

**Additional Information
Submitted by Appellant**

October 31, 2023

Writer's Direct Contact
+1 (415) 268-6047
GAmram@mofocomMs. Sandra Eng
Executive Office
Civil Service Commission
25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 720
San Francisco CA 94102-6033**Re: Appeal of Permanent Future Employability Restrictions by Ms. Zuniga (Civil Service Register No. 0180-20-7)**

Sandra Zuniga appeals the decision of the San Francisco Public Works Department ("Public Works") to impose a citywide future employment restriction on her.

Public Works tells the Civil Service Commission only a small part of Ms. Zuniga's story in their August 28, 2023 submission. Ms. Zuniga admits that she was in a relationship with Mohammed Nuru from November 2008 to May 2020. But her career advancement at Public Works and beyond was not on account of that relationship; rather, she was a dedicated, hardworking, and valuable employee of the City of San Francisco who received recognition commensurate with her achievements, without Mr. Nuru's involvement. Furthermore, after charges were brought against Ms. Zuniga and Mr. Nuru, and Ms. Zuniga had the opportunity to confront Mr. Nuru, Ms. Zuniga promptly entered into a plea agreement and cooperated fully with the government in their case against Mr. Nuru and others. She also ceased all contact with Mr. Nuru and, as detailed below, has been working very hard to get herself back on track.

Her involvement in Mr. Nuru's criminal activities is a source of deep regret to Ms. Zuniga. However, viewed in context, it is an anomaly in a life marked by a strong commitment to public service; and, in many ways, it is the result of a troubled childhood and a prior abusive relationship. Ms. Zuniga certainly made poor decisions, and allowed herself to be taken advantage of by a boyfriend in a superior professional role. But she remains an asset to her community who—despite everything that she has been through—remains remarkably keen to *return* to a job with the City and get back to working to better people's lives. That kind of humility, accountability, and dedication should be acknowledged, not punished. The citywide future employment restriction should be lifted.

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Ms. Zuniga Had A Traumatic Childhood, But She Worked Hard To Create A Better Life For Herself That Was Built On Her Passion For Public Service.

Ms. Zuniga grew up in a volatile family of five in an environment that exposed her to alcohol, drugs, and violence at a very young age. Her parents instilled in her that loyalty to the family should always come first, and that “what happens in the family should stay in the family,” even in circumstances where her family members were dealing drugs, or were engaged in dangerous and violent confrontations with each other. Ms. Zuniga prefers to keep the details of her childhood and her family private in this public forum, but suffice it to say that she grew up with a great deal of instability, violence, and substance abuse.

As a teenager, Ms. Zuniga and her mother were the only family members who had never been arrested. They were close, and her mother encouraged Ms. Zuniga to study and do well in school to create a better life for herself. When Ms. Zuniga was 19 years old, her mother was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Ms. Zuniga immediately took a leave of absence from college to care for her. Her mother passed away two months later, leaving Ms. Zuniga completely devastated and alone. Her mother’s passing left Ms. Zuniga determined to accomplish the things that her mother was unable to, and she resolved to finish school and break the cycle of dysfunction in her family. At the age of 20, Ms. Zuniga moved away from home to attend Sacramento State University. There, she started La Mujer Latina, a student organization that held after-school classes to help younger girls build their self-esteem. She also regularly volunteered with a non-profit to help students who had dropped out of high school to get their lives back on track. Inspired by her father, who served as the Director of Youth Services for Contra Costa County for 28 years, she committed herself fully to community service.

After graduating, Ms. Zuniga became a substitute high school teacher for the East Side Union High School District in San Jose. She went out of her way to support her students. One of them, Patricia Borrayo, had two children, and Ms. Zuniga met with her individually at her home to make sure she was caught up with class. Ms. Zuniga hired Ms. Borrayo for her first job as a teacher’s aide, and eventually the two of them set up a charter school to help young adults who had dropped out of school finish their high school degrees.

Ms. Zuniga Met Mr. Nuru At A Vulnerable Time In Her Life, While In The Process Of Divorcing An Abusive Ex-Husband.

Despite all the progress she had made, at 29, Ms. Zuniga’s life took another turn for the worse when she married Pedro Zuniga, whose last name she still carries. From the beginning of their marriage, Pedro was physically and emotionally abusive. He regularly called her stupid and a “slut.” He controlled her with a 7 p.m. daily curfew and a \$50 per week allowance. He berated her cooking, and sometimes even threw the food she cooked back at her. He took out a loan in both of their names without telling her, and eventually had an

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affair with a coworker. She stayed with him through all of this, until three years into the marriage, when she woke up one night to Mr. Zuniga strangling her in bed out of jealousy of her friendship with a friend's boyfriend. Ms. Zuniga filed for divorce, but—consistent with her upbringing and her childhood—never reported the incident to the police.

It was in these turbulent circumstances that Ms. Zuniga met Mr. Nuru, her new boss, in 2008. She was still in the process of divorcing Mr. Zuniga at the time. Their relationship began outside of work a few months after she was hired. For the first time in her life, Ms. Zuniga felt as though she had found a stable and healthy relationship. Mr. Nuru was kind, supportive, and generous with his compliments. He was professionally established, with a family of five children, for whom she quickly took on a mothering role. He also trusted Ms. Zuniga to handle his financial affairs. Particularly in light of the sharp contrast he drew with Mr. Zuniga, she began to see a future with Mr. Nuru and his family, and she did not question the favors and assistance he requested of her.

Ms. Zuniga Excelled In Her Employment At Public Works.

Ms. Zuniga performed very well in her role at Public Works, and received appropriate recognition for her work. She was known for being an extremely hard worker (working 60 hours per week, on average). Her promotions, performance evaluations, and salary increases were not due to her relationship with Mr. Nuru; indeed, he was hardly involved. This submission does not purport to correct every inaccuracy and respond to every accusation in Public Works' memorandum to the Civil Service Commission (the "SFPWD Memo"), but highlights a few key details in Ms. Zuniga's reporting structure to illustrate how her career advancement was due to her own hard work and dedication.

- Ms. Zuniga was hired as a TPV 2917 Program Support Analyst on May 27, 2008, and was appointed to a permanent position on August 13, 2010. At the time, she reported to Mr. Nuru, but the decision was also made by Richard Bridygham (Assistant Operations Director) and Edward Reiskin (Director), among others.
- As of August 2011, she began reporting to Larry Stringer (Operations Director) instead of Mr. Nuru. She never reported to Mr. Nuru again. Her appointment to a temporary exempt (TEX) 0932 Manager IV position occurred while she reported to Mr. Stringer.
- On December 9, 2013, following a rigorous management exam (that she passed with a very high score) and an interview by three managers (who did not include Mr. Nuru), Ms. Zuniga was appointed to a PCS 0932 position, in which she continued to report to Mr. Stringer.

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- In May 2016, Ms. Zuniga was moved to Mayor Ed Lee’s office to run the new “Fix-It” Department. This decision was made following a meeting between Ms. Zuniga and ten other individuals and, again, did not include Mr. Nuru. In her new role, she reported to Jason Elliott.
- In June 2018, Ms. Zuniga began reporting to Andrea Bruss instead. In addition to the Fix-It Department, Ms. Zuniga was asked to also run the Neighborhood Services Department, and was given a 5% increase in her salary to compensate for the extra workload. She reported to Ms. Bruss until her termination in June 2020.

As is evident from the details above, Public Works’ assertion that Mr. Nuru “regularly participated in decisions about [Ms. Zuniga’s] employment” is demonstrably incorrect. (SFPWD Memo at 7.) To the contrary: the vast majority of the work she did for the City had nothing to do with Mr. Nuru. Attached at **Appendix A** is an abbreviated list of Ms. Zuniga’s accomplishments while working for the City that were the result of her own efforts, without contribution from Mr. Nuru.

