Yes No

9. Has a member of your immediate family done any of the following **within 10 years of the date you submit this application**:

9a. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application been [appointed to](#), elected to, or a [candidate](#) for a California congressional or [state office](#)? (*Appointed* means appointed by the Governor, a member of the Legislature, or a member of the State Board of Equalization, or served at the pleasure of the Governor, a member of the Legislature, or a member of the State Board of Equalization)?*

Yes No

9b. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application served as an officer, employee, or [paid consultant](#) of a California [political party](#) or of the [campaign committee](#) of a [candidate](#) for a California congressional or elective [state office](#)?*

Yes No

9c. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application served as an elected or appointed member of a [political party central committee](#) in California?*

Yes No

9d. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application [been a lobbyist registered with the State of California or a California local government](#)?*

Yes No

9e. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application [been a registered federal lobbyist](#)?*

Yes No

9f. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application [served as a paid California congressional, legislative, or State Board of Equalization staff?](#)*

Yes No

9g. Has a member of your immediate family within 10 years of the date you submit this application [contributed \\$2,500 or more to any California congressional, state, or local candidate for elective public office within any single calendar year?](#) [\(This amount has been adjusted using the California Consumer Price Index.\)](#)*

Yes No

PRIVACY NOTIFICATION AND WAIVER

LEGAL AUTHORITY AND REASON FOR COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

The Voters FIRST Act (Act) and the regulations implementing the Act require that the selection of commissioners for the Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) be open to public scrutiny and the press (California Constitution, Article XXI, section 2, subdivision (c); Government Code sections 8252, 11120, 11121, and 11125.1; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 60835, 60836, 60842, and 60846). The Act also requires the California State Auditor's Office (State Auditor's Office) to select 60 of the most qualified applicants based upon their voter affiliation; eligibility to serve pursuant to Article XXI of the California Constitution; the absence of any conflicts of interest; relevant analytical skills; ability to be impartial; appreciation for California's diverse demographics and geography; and racial, ethnic, geographic, gender, and economic diversity. To determine each applicant's identity and qualifications to serve on the Commission and to track the demographic information of the applicant pool, this application seeks personal information about applicants that will be provided to the Applicant Review Panel, State Auditor's Office staff, and the public, including members of the press, the Legislature, and the Commission.

CONSEQUENCE OF NOT PROVIDING ALL REQUESTED INFORMATION

Failure to provide all of the requested information will result in your disqualification and the removal of your name from the applicant pool. Thus, if you wish to serve on the Commission, it is mandatory that you submit a response for each item of information requested.

PERMISSION TO USE AND RELEASE PERSONAL INFORMATION

By submitting this application, you acknowledge that the application, all documents submitted in support of your application, including a Statement of Economic Interests (FPPC Form 700) if you are asked to submit one, letters of recommendation, materials generated as a result of any State Auditor's Office or Applicant Review Panel investigation of you, and all public comments and responses to public comments about your application are public records. You agree that the State Auditor's Office shall provide copies of these materials to members of the public and the press, members and staff of the Applicant Review Panel, State Auditor's Office staff, the Legislature, the Commission, and as otherwise compelled by law. You understand that members of the Applicant Review Panel and the public may make public statements about you. You authorize the State Auditor's Office to use the information submitted by and about you as the State Auditor's Office deems necessary to select commissioners, replacement commissioners, or otherwise comply with its legal duties. You also authorize the State Auditor's Office to post all materials related to your application to serve on the Commission on its website and any website authorized by the State Auditor's Office.

VOLUNTARY WAIVER OF PRIVACY RIGHTS AND STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE LIABILITY

By applying to be a commissioner, you are waiving your privacy and other rights under various state and federal laws including, but not limited to, the Information Practices Act (Cal. Civil Code section 1798 et seq.), and any defamation, invasion of privacy, and negligence claim you may have against the State Auditor's Office and those acting on its behalf. Accordingly, by waiving your privacy rights, you are agreeing to permit the State Auditor's Office to release any and all information submitted by or about you, EXCEPT that the State Auditor's Office will not post on the Internet your date of birth; physical, mailing, and email addresses (excluding the city and county); telephone numbers; the addresses and telephone numbers of your immediate family members; or any materials that the State Auditor's Office deems offensive. At this point in the process, the State Auditor's Office will not collect, and you should not voluntarily submit to the State Auditor's Office, your social security number, driver's license number, financial account numbers, or health information. By submitting your application, you acknowledge and consent to the release of the information you and others are providing related to you and, except as specifically provided above, you are waiving your right to privacy regarding all information relating to you and your application to serve as a commissioner. This waiver authorizes the State Auditor's Office to make public information submitted by or about you for a period of 12 years from the date of your application, even if you are not selected as a commissioner. You are providing this waiver voluntarily, understanding that the State Auditor's Office shall not be legally liable as a result of the release of information submitted by or about you or as the result of comments made about you by others, and that the State Auditor's Office will post on its website or otherwise release publicly. This includes claims of defamation, invasion of privacy, negligence, and any other statutory or common law claims.

