



October 11, 2019

Applicant Review Board  
c/o California State Auditor's Office  
621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Selection Committee:

**RE: Dr. Ray Kennedy, Candidate #3710, Rec Letter #1**

I have been asked to write a letter on behalf Dr. Ray Kennedy in support of his application for the 2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission.

***My Background***

I have been passionate about election administration and assessment for more than two decades now, working in both developing and established democracies around the world. I currently serve as Chief Electoral Officer for the Canadian province of Saskatchewan (a position with responsibilities akin to both a Secretary of State for a U.S. State and a State Director of Elections) where I lead a head office and field leadership team of 160 that engages and trains more than 12,000 election workers to conduct provincial electoral events over the course of an electoral cycle in 61 constituencies. I am also responsible to liaise with and regulate campaign and financial activities for five registered political parties and their candidates. My Office also acts as the secretariat to a provincial redistricting commission that is created every ten years following a national census. Over the years, I have been deeply involved in the implementation of elections as an administrator but have also dug deeply into the evaluation of elections as a scholar and analyst.

From the outset, let me say that I believe Dr. Kennedy could be an excellent asset to your Redistricting Commission as it works to redraw boundaries for California's congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts. My goal, in the coming paragraphs, is to offer some insight on my understanding of a number of Ray's qualities in an effort to provide some additional "data points" as you seek to know your candidate better.

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***A History with Ray Kennedy***

I have known Ray Kennedy since taking a class with him at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in the early 1990s. Our professional relationship grew out of a course during which he demonstrated a keen interest and ability to articulate an understanding of International politics and how it relates to the United States. Ray subsequently hired me as his deputy within Information Resources at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and we have remained colleagues and friends since that time, working in similar circles over the years and meeting up whenever geographically possible.

I have come to know Ray as a person of integrity and one who lives his life consistent with the values that he espouses. As one involved in elections over a lifetime, I have observed a person who lives out the values that are necessary to reinforce democratic elections. In my engagement with him, he has always acted as an independent and impartial voice during electoral events, exhibiting a high level of professionalism and commitment to democratic standards for elections. While offering clear leadership in his work, he has operated as one willing to be held accountable within the institutional frameworks in which I have seen him work. He is innovative and particularly keen to evaluate how technology can be used most effectively in an electoral context and in light of the rights and privileges of voters and political participants. Perhaps most important, I have seen a professional who is genuinely committed to serving others in a way that is very different than is traditionally observed in either the public service or not-for-profit context. I would describe him as a servant leader.

I would like to describe an array of more specific characteristics that, I hope, offer further insight into why Ray could contribute significantly to your Commission. I do so as one who initially worked for Ray but has spent much of his career since as a peer in a field for which Ray clearly has a passion.

***Understanding of Election Administration***

I have met very few individuals that are consistently so inquisitive about how elections work. From the time I began to work for Ray, I recognized his strong commitment to understanding and helping to refine electoral best practice and our technical understanding of electoral processes. His background in information resources is merely a practical outlet of what comes naturally to him--asking good questions about what it takes to implement a democratic election within the boundaries of electoral best practice and standards. His goal for the past three decades has been to understand the context in which citizens operate and then to ensure elections are conducted in a way that is fairest to voters, political parties and candidates alike.

The various roles that Ray has taken on over the years demonstrate this well. I might suggest Ray's foundations of understanding this field so deeply came from before and during the time we worked together at IFES in Washington, DC. By the time I arrived, it was clear that Ray had accumulated a wealth of knowledge from a variety of experiences during missions around the globe focused on organizing and conducting elections. On other occasions, he had been drawn into efforts with a mandate to evaluate electoral events, observation efforts where he was afforded the opportunity to enter into an outsider's role as an assessor of those responsible for implementing elections.

In most every situation I have observed him, Ray has viewed elections through a technical lens, consistently considering how technology could be used to make a process more effective and efficient while also being aware that it could be detrimental to and undermine the tenets of democracy in a given context. This was clear in the research that we conducted through the F. Clifton White Resources Center at IFES on an ongoing basis, but it has also been evident in the analysis and collegial discussions that we have had over the years together.

### ***Articulating Vision and Mission***

From the outset, I was drawn to work for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems based on a clear vision and mission that Ray had articulated for me. He described IFES as an international not-for-profit based in Washington, DC. His description of the efforts of an extremely diverse staff whose mission was, first and foremost, to support election administrators around the globe was something that not only drew me to the organization but, ultimately, has encouraged me to remain involved in election administration and assessment for many years now.

International NGOs can be understood in many different ways, even by those who work for the organizations. In Ray, I saw the articulation of a clear and consistent vision that was based on supporting individuals responsible for conducting an integral democratic event in jurisdictions around the globe. He never veered from this understanding when it could easily have been the case. Many that I saw focused increasingly on the "business" of elections and the overhead that was necessary to maintain a certain level of funding. Ray certainly understood the need for a balanced budget and seeking sources of revenue to expand our work, but the need to support and serve election administrators remained most central to our efforts.

The ability to articulate this vision and mission publicly is perhaps one of Ray's greatest strengths. He was capable of doing so when I worked with him at IFES, expressing it with clarity internally and externally on an ongoing basis. Over the years, however, I have seen him continue to develop his speaking and writing skills, demonstrating his ability to communicate in both substantive articles and in the press where a simplified message of a very complex topic generally leads to greater success.

***Demonstrating Leadership and Management Skills***

While Ray has strong scholarly credentials, I would argue that he also demonstrates leadership and management skills that are rarely seen among those holding doctorates. Ray clearly has the ability to drive an organization forward based on a vision and mission, but he also knows how to translate principals and ideas into tangible and demonstrable results.

As an example, in establishing and growing the F. Clifton White Resources Center at IFES, Ray had to demonstrate many important characteristics: being able to communicate, lead, get people moving in the proper direction, writing, speaking, and engaging social media in a way that reinforces an overall message.

To end where I began, I have many, many positive things to say about Dr. Ray Kennedy. He is an individual who not only understands the principals by which he lives and works as an election professional, he has worked over the course of decades to practically and meaningfully achieve a variety of goals that pushed forward our profession. He is a leader that I trust and could envision him offering a significant contribution to the 2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission. Ray engages with people in a way that inspires them to get on board with the mission that he has been given. Around him, there are "no unimportant people" but he also knows to treat with respect those who are capable of assisting in helping fulfill an institution's mission and mandate.

Of course, your selection committee members are the only ones who will know whether Ray meets your expectations and needs for this commission. My hope is that I have been able to provide a clear window on the kind of partner that Ray could be in advancing your mandate.

Very best wishes in your search.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Boda, D.Phil., Ph.D.  
Chief Electoral Officer  
Province of Saskatchewan