To call out a few noteworthy examples: while a Program Analyst for Community Programs, she created an in-person training for the “Street Parks” program, supported over 100 street parks, and organized a 400+ person conference in San Francisco in 2013. She also won the Neighborhood Empowerment Network’s Most Empowering City Employee of the Year Award. As an Assistant Deputy Director for Operations, she managed 30 individuals, was one of 16 Initiative Leaders who led Public Works’ strategic planning efforts, and led the Public Works’ Emergency Operations Center during Fleet Week, New Years, Bay to Breakers, and rain storms and flooding (which involved staying on call 24/7). In 2016, she created Mayor Lee’s Fix-It Department from scratch, designing the meeting formats and process, creating job descriptions for and hiring staff, and creating and building relationships with different city agencies. In April 2019, she took over the management of the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services, along with the Fix-It Department. She was granted a 5% salary increase and 0933 classification for the additional workload.

It is unfortunate that Public Works is attempting to dismiss Ms. Zuniga’s long and stellar career of service to the City of San Francisco as nothing more than the perks of “favoritism” from Mr. Nuru. (SFPWD Memo at 8.) Ms. Zuniga admits that she should have disclosed the relationship earlier (in fact, she was told not to do so by Mr. Nuru). But to attribute everything that she achieved—particularly as a talented, committed, hardworking woman of color—to her male superior is inaccurate and unwarranted. (SFPWD Memo at 7–8.)

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Ms. Zuniga Ceased All Contact With Him, Cooperated Fully With The Government In Their Investigation, And Has Worked On Getting Her Life Back On Track.

Crucially missing from the SFPWD Memo is Ms. Zuniga’s subsequent cooperation with the government following the indictment against her and Mr. Nuru. Ms. Zuniga entered into a Plea Agreement on May 14, 2020, and pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1956(h). She then participated in multiple extensive proffers with the Department of Justice and provided substantial and helpful information about Mr. Nuru’s criminal activities. Public Works’ accusations of “[u]nethical conduct,” “[d]ishonesty,” and “[v]iolation of the San Francisco Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code” (SFPWD Memo at 7-9) must be understood in that context. Ms. Zuniga feels tremendous regret for her actions, has taken steps to make things right, and is determined to hold herself fully accountable for her actions and prevent anything like this from happening again. These are sentiments that Ms. Zuniga expresses in her own words in the declaration attached at **Appendix C**.

Furthermore, Ms. Zuniga has not had any contact with Mr. Nuru or his children in over three years, nor does she intend to have any contact with them going forward.

Since her arrest, Ms. Zuniga has worked tirelessly to right the wrongs she committed, pick herself back up, and give back to the community. After losing her job with the City, she rented out her apartment to stay with her cousin. To pay for her living expenses, she worked the overnight shift at an Amazon warehouse from 3 a.m. to 12 p.m., earning \$17 per hour. Currently, she works fulltime for the Oakland Housing Authority as an Administrative Analyst and part time for the Community Resource Initiative. Ms. Zuniga has also prioritized her health. She exercises regularly, and has completed the Alcatraz Swim twice in the last two years.

Ms. Zuniga has also been working on herself to ensure that the crimes she committed with Mr. Nuru never happen again. She has been attending therapy for three years, as well as Co-Dependents Anonymous, to understand and dismantle the thought processes and behaviors that led her to where she is today. Ms. Zuniga also attends three to four healing circles a week, hosted by Restore Oakland. She has gone on to complete their training for facilitators, and now holds her own weekly healing circle at the Community Resource Initiative for people who have been formerly incarcerated. The *twenty-seven* letters of support attached at **Appendix B** describe not only the strides that she has made for herself, but also, the positive impact that she has had on so many people around her.

Ms. Zuniga Deserves A Chance To Resume Her Work At The City.

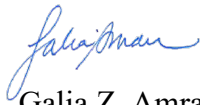
Distilled down, the five “[c]harges” that Public Works lists in the SPPDW Memo rely on only two facts: first, that Ms. Zuniga failed to timely disclose her relationship with Mr. Nuru,

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and second, that she participated in Mr. Nuru’s improper and illegal activities. Ms. Zuniga feels great remorse for both of these actions, and she has since severed all ties with Mr. Nuru; cooperated with the government fully in their charges against Mr. Nuru; and worked—through her therapy, her healing circles, and the support of her friends and family—to break the cycle of codependency and trauma that landed her in this situation in the first place.

These are hardly the actions of an individual who “lack[s] integrity” or presents a risk of “continu[ing] her cycle of misconduct.” (SFPWD Memo at 10.) They are the actions of an individual who can admit to and take responsibility for her wrongdoing, work to make up for it, and take steps to rehabilitate herself and prevent a reoccurrence. Ms. Zuniga is far from a liability; rather, her work ethic, dedication, passion, humility, and resilience would make her an invaluable asset to the City. Ms. Zuniga respectfully requests that the citywide restriction on her future employment be lifted.

Sincerely,



Galia Z. Amram
Partner

APPENDIX A

2008–2011: Program Analyst for Community Programs (managed 5 staff)

- Managed: Corridor Program, Clean Team, Adopt A Street, Street Parks
- Corridor Program: Expanded Corridor Program, assisted in hiring, led trainings, created a training video
- Street Parks: Created in-person training for participants, supported over 100 street parks, served on the Board of the American Community Gardening Association and organized a 400+ person conference in San Francisco in 2013

2011–2016: Assistant Deputy Director for Operations (managed 30 staff)

- Managed: Corridor Program, Clean Team, Adopt A Street, Street Parks
- Created the Outreach and Enforcement Team (“OnE Team”)
- Created the rules, regulations, policies and database to document, track and collect funds from finds, as well as implement database on tablets; hired 8 staff members for the program, including two managers; and provided training and evaluation of all
- Expanded Apprenticeship Programs from 1 program to 5 programs with Larry Stringer (Laborer, Cement, Arborist, Gardener, Carpenter)
- Led Strategic Planning Efforts for the Department of Public Works (was one of 16 Initiative Leaders)
- Managed (hired, fired, evaluated, disciplined) Fleet, Project Management Team, Storage Staff, Apprentice staff, and Community Programs staff
- Led Public Works Emergency Operations Center during Fleet Week, New Year’s, Bay to Breakers, and rain storms and flooding
- Stayed on call 24/7
- Served as main liaison for Operations to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Mayor’s Office
- **Won Neighborhood Empowerment Network's Most Empowering City Employee of the Year** (nominated by residents). See: <https://www.empowersf.org/11th-nen-awards-2019/>.

2016–2020: Neighborhood Fix-It Program

- Appointed to lead Fix-It Program out of the Mayor’s Office; reported to Deputy Chief of Staff Jason Elliot and Mayor Ed Lee
- Other individuals selected included Joaquin Torres, Ed Reiskin, Sam Dodge, and Derrick Brown
- Created the entire program from scratch: designed the meeting formats and process, created job descriptions for and hired staff, created and built relationships with different city agencies
- Created and designed an Artificial Intelligence Predictive Analytics tool, partnering with Noodle AI, to determine how to decrease crime and increase cleanliness in neighborhoods. See: https://oecd-opsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/90_Fix-ItReport_0918.pdf.
- Worked with Mayor Mark Farrell to install Big Belly Trashcans throughout neighborhoods, despite resistance from Mohammed Nuru and Walter Wong:

<https://sfmayor.org/article/mayor-mark-farrell-annouces-installation-popular-trash-receptacle-program-part-ongoing>.

- Led community meetings throughout the city and followed up on all neighborhood concerns. See: <https://hoodline.com/2017/05/fix-it-team-returns-to-sunset-to-address-street-sidewalk-cleanliness/>.