WHOM TO CONTACT

You have a right to review personal information the State Auditor's Office maintains about you and to verify its accuracy. Please contact the State Auditor's Office's Information Privacy Officer at (916) 445-0255; 621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200, Sacramento, California, 95814; if you would like to view or obtain information about the location of your records and the categories of persons who use the information in your records.

Affirmation

I affirm, by entering my initials in the box, that the statements contained in this application are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I have read and understand the Privacy Notification and Waiver.

Initials*: NF

Submitted At: 07/16/2019 6:38:36PM

Supplemental Application not displayed (redacted content)

Letters of Recommendation

Letter of Recommendation #1, submitted by Denise E. Koker

How Submitter Knows Applicant: Neal was a management colleague and reported to me.

Letter of Recommendation:

I am honored to submit this letter of recommendation for Neal Fornaciari (#7806). I have known Neal professionally for many years from working together at Sandia National Laboratories in Livermore, California. I worked at Sandia from 1980 until 2017 when I retired as Director of Operations for Sandia's California Site (SNL/CA). I was one of six Directors reporting directly to the Sandia's executive leader for the California Site - a position directly accountable to Sandia's Laboratory President in New Mexico (SNL/NM). SNL/CA is composed of approximately 1200 workers and incorporates both technical research and development (R&D) mission functions and mission support or operations functions. The CA Director of Operations is responsible for nearly all of the mission support functions - over 300 people - including security, facilities, environment, safety & health, human resources, project management, business development, and budget

I began to get to know Neal in 2009 when I was a Senior Manager and he joined the Center as a manager, reporting to another Senior Manager. When I became Director of Operations in 2012, I selected Neal to be one of my three senior managers, a highly sought after position filled via an objective and competitive process. As Senior Manager, Neal had a large, complex organization of about 70 people, including 5-6 managers, which he managed independently. My selection of Neal proved to be an excellent decision. During the next five years, I worked closely with him on ensuring both excellent operational support to Sandia's missions and in pursuing and implementing institution-changing initiatives to improve Sandia operations and culture. What we accomplished in that five years was notable, and Neal was more than an integral member of the team; he was a prime leader in defining and pursuing the end-state.

To address Neal's qualifications, I have organized information into four broad categories, within which I reference qualifications that I think are important for this position, including those you specifically asked to be addressed.

"Technical" Competence: Neal has an excellent education background that gives him both depth and breadth of knowledge in technical areas (BS and MS in Engineering from UC Berkeley) and business (MBA from UC Berkeley). During his tenure at Sandia he held staff and management positions in both engineering R&D and operations functions. He consistently received performance ratings up to the highest level, evidence of Neal's intellectual and practical capabilities, as well as his versatility. He should more than meet your needs for objectivity and analytical skills, both quantitative and qualitative. I think it is critical to be able to analyze numerical and non-numerical information and then to apply sound judgment to create understanding and make good decisions. This includes understanding the psychological, social, and political factors and ramifications of information and decisions. Neal has demonstrated this ability. In fact, he has been asked by a contributor to UC Berkeley's MBA program to develop training on how to effectively use quantitative information in presenting a persuasive argument.

Character & Integrity: As Director of Operations I took performance evaluation of my Senior Managers very seriously. On a regular basis I vigorously solicited feedback from their direct reports, peers, and internal clients, including executives not in his line organization. Consistently, Neal was highly regarded by people at all levels for, among other things: his authenticity and honesty; his sincere regard for people and organizational performance; his habit of addressing problems promptly and positively, and using candor and goodwill when having difficult conversations.

Alignment between a person's values and behavior is a key element of integrity. Neal followed through on important things he said

he would do, for example, his passion for leadership. After completing his MBA as a Senior Manager, he embarked on an intense leadership development effort with his 5-6 managers. It would have been easier for him to ignore this long-term effort in the press of the intense day-to-day demands of the work. Instead, he brought in a leadership consultant to work with him and his team and diligently adhered to his commitment to develop their individual and collective leadership over an extended period. The entire organization benefited from the organizational planning and leadership competency that was developed. Neal is still in touch with that consultant who has called him back to the Berkeley MBA program to be a TA. He has also continued to provide mentorship to one of his former managers even after she left Sandia for a higher-level position in another institution.