2019–2020: Director of Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services

- Ran Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services simultaneously with Fix-It Program at the request of Andrea Bruss, Mayor London Breed’s Deputy Chief of Staff
- Responsible for responding to all of Mayor Breed’s emails by 9am
- Responsible for approving all “Commendations” from the Mayor’s office
- Responsible for Mayor’s cultural events, backpack and turkey give aways and overall connection to neighborhood groups and community
- Was granted a 5% increase and 0933 classification for additional workload

APPENDIX B

September 8, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of my colleague Sandra Zuniga. I've known Ms. Zuniga for almost 2 years through her participation in a weekly Restorative Justice Circle that I facilitate at Restore Oakland. I would say that we know one another very well, due to the nature of the weekly circle. The circle is voluntary and open to all participants. The circle is made up of a rare mix in terms of race, class, gender and gender identity, age, and incarceration status. We meet for 90 minutes each Wednesday evening and follow a Restorative Justice (RJ) practice called Community Building Circle. The process entails creating a safe space, grounding ourselves with somatic exercises, naming our values, and checking in on how each person is doing. Then we dive in to discuss one of the RJ themes such as accountability, forgiveness, freedom, hope, safety, healing and harm. When people of differing life experiences honestly and openly define what accountability, or freedom, or healing means to them, everyone increases their understanding of these essential themes. When we tell our stories we deepen our understanding of each other, and build lasting community. Through the weekly circle I am aware of Sandra's crime of money laundering and other charges, while working for the San Francisco Mayor's office. I wholeheartedly support Sandra in spite of her crime.


Through our weekly circle I've come to know Sandra as one of the most truthful individuals I've ever met. Sandra openly shares her awareness of her crime, and her commitment to not reoffending. Toward that goal, Sandra is extraordinarily transparent about her inner self, her motives and feelings in ways most of us are not capable of. She shares her specific story, how she got engaged in the crime she committed, how she wants to mend the harm committed, and how it feels to be facing sentencing. One evening Sandra explained her self-affirmation practice which helps her listen to herself, and to reject unwelcome pressure or involvement in inappropriate activities. Many participants have adopted Sandra's self-affirmation method. In a group that seeks authenticity and justice, Sandra is a model.

Last summer Sandra Zuniga joined my Circle Keeper Training together with Community Resource Initiative's (CRI) Rigo Gomez. They quickly learned the circle method, and have hosted their own weekly circle at CRI for over a year. I am honored that Ms. Zuniga has brought our circle process to serve the CRI client population. I've sat in her circles and find her to be conscientious and sensitive to the unique situations of each person in the room. I'm aware that Sandra goes above and beyond in her relationships with program participants, often helping them find therapy or other resources, as well as celebrating their successes. In addition, I've called on Sandra to substitute for me at my weekly circles, always trusting her excellent work.

Sandra Zuniga found that the indigenous-inspired principles and practices of RJ support her own healing, and she now offers them to support the healing of many others. I believe that she will continue to rely on these principles, and I trust that she and I will continue our connection to this work indefinitely. Sandra knows her crime, and is committed to making things right. Sandra Zuniga helps me believe that change is possible for all of us.

Thank you for considering Ms. Zuniga's strengths, and her dedication to giving back to the community, in your sentencing decisions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Jo Bauen, Ed.D.

Consultant to Restore Oakland

Oakland, CA

Carmelita Belt

1136 Polson Circle
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 550-1887
cbelt2275@gmail.com

21st of September, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of my cousin, Sandra Zuniga, who is currently in the sentencing phase due to her involvement in a crime. While I acknowledge the gravity of the situation and the consequences of her actions, I want to emphasize the remarkable qualities and positive contributions that Sandra has consistently made to her community and our family.

Sandra and I have shared a unique connection since our earliest days, being only one year apart in age. Growing up, we were not just cousins but the closest of friends. Our families often gathered for family BBQs or trips to Lake Tahoe. These gatherings were more than mere get-togethers; they were opportunities for us to strengthen the bonds of family and friendship.

Our high school years included cross-school sports rivalries, where we learned teamwork and fair play. Even as opponents on the field, our friendship remained unbreakable, and we celebrated each other's victories.

In adulthood, we continued to share life milestones, both joyous and heartbreaking - family weddings, new family members, and loss. We also leaned on each other through the losses of our mothers and my uncle, Sandra's father. Sandra helped guide me through grief by being there during one of my most trying times. These occasions are a testament to the strength of our family and the support we offer one another during life's challenges.

In the past two years, I have had the opportunity to grow with Sandra through powerful Healing Circles and fundraisers. During our Healing Circles, Sandra has shared her remorse regarding her past crime. She offers support and care to formerly incarcerated people during our circles when they are seeking advice. Sandra has completed the swim to Alcatraz over the past two years as a means of fundraising for criminal defense mitigation efforts and advocating for individuals facing the death penalty. Her commitment to facilitating healing circles, volunteering her time and energy to various

causes, advocating for restorative justice, and providing support to formerly incarcerated individuals demonstrates her deep sense of compassion and her belief in second chances.

I know Sandra understands the gravity of her involvement in her crime and has taken responsibility for her actions. She is actively seeking ways to make amends, both legally and personally, to those affected. She is committed to participating in rehabilitation programs and therapy to address the root cause of her actions and to ensure she does not repeat such mistakes in the future.

In light of Sandra's remarkable qualities, her commitment to personal growth, and her strong belief in restorative justice, I kindly request that your honorable court consider these factors when determining her sentencing. While accountability is essential, I firmly believe Sandra's potential for rehabilitation, her dedication to positive change, and her invaluable contributions to her community should also be taken into account.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you require additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (925) 550-1887.

Sincerely,

Carmelita Belt

DocuSigned by:

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September 22, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Sandra Gonzales back in 2002. I was a struggling high school student; I had a toddler and another baby on the way. I was looking to get on the right track and was very blessed to be at the right place and at the right time when I was introduced to Ms. Gonzales. She was an independent studies high school teacher helping at-risk students. Ms. Gonzales became more than my teacher; she became one of my most incredible supporters and the person I thank for helping me start my career. I am now a Sr. Global Product Solutions Manager in the HR industry and have two kids in college.

When I started the independent studies program, Ms. Gonzales would meet with me weekly at home to review my assignments and issue new homework. She would come to my house because she knew I had two kids and transportation was challenging. Every week we met, she gave me so much positive feedback and encouragement that motivated me to try to do better each time. When I started working with her, I only had less than a year's worth of credits and, at the beginning, felt it would be impossible to graduate on time. However, Ms. Gonzalez's motivation and belief in me resulted in me quickly excelling and getting all the credits I needed to graduate on time with my classmates. Additionally, Ms. Gonzales also helped me get my first job in 2003.

I started working as a teacher's aide and promoting the independent studies program to help grow registrations. A couple of months after starting in my role, Ms. Gonzales shared her vision of creating a Charter School to allow students to come in and have a safe place to study. Even though I was only 18, Ms. Gonzales treated me with so much respect, empowered me to contribute, and, most importantly, allowed me to be part of this fantastic project. We created a plan, recruited teachers and students, and set up a Charter School. This is one of my most significant accomplishments. We provided young adults a place to attend and finish their high school education.

This goes to show Ms. Gonzales is a one-of-a-kind person who puts herself aside to help others excel and is one of the most selfless people I know. It is my hope that the court take this letter at the time of sentencing to consider Ms. Gonzalez character and rather than any actions.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide my thoughts.

DocuSigned by:

PATRICIA BORRAYO

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Patricia Borrayo

Melanie Brazzell
1638 Stuart Street
Berkeley, CA 94703

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of Sandra Zuniga. Through the news, I became aware of her crime and those of her associates, but through the Restore Oakland community building circle, I had a chance to get to know Sandra personally, away from those headlines. I was able to witness her transformation towards an ethos of restorative justice, reparation for harm, and commitment to social justice for the most marginalized in our communities. I believe that people can change, and Sandra is living proof of that truth.

From the first time I entered the weekly Restore Oakland community-building circle, Sandra greeted me with warmth and a smile, asking about my life and encouraging me to come again. Circle practice invites everyone in the circle to share about their feelings and thoughts on a specific topic. Week after week, I saw Sandra show up authentically and meaningfully, sharing her own deep reflections on her upbringing, her past, and what a new life she has created for herself since confronting her crimes and changing her life path. Sandra not only practices restorative justice for herself, she shares it with others through her work. I have met her colleagues at Community Resource Initiative and heard about the powerful community-building circle they co-facilitator together in the Mission district in San Francisco. It is clear to me that Sandra has a deep passion and commitment for restorative justice and building community among people seeking transformation - formerly incarcerated people, unhoused people, and people facing addiction. Sandra is able to connect with these people because of her kindness, her sense of humor, her humility and accountability - she is open about her past and her mistakes, and her desire to support others. It is clear to me that Sandra is a changed woman and that her career choices and personal choices have led her far away from the culture of corruption and law-breaking she was involved with previously.

I hope you will take Sandra's contributions to the community and her commitment to change into consideration when deciding your sentence. Some of the most powerful proponents of restorative justice are those who have done wrong and taken accountability, who can teach others how to do the same. We ask you to keep Sandra in the community where she can fulfill her calling of supporting others in the same kind of transformation she has undertaken for herself.

Sincerely,
Melanie Brazzell

DocuSigned by:

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of my friend Sandra Zuniga. I am a person who strongly believes in holding people accountable for their actions. However, I also believe in second chances, and I believe in Sandra despite the gravity of her crime, but most importantly, Sandra believes in herself and now realizes the danger of seeking unhealthy acceptance from others to feel validated or loved.. Since I met Sandra one year ago, She has owned and expressed a profound sense of shame and remorse many times to others for her actions against the community, her family and friends. Which takes a great deal of courage, and she continues to do so not just through words but her actions. Sandra has demonstrated on numerous occasions her commitment to restore the integrity she forfeited. She is a generous and nurturing spirit who is now driven by her mistakes to be the best version of herself even if she has to go to extraordinary measures in a healthy way to do so. Like staying up all night to make her favorite African Stew for the group or pulling an all-nighter making masa for tamales to ensure that everyone is included. With this in mind, your Honor, I ask that you might have mercy on my friend, because her journey of healing has been tumultuous in front of so many.

Respectfully,

Leonard Brown 9/21/2023

Esther Chang
3113 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705

September 11, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Esther Chang, and Sandra Zuniga is my friend and fellow participant in a weekly restorative justice circle hosted by Restore Oakland, a community-based organization in Oakland's Fruitvale neighborhood. I'm writing in support of Sandra. Specifically, I'd like to highlight aspects of her character that make her a trusted and important member of my community.

Sandra is deeply reflective about her actions. I first met Sandra in April 2022 at a training about how to hold healing circles when there are relational conflicts or ruptures. This process—also called “circle-keeping”—brings together people who *caused* harm and who *were* harmed to understand community impact and, where possible, seek repair and healing in a structured environment. A few days after the training ended, I found myself sitting in circle with Sandra as she shared her own life testimonial with vulnerability, reflectiveness, and humor (very true to form for Sandra). She talked openly about her crime and how it had changed her life; how her actions caused her to lose her job, reputation, and friendships. Even more importantly, she shared about her journey of healing, the sense of community and wholeness she discovered in circle, and her new commitment to living by her values and with the highest integrity.

Sandra is someone who gives back, and who applies her learning to her life. Ever since discovering the healing magic of the circle process, Sandra has shared it as a gift with her friends, family, and community members. In the weeks after the training, Sandra facilitated a circle repair process with members of her own family, leading to more direct communication and effective conflict-resolution. A few months later, she began holding a weekly circle of her own with formerly incarcerated people in San Francisco. I visited her circle earlier this year and marveled at the sense of emotional safety and friendship. It was palpable: grown men were talking openly about their experiences with toxic masculinity and the messages about manhood that they had been taught.

Sandra is a pillar of support and care for her friends and community members, including me. She goes above and beyond to be available and responsive to other people. When I sit with her in circle, I know I can trust her to hold my reflections and others'—often messy, painful, and not fully processed—with the deepest care, sacredness, and empathy. As a circle-keeper, Sandra regularly hosts events to create opportunities for returning citizens to build community and joy (e.g., making tamales from scratch).

My friend Sandra Zuniga, the one I met in April 2022, is on a completely different life trajectory now than she was in the past. She understands the seriousness of her actions and has fully accepted responsibility for them—and she is making up for it every day, repairing harm and facilitating healing in every corner of her life. I cannot speak more highly of the impact she has had on my life and others'.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

764475AE534E7...
Esther Chang
esthergwang@gmail.com
224-260-1323

September 22, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Emma Cott, and I am writing on behalf of Sandra Zuniga. I am a San Francisco resident and a Special Education teaching specialist in the Peninsula. I had the honor of sharing a department with Sandra for a year at the non-profit organization, Community Resource Initiative (CRI). During the time Sandra and I were coworkers, we spoke often of her charges, as well as her future development, rehabilitation, and growth. Sandra and I worked every day, all day together creating community programs and raising money together for the nonprofit. In our year of working closely together, I experienced Sandra as one of the most hard-working, compassionate, and genuine people I have ever had the honor to know.

Sandra and I developed a reading program for children of incarcerated parents at CRI. We also organized fund-raising events for the organization. Sandra initially was tentative to be associated with the money raising sector of the organization and the public facing side of the reading program. She feared her charges would cast a negative light on the organization and she worried it might negatively impact funding. Sandra is like this, always worried about the collective and self-sacrificing to an extreme. We assured her that her hard work would speak for itself, and that her organizational and community outreach talents were much needed within the organization. Sandra is a tireless worker and we accomplished more in crafting the development department that anyone had in the time the organization existed. We implemented systems of organization for donors, program participants and supporters of the organization so we could build CRI's support base. We engaged in outreach (Sandra specifically creating the newsletter), hosted fundraisers and gave pitches to prospective supporters of the organization. We did so much largely because of Sandra's experience and incredible work ethic.


Sandra began attending a rehabilitative healing circle in Oakland in the first months I knew her. This practice deepened and became a major part of her life. She attended meetings multiple times a week, developed relationships with facilitators and participants and eventually underwent the extensive, two-month training needed to be a facilitator of her own healing circle. Sandra has been organizing, operating, and building her San Francisco based healing circle for over a year now and it is immensely successful. She works with people impacted by systems of incarceration to help repair the damage they have caused to their community, as well as heal their wounds of systemic oppression and personal trauma. I have attended her healing circle and I have spoken with the people who participate each week. They see Sandra and her healing circle as supportive forces in their lives for healing and reparation. One participant had recently been released from jail and was far from his family. He was working to overcome a drug addiction, but found this immensely difficult being so far from his community. Through CRI, he found Sandra's healing circle. Months later, he expressed that through their healing work, he had found a friend that had helped him to grow. He expressed trusting Sandra, and that this trust had allowed him to find the support he needed during a difficult time in his life. This individual has brought many others to Sandra's circle, as well as his own family to healing circle community events.

I understand what Sandra did was a crime. Through our hours of extensive conversations and close working relationship, I know Sandra understands this as well. And she has taken the task of repairing the damage she caused very seriously. Since I have known Sandra, her life has been dedicated to serving those around her, supporting her community and developing a

diligent practice of healing as a life-long journey. I do not believe Sandra will commit a crime in the future, because it would be antithetical to every step she has taken in building her new life.