Neal exhibited this same alignment of values and behavior with respect to diversity and inclusion (D&I). Sandia executives recognized the value of having a diverse workforce and creating a culture where all members of the population were included (had a voice, shared a sense of belonging, and were valued for their contributions). It took people like Neal to do the hard work of making progress. Neal participated very early in Sandia's D&I initiative with intensive training for corporate executives. He quickly became an advocate and leader in a very positive, non-adversarial way. In one case involving my organization, I initiated an intervention to understand intense dissatisfaction that some workers in my organization were having in their work with another organization. Neal identified gender and race as contributing factors in the conflict. He took the lead in bringing in a D&I workshop specifically for white male management - providing a safe space for exploring bias and exclusion, and the negative impact they have on motivation and performance. This was followed up with workshops for the broader population. These interventions and workshops contributed to greater understanding of and value for diverse perspectives and behaviors. Ultimately, the working relationships between individuals and organizations improved significantly. Our staffs now were included in working sessions - by invitation and by participation. Neal was not at the top of the hierarchical ladder, and his relationships with the management in the other organization were of critical importance, but he demonstrated courage and integrity in confronting the problem and helping to resolve such difficult issues. His passion and commitment for diversity and inclusion were evidenced by his continuing role as a leader in the D&I initiative across Sandia, a voluntary activity.

Among Neal's great strengths is his informal communication, which is highly interactive and authentic. People are inspired to trust him and want to work with him. Neal is not as adept with the written narrative. With three degrees from UC Berkeley and a successful career in management, this is far from a major issue. He is self-aware and continues to work honing those skills and compensates for any difficulty by working with others to polish and finalize written reports. In his recent grand jury experience, Neal wrote the first draft of the report and then worked closely with other members of the jury to publish a well-written final document.

I know Neal to be a hard worker who takes personal responsibility for his actions and decisions. Sandia/CA was a satellite to SNL/NM headquarters, with all the tensions and complications that arises in such an institutional relationship. To be effective, management and staff at Sandia/CA had to engage in regular interactions with our counterparts at headquarters in order to stay apprised of information, ensure positive day-to-day operational alignment, and pursue changes in policy or work processes. This required regular travel to formal meetings and projects and informal checking in to establish and maintain positive relations. It would be easy to postpone or avoid such interactions; often the payoff was for long-term rather than short-term productivity. Neal's personal presence at meetings and his informal checking-in with people at all levels in the institution brought him information and good will that paid off. When pursuing changes in policy and practices it could be easy to either fall into an adversarial role or simply capitulate. Neal's personal engagement, objectivity, and interpersonal relations contributed to his success at navigating the tension between advocating for his position and supporting corporate positions. He was diligent and effective; he did not default to short-term expediency or avoidance of conflict in his decisions to engage.

Leadership & Collaboration: The following example illustrates how Neal employed leadership and collaboration to accomplish difficult, important work. These are characteristics the Commission will require to get its work done well.

My center was a leader in helping to identify the need for significant changes in the definition and role of project management (PM) for the execution of R&D projects at Sandia. In a multi-year effort, we took on significant organizational responsibility for defining and building the capabilities and competencies for PM. Sandia had always taken pride in acquiring the highest quality technical R&D staff from the country's best universities. Traditionally, PM was viewed less as an expertise on its own, but rather as an element of engineering which was conducted from within the project. Building and managing expert PM staff in an independent organization, an organization that was not an R&D organization, was unprecedented. This is what we were striving for when I selected Neal as the Senior Manager to lead this effort. The complexity of this effort cannot be underestimated. To succeed, Neal needed to work collaboratively and persuasively with his R&D counterparts and stakeholders across the Laboratory. He had to hire and develop outstanding staff to prove we could do the job, overcoming traditional biases in the organization along the way. He had to turn his R&D collaborators into advocates who would join him in persuading executive management that this was the way to implement project management. He had to work with all the PM stakeholders across the Laboratory to collaborate on an entirely new job structure for the roles in project management, convincing Human Resource Management of the validity of the new scheme. Neal had to develop a leadership team under him that would be able to exercise leadership, persuasion, and excellence in execution as he exemplified. By the time I retired a new, robust way of doing business was in place and operating. It continued to progress after my retirement. Without Neal's commitment, hard work, diligence, collaboration, and knowledge across technical and business fields - without his leadership and credibility - we would not have succeeded.