Thank you kindly in your attention to this matter,

Emma Cott

DocuSigned by:

FB44A50A0FAA43F...

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sanura Dewa and I am a People Operations Associate and Office Manager at a non-profit called Common Future, and I'm also an entrepreneur based in Oakland; I have a consulting and pet/home sitting business.

I am writing in support of Sandra Zuniga. I know Sandra through my personal relationship with Mohammed Nuru, he is the childhood best friend of my father and I have known him since I was a young girl, so I know him as Uncle Mohammed. In spite of what Sandra did, I still support her and would like to share my experiences about my relationship with her.

I came to know Sandra when I moved to San Francisco in 2019 while staying with Uncle Mohammed for about 9 months as I got acclimated to the new city and my new job. During those 9 months, I had a hard time adjusting but I do remember that Sandra was always there to support Uncle Mohammed, his kids, and by extension of me being there she was also there for me. We would all go out to eat dinner together often and I found myself being drawn to Sandra because she is very kind, funny, generous and warm. We would always sit near each other and chat about everything from fashion, gardening, community service and her upbringing as a woman of color. She was very easy to talk to and would always make me laugh with her goofy stories or unique perspective on things.

With Sandra, she was a very grounding energy to be around, especially when I found out about the investigation into my uncle's corruption. When the FBI was executing on a search warrant in my uncle's house, Sandra was the one to call me and let me know what was happening and while I was taken aback by this act, Sandra was there to comfort me and ease any anxiety that I was feeling in that moment. It was really helpful for me to have Sandra there since I had never encountered such a thing prior to it happening right then. The investigation was still ongoing when I decided to move out of my uncle's home in early 2020 just before COVID lockdown, and I completely lost touch with Sandra, Uncle Mohammed and his family.

Fast forward to April 2022, I was invited to be part of a 3-day Healing Circle Training at Restore Oakland. The purpose of this training was to become a Healing Circle Keeper and learn how to facilitate a restorative justice circle with the intention to resolve conflict between all parties involved. When I arrived on day 1, I walked into this space thinking I didn't know anyone but as I made myself a name tag and went to my seat, I heard someone say hello and call me by my name. Since we were all wearing masks, I had no idea who this person could be, but then I looked at her name tag and it said Sandra. I immediately had flashbacks to my time at Uncle Mohammed's and I felt like my past and present worlds collided all at once. I remembered her but in that moment I had associated her with the negative trauma of dealing with my uncle's case and tried to avoid her. Once we had a break in the training, she approached me saying that she was so glad to see me but also understood if seeing her was troublesome. She met me with that same warmth and kindness that she had shown me in the years prior, and it didn't take long before we were catching up and laughing like we used to. It was as if we hadn't spent all those years apart, and we actively made plans to meet up and have dinner to catch up more in

the future. Since then Sandra and I have rekindled our relationship, and I have seen her step up as a facilitator and a regular at the Restore Oakland Community Building Circle every Wednesday, while also doing work to help formerly incarcerated folks have access to resources. I am in awe of how welcoming and positive she is towards everyone that she interacts with and I notice how intentional she is to ensure that everyone feels safe and heard. She is very easy to get along with and quick to support others when they need it.

I am confident that Sandra will not commit any other crimes in the future because based on my conversations with her, she feels great remorse and regret for the crimes she has already committed and does not wish to have this happen to her again. She wants to lead a life where she is able to help others thrive and grow, and I believe that she is already doing that and will continue to do so. I don't think our Restore Oakland community would be the same without her and I hope this letter helps in driving that point home.

Thanks,
Sanura Dewa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sanura Dewa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

To Whom It May Concern:

9/20/2023

I am writing this letter in support of Sandra Zuniga. My name is Carlus Evans, I am a Restorative and Healing Justice Circle Keeper, and I met Sandra doing this work. Even with the knowledge of the crime that Sandra has pleaded guilty to, I still support her as a friend, mentor, colleague and community member.


Sandra had come to us approximately two years ago to participate in our Restorative and Healing Justice circles. She was shy and reserved early on. However, the more comfortable and transparent she became, the more we began to see the birth of someone who understands accountability and love through her story. These are the two pillars that are needed to fully participate in the circle process. When Sandra shares her story it is always through the lens of not blaming anyone or making excuses for the choices she had made in regards to the crime she had committed.

Sandra's weekly commitment to not only attend/participate in the circle I facilitate but her own as well, is the mindset and behavior change that reflects her accountability.

Sandra is now a trained Community Building and Healing Justice facilitator, leading her own weekly circles. Sandra continues to build positive relationships as she supports the community by preparing meals for participants, assisting in hosting community events as well as being available to be the much-needed support of community members.

I do realize that Sandra has broken the law. However, I ask that when deciding Sandra's punishment, you take into consideration what you read here today. Thank you for your time and consideration in reading this.

Warm regards

DocuSigned by:

F35DAE13F95D495...

Carlus Evans

cr.evans510@gmail.com

510-634-0142

Arnie Fischman

4061 Lakeshore Avenue
Oakland, California 94610-1141
(510) 634-2321
Arnie.Fischman@gmail.com

September 20, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Sandra Zuniga, whose case is currently pending. I am aware of Sandra's offense and remain strongly committed to supporting her.

I have known Sandra since early 2022, when she began participating in the Restore Oakland Restorative Justice Community Circle. This circle meets every Wednesday evening to support healing and redemption for formerly incarcerated and impacted people and our allies. Sandra and I are stalwarts in the circle, very rarely missing a session.

In March of 2022, Sandra and I were accepted into a Restore Oakland series of trainings on how to conduct Restorative Justice circles. In April of 2022, we were accepted into a more advanced series on facilitating circles in situations when harm has been done.

In these trainings and in the weekly Community Circles, I have seen Sandra's skills as a Restorative Justice practitioner blossom. Sandra has presented a lengthy account of the sources of her crime to Community Circle. Her presentation was profoundly insightful and accountable. Sandra's remorse is profound.

Sandra has skillfully facilitated Restore Oakland Circles and has gone on to facilitate circles for other organizations. She now conducts her own weekly Restorative Justice circle for another non-profit.

Sandra is one of the most empathetic, caring, and sensitive people I have known. She is deeply committed to the vocation of Restorative Justice as a powerful means to accountability and healing.

Arnie Fischman letter of support for Sandra Zuniga
September 20, 2023
Page 2

I write as one who entered the Restore Oakland Circle after my release from Federal incarceration in 2020. Sandra has played an important part in my own path to healing and redemption after causing harm.

In conclusion, I can affirm that Sandra's highly effective Restorative Justice work is desperately needed in the prevention and healing of harm in our society. Please take these contributions into strong consideration.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Arnie Fischman



COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th St
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382

September 24, 2023

US District Court, Northern California

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Michelle Gaudet. I am the Co-Executive Director of Community Resource Initiative (CRI), a San Francisco based nonprofit that challenges the death penalty, supports families and communities impacted by incarceration and advocates for policy reform.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on and share my experiences with my colleague, Sandra Zuniga. Sandra has not only profoundly advanced the work and mission of CRI, but has contributed to my own personal and professional growth, having challenged my own assumptions about who is deserving of our community's time, resources and care.

In May 2021 my Co-Director, Anthony Ginez, spoke with me about bringing Sandra on board at CRI, first as an intern and later as a staff member. I soon learned Sandra was among those incited and charged in her current case.

I initially had serious reservations about bringing her on. I made assumptions about Sandra's background and experiences, and I could not have been more wrong.

Sandra arrived to CRI as an intern in May 2021, became a fulltime staff member in October 2021 and now works at CRI part time, after accepting a position with Oakland's Housing Authority in July 2022. Sandra's dedication and contributions to CRI have been immeasurable.

As Co-founder of CRI's Healing Circles Sandra has exponentially broadened the reach of CRI's community support programs. Healing Circles are a community space created for formerly incarcerated people and people in recovery from substance dependence. The group meets weekly on Tuesday night to discuss topics such as regret, accountability, loss and grief. Circle participants offer their personal reflections and support to each other as they process their personal histories and decisions, make meaning of their lives and build a positive sense of self in a supportive environment. Sandra co-facilitates these circles, and in a year and a half, she has not missed a single Tuesday night.

It is difficult to express how impactful these Healing Circles have been for those who attend. I've heard participants describe the Circles as the only support group they look forward to, or the only group where they can express themselves openly without fear. Sandra has created a rare space that is truly healing. This is possible to a large degree, because of the openness, vulnerability, trust and love she brings to the group.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th St
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382

I have attended Circle several times and I've heard Sandra discuss her own shame and regret at her conduct in her case. I've heard her reflect on her relationships with family and romantic partners that contributed to her patterns or behavior. I've also heard her express tremendous regret and shame over her offense and take responsibility for her actions. Sandra is a model to me and to others in her ability to share, express difficult or conflicting emotions, admit regret and shame and in it seek to hold herself accountable. Many circle participants receive Sandra's openness as an invitation to explore their own complicated lives and relationships. In short, she is an inspiration to many in our community as we strive to become better versions of ourselves.

During the holidays last year, Sandra organized a tamale-making party for Circle participants on the weekend. Remarkably, all of the circle regulars showed up. They did so because they wanted to. Not to get a sign-in for their program or to check a box off. Sandra has created a real community of real people who seek authentic connection and healing. They learn from one another, share with one another and now were breaking bread together as if it was the most natural thing. This space would not exist but for Sandra, her leadership and commitment.

On a more personal level, Sandra has been a mentor to me as an organizational leader during difficult moments. She models professionalism and direct communication and has offered advice on conflict resolution, personnel issues, HR and staffing. I've learned a great deal from her the value of direct, honest communication with our staff.

Despite her past, or perhaps ironically because of it, Sandra is an integral member of our community at CRI. She is support, a coach, an inspiration, a mentor and a friend. Thank you for considering Sandra's contributions and attributes alongside her shortcomings as she moves through the legal process.

Sincerely,
DocuSigned by:



Michelle Gaudet

Co-Executive Director, Mitigation Specialist
Community Resource Initiative
Cell: (415) 385-5190
Michelle.gaudet@cr-i.org



COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th ST
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382

September 18, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for Sandra Zuniga

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Co-Executive Director of Community Resource Initiative (CRI), a nonprofit in San Francisco that supports incarcerated people and their families through direct legal assistance, community initiatives, and advocacy. I am writing to express my emphatic support, both individually and on behalf of our organization, for Sandra Zuniga.

I first met Sandra in May of 2021 when Sandra expressed interest in volunteering with our team and collaborating with our organization. Given her professional experience in community services and nonprofits, Sandra was an ideal candidate to lead our organization's programs. In our initial meeting, Sandra voluntarily shared with me the nature of the charges to which she had plead guilty and the present case at hand. She was honest, forthcoming, and regretful. Initially, her pending case gave me pause, but as I came to know Sandra and the core of her character, she proved my hesitation to be not just unfounded but flat-out wrong.

I have been deeply impressed with Sandra's humility. After our initial conversations, Sandra began, first, as a summer intern. She was on equal footing with 10 others, mostly students, including two high schoolers, and despite the differences in her professional experience, Sandra fully participated without any sense of pretentiousness or ego. She was enthusiastic, motivated, and an inspiring mentor to others in her cohort. After the internship program ended, it was clear that Sandra's experience and wisdom was too valuable to pass up.



Sandra and 2021 CRI Internship Cohort



Sandra facilitating Community Healing Circles

Over the last two years, Sandra has been an integral part of administering our ongoing programs, including the launch of our organization's most active and well-attended program, Community Healing Circles. Every Tuesday night for over a year now, Sandra and our colleague host a group of community members in our office to collectively discuss topics such as accountability, fear, and relationships. Attendees are mostly individuals who are hoping to turn their lives around in the wake of incarceration or addiction. Given her process through this current case, Sandra facilitates these highly structured conversations with empathy and care, and I continue to be in awe of the positive impact she's had each week. She's a key member of this community as an equal, a partner, and a friend.



Sandra and Community Healing Circles participants making tamales for the holidays, 2022

Sandra has spearheaded many other initiatives with our organization. Last holiday season, Sandra organized the distribution of holiday gifts to children with incarcerated parents. She gift-wrapped and hand-delivered many of the gifts directly and took photos which we shared with their loved ones. Sandra also sought to scale our program titled, Reading Across the Lines, which connects children with their incarcerated parent through recordable books. Sandra successfully obtained permission from various children's book publishers, set up a process for implementation, and facilitated, herself, a handful of recordings.



Sandra and colleague, Rigo, delivering gifts to families with incarcerated loved ones, 2022

Because of Sandra, our organization and the communities we serve are stronger and more resilient. I, personally, have learned so much from her and find myself inspired by her resolve and value-driven approach to her work. She has taught me to be more patient and more supportive, and she stands as an ongoing example of hard work and intention, to me and to everyone that has the benefit of her presence in their lives.

Given everything mentioned above, I speak on behalf of myself and our entire organization to express unequivocal support for Sandra. I have seen firsthand her tremendous impact, and it is not just despite her serious violations of the law, but also because of the remorse and guilt that she carries in its wake. While awaiting final disposition in this case, Sandra has not carried on with her life as usual. Instead, she has shown and carried out a desire to help others in a meaningful way, and I can attest to this. I acknowledge and regret the mistakes that Sandra has made in the present case, and still, I am committed to our ongoing collaboration if her sentence allows.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th ST
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382



Sandra and swimmers after swimming from Alcatraz to raise money for CRI

It is my hope that Sandra's character and contributions to our nonprofit's mission be considered in her sentencing, and that she is given the opportunity to make amends, to facilitate healing, and to overcome her past to become a success story from which we can all learn. I look forward to seeing where Sandra's current momentum will take her and hope that she can work alongside our organization to break cycles of criminality and build a better community for us all.

Please feel free to contact me if there is anything else I may do on Sandra's behalf.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Anthony Ginez in blue ink.

Anthony Ginez, Co-Executive Director
Community Resource Initiative
(415) 824 1424 office
anthony@cr-i.org

Rodrigo Gomez

3012 16th Street
San Francisco, CA, 94103
(415) 209-8292
Rgomez0387@gmail.com

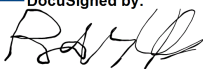
21 September 2023

To whom it may concern,

I have known Sandra now for a little over three years. When I met Sandra, she had recently been charged with money laundering and was having difficulty coping with this. Shortly after meeting Sandra, we began attending Healing Circles in Oakland as a way to work through our respective issues and have a safe place. Since attending the first circle almost three years ago, I have seen tremendous growth from Sandra as a colleague and as a friend. When we met we were both working at Community Resource Initiative and my first impression of Sandra was that she was having a difficult time accepting what was happening in her life but was willing to try new things. The healing circles in Oakland allowed her to have a support system for people who are in the process of trying to be better people in the world. Healing circles gave her the confidence to become a better person despite the challenges in her life. Sandra and I were trained in how to facilitate Healing Circles in an attempt to provide the same empowerment to other people. Sandra and I have been co-facilitating healing circles for over a year, and now provide the same support and safety to people that we received when we first began our healing journey. In December, Sandra hosted a tamale-making party at our office with healing circle participants. One of our participants Eddy, brought his whole family, and was a very special moment for them. Sandra is extremely compassionate and maintains contact with participants to uplift them with positive messages. Sandra is so important to many people who regularly attend our group, and is making a positive impact and helping people be the best versions of themselves. She does this by always being uplifting, never judging people, and always making herself

available to lend an ear if people need her. She is very motivated and determined, this is evident by the fact that we both swam from Alcatraz together last September. I can always depend on her to show up every Tuesday to hold the circle and to always come with a positive attitude and a solution-oriented mindset when it comes to problems. I have learned how to be resilient in the face of problems by watching her maneuver through the world. Sandra remains cheerful and dependable no matter what is going on in her personal life and it has been an honor for me to witness her growth and motivation.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

A58A9371DCA442B...