The examples above provide evidence of Neal's qualifications for the Citizens Redistricting Commission. While Neal doesn't spout mantras such as "do the right thing," in practice he consistently strives to do the right thing. Neal commits to a course of action when there are important principles and practices at stake on issues about which he feels he can contribute. This speaks to his motivation for seeking to serve on the Commission. In 2002 he witnessed, and was impacted by, gerrymandering. The manipulation of voting

districts, the failure of districts to represent the diverse make-up of our State, and the sense of unfairness and disenfranchisement that resulted, are things that Neal seeks to rectify. By direct participation he seeks to ensure that voting districts are fair and representative of the population of the State. In many ways it is a continuation of Neal's D&I activity.

As a citizen of the State of California and of the USA, I give my unmitigated, enthusiastic support in recommending Neal for the Citizens Redistricting Commission. I want to see the Commission be successful in establishing a process and an outcome that are fair and representative of the diverse populations of the state. I also want a successful model that other states will adopt. Our democracy will suffer and decline if the manipulation of voting is allowed to continue. I completely trust Neal to be an excellent contributor to this objective. He possesses the motivation, the values, the technical knowledge and abilities, the personal characteristics and work qualities to make a terrific contribution. His ability to lead and collaborate will promote the participation and contributions of the other members.

Letter of Recommendation #2, submitted by Alison Meyer

How Submitter Knows Applicant: He was a student and client of mine

Letter of Recommendation:

October 19, 2019

Applicant Review Panel

c/o California State Auditor's Office

Re: Applicant ID #7806 - Neal Fornaciari

Dear California State Auditor's Office Representative,

It is with the highest recommendation that I write to you in support of Neal Fornaciari's application for the 2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission. I believe that in Neal you have a thoughtful, civic-minded person, whose many years of experience carefully managing complex, large scale projects with numerous stakeholders in a National Lab, and whose dedication to doing high-quality work will make a significant contribution to the Commission's success. By training and attitude, Neal blends the engineer's need for the meticulous problem-solving with the business person's strategic thoughtfulness and big-picture approach. He's also great with people.

My field is leadership development, particularly leadership of people and teams, and organizational leadership methods and strategy. As a practitioner, I work as a leadership coach and educator in both the academic and corporate environments: at the Berkeley Haas School of Business and the San Diego Rady School of Management of the University of California, and in companies such as Microsoft, Salesforce, SAP, Apple, PayPal, Ubisoft, Ziff-Davis, and numerous startups.

Neal and I met in 2013 during his Executive MBA at UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, where he was one of my students in the leadership communications core class. At the time, he was working at Sandia National Labs, leading a group that contained 6 different business functions at the Lab. During 2015-16 he brought me into Sandia as a consultant to work with his group on team-building, communications, and strategy. And summer 2019, because of his analytical strengths, I brought him in to work with me on a Berkeley Haas course, "Presentation Design for Analytical Communication." We were teaching how to communicate complex data and material clearly and effectively; Neal provided the real-world examples of complex analytical work that we used in the course.

Over the years of knowing Neal through multiple experiences, here are the key behaviors I have observed from him that will make him an excellent addition to the Commission:

- Strong technical reasoning and analytical skills: with a Masters in Mechanical Engineering and decades of managing engineering projects in a National Lab setting, Neal has worked alongside PhD scientists to bring their work to market. To do so, for each project he had to familiarize himself with the technology through exploration and analysis.
- Thoughtful evaluation: Neal takes great care to understand a problem he's involved in in order to craft the solution that meets stakeholders' needs and creates the most positive impact. In our collaborations, we have worked through everything from individual assessments of each of 6 his direct reports for how to best develop them, to how do we design a data visualization assesement for the MBA students, to how to guide his team to collaborate on the strategic planning for the group. In our work, he will evaluate multiple viewpoints to look for the ideal option. He really thinks problems through in a deep way.
- Lead through complexity and ambiguity: Neal's career at Sandia involved constant work on multi-year projects with multi-million dollar budgets, and heavy competition among stakeholders for resources. Getting these projects to completion demands determination. Neal will fight for what he believes is the right approach, and has the patience to succesfully bring long, complex projects to a close. In the case of building the project management organization from scratch, he had to convince 6 department directors to approve the change in the organization; this required him to build 6 separate business cases, a unique one for each director, in order to sell the solution into the organization.

- People skills and managing diverse personalities: Neal works to help people work well together. He is just as comfortable working with highly analytical/technical folks as with business folks, and works to build community. Developing the members of his team is also very important to him. In our work together I have always found him a friendly and easy collaborator on projects. He will speak his mind, but he will listen, and debate.