Rodrigo Gomez

September 21, 2023

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to you regarding my sister in law, Sandra Zuniga. I know that Sandra will be before you in court to face consequences for her role in the current matter.

I am writing because I would like you to know Sandra, aka Sandy Ales as we sometimes call her. She is a kind, giving, caring, cat loving person who is not only my sister in law but a friend.

I was fortunate to meet her back in 2001 when I became part of the family. I have gotten to know her over the years and always loved how she is so devoted to her family. Family first for her, ALWAYS. I have watched her go through some of the things that life throws at us but she has pushed through. She is strong and brave.

In May of 2013, her father Nico passed away after his health had slowly started to decline. He was not only her father, he was her best friend. Her father lived in Pittsburg and Sandy lived in the South Bay but she was always at her dads to spend time with him, make him dinners, watch sport and run errands for him, always making sure he had everything he needed. She was at her father's when he had to be taken by ambulance to the hospital, he did not want to go but she didn't let up. He went and that was the last time he was home. He passed I believe a week or two later at the hospital. That day a few hours before he passed, she told me in confidence that she had been seeing a therapist for quite a while to be able to handle the passing of her dad. I admired her for that but knew she was going to really struggle. I saw her so defeated and so very lost. She had lost her mom back in 1995. I did not know the family then so I never got to meet Marie but I can't even imagine the pain of losing both parents.

Her father has been gone for 10 years now but I still see it, she misses him so and I think still feels so lost without him. Her immediate family consists of Sandy, her sister Nicki and my husband Joe. She has a lot of extended family that she loves to spend her time with.

I just want you to know the side of Sandy that you are not able to see. She is very committed to helping others through her work and in her personal life. She is working so hard to build a life for herself despite everything that has happened in the past few years.

I hope that you will consider all the good things that Sandy is doing and has done for her community, family and friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Gonzales". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Lori Gonzales

September 25, 2023

Subject: Character Reference for Sandra Zuniga

To Whom it May Concern:

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Theresita Gonzalez, and I am writing to provide a character reference for Sandra Zuniga, who is currently facing charges. Sandra is my cousin, and I have had the privilege of knowing her for my entire life, which spans 45 years. I feel compelled to share with you the Sandra Zuniga that I know – a person of integrity, resilience, and compassion.

From my earliest memories, Sandra has been more than just a cousin to me; she has been my best friend and a mentor. Throughout our lives, our bond has grown stronger as we have navigated various stages together. Sandra has always been the older, cool cousin who included me in playtime and shared her wisdom. Our relationship blossomed over the years through family gatherings, vacations, and lazy days spent by the pool.

We've faced our fair share of challenges, including the untimely passing of our beloved Aunt Marie. Sandra and I grieved together during those difficult times. In our college years, we even became roommates, and it was Sandra who inspired me to take a chance and work for a non-profit organization; working with low-income and at-risk youth. We eventually became colleagues in this field. Sandra's support and guidance have been instrumental in shaping my life.

When I had my daughter, I knew that I could trust Sandra with all my heart to be her godmother and provide the care and love she would need. Throughout our 30s, we found solace in each other as we both went through divorces. Sandra has always been my rock, and I was grateful to have her by my side when my Uncle Nico, her father, passed away. In turn, Sandra was there for me and my family when my mother passed away just four short months ago.

The past three years have presented numerous challenges for Sandra, but she has demonstrated remarkable resilience and personal growth during this time. We became roommates again, and she had to make some tough but necessary decisions; she took on a position with Amazon warehouse to load and unload trucks, rented a room and rented out her condo in order to save money. The position was drastically different from her former position; a very physically demanding job at a drastically lower salary. This experience has prompted deep reflection on her part, leading her to reevaluate her associations and time management. Sandra explained that she starting going to therapy and was able to talk about her feelings and how this has affected her. She has told me that she has felt better making these decision to simplify her life, focus on her needs and to heal from this experience. I have seen Sandra emerge from this period as a stronger, more self-aware individual.

Sandra has wholeheartedly committed herself to community work. She has undergone extensive training and now co-leads healing circles, aiding others in their journey to overcome past traumas. In addition, she actively participates in other community healing circles and dedicates her free time to fundraising for non-profit organizations, shedding light on critical social justice issues. Sandra's dedication to her own personal growth and her passion for helping others heal from their past traumas are truly commendable.

Sandra remains a source of strength, intelligence, and guidance for everyone who has the privilege of knowing her. Her colleagues, family, and the community at large have all benefited from her tireless efforts and unwavering commitment. I want to express my profound appreciation for Sandra, a remarkable person who deserves your understanding and support during this challenging time.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the provided contact information. Thank you for considering my perspective on Sandra Zuniga's character.

Sincerely,

Theresita Gonzalez

111 Arana Drive Martinez, CA 94553

(925) 234-3970

DocuSigned by:

3A30F92E116A4DB...

Garrett Jacobs
[gjacob@designingjustice.org](mailto:gjacobs@designingjustice.org)
510-900-9922 ex 106

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my heartfelt support for Sandra Zuniga and to advocate for her continued participation in the community in which she is serving as a leader; Sandra authentically shares her personal story to help others uplift themselves. I would like to share my own perception of Sandra's character.

I have had the privilege of knowing Sandra for the past six months through the Community Building and Healing Circle offered by Restore Oakland Inc. I have experienced the honesty and sincerity with which Sandra openly speaks about her wrongdoings and how her actions inspire her involvement in many other circles to support others who have experience with the criminal legal system. Sandra has even taken her experience and founded another circle with a co-facilitator to help even more people build social cohesion. It is clear that Sandra's commitment to public service continues regardless of her crime, and the public perceptions of her actions.

There are many options when confronted with a challenge placing one's character on public trial; one could deny, escape public life and self destruct, or disconnect, but Sandra is doing the opposite. She shares her experiences openly, which I have seen have inspired her co-facilitator to improve his own life and step into leadership. She has spoken with past colleagues in the face of potential judgment and criticism to build relationships, and most importantly she is committed to her own healing. Sandra's experiences have helped me navigate difficult times and her hand on my shoulder in circle helps reinforce the fact that we have more in common than differences as humans. Sandra's openness and courage with how she is accepting the consequences of her actions are inspiring me to own my own mistakes.

I support Sandra as an active and contributing member of our community, working to heal her own, and our collective harms. I ask you to take what I have written here into consideration so Sandra can continue to be one of the few committed to service and healing in our city.



Garrett Jacobs
9/14/23
Director of Research & Evaluation, Designing Justice + Designing Spaces
Board President. Open Architecture Collaborative, Inc.

9/28/2023

To Whom it May Concern ,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Sandra Zuniga. I have been fortunate to meet Sandra at restorative justice circles in Oakland and to attend healing circles in San Francisco led by Sandra. Despite her continuing legal case and upcoming sentencing, Sandra has created inclusive, research based, growth mindset centered healing circles based on indigenous practices for community restoration and healing. She has led thoughtful, insightful and honest discussions about her journey and growth as a person. She has facilitated studies for our circles that provide opportunities to grow in community and perspective. These circles have taught me many lessons over the last several months I have been fortunate to attend.