- Commitment to diversity and inclusion: Neal was instrumental in bringing programs to Sandia such as "White Men as Full Diversity Partners" and while there he was very passionate and committed to hiring more women, and investing in female managers' development. Also, as a white man [Redacted], Neal gets to experience both having privilege and having [Redacted], and that really shapes how he shows up in the world. He is a very strong advocate for building diversity.

I'll be direct: Neal is a seasoned manager of very large, complex projects requiring analytical abilities and people skills of the highest order. He is analytical, thoughtful and personable. He is an excellent collaborator. And he is extremely interested in being a Commissioner. I enthusiastically recommend him for the Commissioner role.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Alison (Bloomfield) Meyer

Continuing Lecturer, Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley - On leave AY 2019-20

Lecturer, Rady School of Management, UC San Diego

Leadership Coach in Executive Coaching | Speaker Coaching | Team Facilitation & Strategy

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Letter of Recommendation #3, submitted by Sarah Willits

How Submitter Knows Applicant: Professional / Former Direct Report

Letter of Recommendation:

October 17, 2019

Applicant Review Panel

c/o California State Auditor's Office

621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Applicant Review Panel:

I am honored to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Neal Fornaciari. I was fortunate to work closely with him for three years as a direct report at Sandia National Laboratory where I learned a great deal from him about leadership. Neal was a senior executive who led a large team with broad and complex responsibility for business operations, business development, finance, quality assurance, and project management. He retired from Sandia after a long career of service in the national interest.

As a leader, Neal modeled the way for many people. I've observed and personally benefited from his strategic mindset, his analytical approach, and his ability to influence others. At a time when demand for project management was growing at unprecedented levels within the company, Neal had the foresight to recognize a change in our approach was needed and he worked collaboratively across the organization to build a new vision for service delivery. This involved consolidation of the function under his leadership so that project management structures and tools could be deployed and matured. He applied his systems thinking to help others see that this change wasn't just about executing projects more effectively, but rather positioning the Laboratory infrastructure and supply chain for a fundamentally different future using data-based decisions.

Another admirable quality about Neal is his attention to diversity and inclusion. After he attended a retreat focused on this topic, he returned to work and opened conversations with me about what he learned and asked questions about my experience as a female leader in a male dominated environment. This took courage and he created a comfortable environment for me to be open. Neal continued to be an advocate for acknowledging diversity and inclusion in the workplace by being vocal, making it okay for others to speak up. He also organized an effort to send all his female leaders to a class at UC Berkeley which helped us explore how gender affects our experience at work.

Neal is an honest broker. His communication style is direct and yet he maintains objectivity. I observed this when one of Neal's peers made a leadership selection decision that was unpopular. The selected candidate was an existing manager who was perceived by others to be a poor performer and many people felt a hard-working staff member with high potential deserved the promotion instead. In a meeting where several of us were voicing our frustration about the decision, Neal remained professional and objective. It

was obvious he knew more information about the decision than we did, but he maintained appropriate confidentiality. He heard us and tried to neutralize the situation by assuring the team due diligence was performed, including evaluating the unique requirements of the job and performing extensive reference checks.

After his retirement, Neal took on an assignment with a Grand Jury, where he again applied the strengths I've described above. They were responsible for performing analysis of accusations in advance of a trial. While I didn't observe Neal in this assignment, he described to me how he worked to bring people of varying backgrounds and styles together and I do know that he was selected as a leader among the group.

Neal would be an asset to any organization, but I know he has a passion for serving the public interest through The Citizens Redistricting Commission. He is a man of character well suited to provide fair representation for all Californians. I offer my highest recommendation for Neal's consideration and would be happy to provide any additional detail that is requested.

Sincerely,

Sarah Willits

Public Comments

[Submit Public Comment for this Applicant](#)

Comment 3481, submitted by Brenda Loggins

How Submitter Knows Applicant: I know him as an active community member.

Submitted On: 05/04/2020

Comment:

The City of Tracy has not received the representation it needs in past commissions. Neal is a long-time resident of Tracy. Neal is an essential pick for this commission.

Comment 3482, submitted by Rebecca Brown

How Submitter Knows Applicant: Great Representative of Tracy

Submitted On: 05/05/2020

Comment:

Tracy has not received proper representation from past commissions. As a long time Tracy resident I believe Neal is essential selection to this commission.

Files

- [Supplemental Application \(PDF\)](#) (redacted content)
- [Form 700 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Background Check \(PDF\)](#)