I am a Bay Area school teacher with over 30 years of experience in the public school classroom. I attend these meetings seeking my own growth as a person, and with the hopes of bringing these restorative justice and healing practices to my own classroom and community at large. The topics, deep dive into perspectives and personal journeys facilitated by Sandra are really important to me and all who attend. Through Sandra's work I have been given the opportunity to explore other perspectives and biases, and to process some very heavy topics that ultimately have led to immense personal growth and a path I continue to seek. I have seen Sandra connect with others with thoughtful empathy and care.

I am very grateful for Sandra's open heartedness, frank discussions about remorse for past choices, and her determination for growth and healing. She has really set a beautiful example of human perseverance and transformation. She has been open about her journey and the choices that were made in the past and the contrast in how choices are made now. I appreciate the opportunity to speak of the calm, empathetic, organized and centered person I have had the privilege of getting to know. I look forward to continuing to attend her circles and attend circle with her. I am aware laws were broken and there are consequences for that, but I am hopeful her true deep dive as a person into growth and her focus on restoration as a person can be recognized and the healing work she is providing for others and for herself be acknowledged.

Thank you for consideration ,

Kelly Maher
Teacher
Hearst Elementary
Pleasanton , Ca

DocuSigned by:

14E10CDBC871480...

September 21, 2023**Letter of Support for Sandra Zuniga**

To Whom It May Concern,


My name is Kari Malkki and I am the Senior Healing Justice Organizer at Restore Oakland Inc. I'm writing in support of my dear mentor and friend: Sandra Zuniga. I met Sandra in the beginning of her ongoing journey of healing and transformation after her arrest, and I have been grateful to witness and participate in this journey over the last 2 years. I acknowledge, as does Sandra, that the crime she committed caused harm, and I would like to take a moment to illuminate the immense personal growth she has done since then. Today, Sandra is someone who exemplifies what it means to live with integrity, honesty, self-awareness, accountability, and love for her community.

In my work with Restore Oakland Inc, I cultivate spaces for healing, learning, and transformation with and for people impacted by the criminal legal system. I met Sandra when she first participated in Restore Oakland's community-building circles in the Fall of 2021, and I was struck by how reflective, transparent, and thoughtful she was. Oftentimes in the wake of being arrested, people struggle to be honest and open with others, but soon after joining our circle, Sandra expressed tremendous accountability and insight. She was clearly determined to do the personal work that would allow her to become the best version of herself possible, to prevent future harm, and to build the skills that would make her an asset to her community and family. This is still true today.

Over the last 2 years of sitting with Sandra in weekly healing circles, I have been continuously amazed at how she has grown into a true community leader. Soon after coming to Restore Oakland, Sandra saw a need in her own community and challenged herself to create and facilitate healing circles at CRI, for others who experienced criminalization, incarceration, violence, addiction, and trauma. I have participated in the circles that Sandra facilitates and have seen firsthand the ways in which she provides deep compassion and healthy unconditional acceptance, uses her own experiences to support and educate others, and creates safe spaces for healing.

If she is given the opportunity, Sandra will undoubtedly continue making a powerful positive impact on our community here in the Bay Area, and being a bastion of hope for all those who know her. Sandra is one of the most dependable, loving, and resilient people I have had the pleasure of knowing; we are all better off because of her presence. Thank you for your consideration, and please reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Kari Malkki

DocuSigned by:

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Restore Oakland, Inc.

1419 34th Ave, Oakland, CA 94601

June 20, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

I feel it is imperative for me to share my experience knowing and working with Sandra Zuniga, to hopefully give a fuller picture of her for the sentencing in the crime for which she has pleaded guilty.

First, I would like to share a paragraph I wrote in 2016 when my Neighborhood Action Group nominated Sandra, in her capacity as the head of the Mayor's Fix-it Program, as the Most Empowering City Employee of the Year (an award which we later learned she had apparently already won previously). I wrote:

"In the relatively short time she has been in this position, Sandra has proven herself an effective and invaluable resource to our community. She has made herself accessible to everyone on a wide variety of neighborhood issues; has demonstrated genuine concern for those issues, and a commitment to helping solve them; and unfailingly attends any community meetings, large or small, to assist residents in solving those problems. She is a tireless and effective conduit between citizens and several city bureaus--DPW, police, DPH, etc.--and she is admired by, and has quickly established a solid reputation among, virtually everyone in our local neighborhood association"

This early assessment was only strengthened in the subsequent years and the many dealings my neighbors and I had with Sandra. Today, for my part, I put it like this: Among the countless city employees, administrators, and officeholders who I have dealt with over several years in an effort to improve conditions—from minor ones to dire ones—in our neighborhood, no one has demonstrated the level of concern, accessibility, commitment, positive accomplishment, and friendship that Sandra has.

In short order, our Neighborhood Action Group came to depend on Sandra's extensive knowledge of the city bureaucracy, its agencies and its workings; her commitment to our community; and her willingness and ability to make positive changes in our neighborhood. As a result, any time our Neighborhood Acton Group arranged a meeting with any city official or agency, we would consider asking Sandra to join us, knowing that her eyes and ears, as well as her ability to take action, would make her a valuable partner and bring results. (We didn't have to invite her, however, to the monthly community meetings at our local police precinct; she usually just seemed to be there!)

Sandra's dedication to her job, and to the people she was helping, extended beyond normal hours and beyond the level of concern of the average city employee. At the same time that she was an active advocate for us, she also showed us genuine friendship. As for me, she never took exception when I, perhaps too often, would call her at home after hours and then, after getting the latest news about her two kittens, proceed to burden her with all the neighborhood issues that had newly caught my attention—but were not receiving comparable attention from the city. Sandra listened attentively, assured me that she would investigate, and then she would proceed to "fix it" (or at least begin the process). Invariably I would, in short order, hear directly from the appropriate city agency to discuss and resolve this or that problem.

It was important to me to offer this information and these observations, both as the reason why I don't believe Sandra Zuniga would commit any future crimes, and also so that you may include and weigh these factors when determining Sandra's punishment.

Respectfully,

Michael Mascioli
44 Prosper St., #3
San Francisco, CA 94114

September 22, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that Sandra has been found guilty of the crime she committed and that her sentence is presently under consideration. I am writing this letter to share my experiences working with Sandra over the past two years.

I first met Sandra in the fall of 2021 during my second term as Board Chair for Community Resource Initiative (CRI). Sandra and I had volunteered to sit at the CRI booth during the Castro Street Fair that year, to share CRI's mission and recruit volunteers. I knew Sandra was a new employee of CRI but until that day, I didn't know anything about her personal story.

I was a bit shy at first but Sandra was open to everyone. While I had been with CRI for a couple of years at that point, Sandra had only recently joined as a full time employee. Yet, she approached people with confidence, and in no time, we had a long list of names and emails of people Sandra had connected with.

As the day went on, and the crowds began to thin, Sandra opened up to me about her legal problems and her guilty plea in March of that year. I was then and have continuously since that time been amazed by the way Sandra talks with people about her experiences and accepts full responsibility for her crimes. I have never heard her blame anyone for her situation.

I later learned that Sandra was fired from her government position and was working nights at Amazon. She interned at CRI for five months and proved to be invaluable for the organization. Sandra was a much needed addition to CRI. She worked tirelessly to establish efficient systems and procedures for the administrative work in the office while also tending to the people who work there. The mitigators may travel and be out of the office for days or weeks at a time. Sandra established and maintained a stable, comfortable environment for them to return to. I continued on as Board Co Chair of CRI through 2022 and Sandra was a dependable resource for agenda setting, financial reporting, and case updates.

A critical part of the work that is done by CRI is the integration into society of former clients who have been released. Sandra's acceptance and ability to collaborate to create meaningful experiences for these clients is profound. One of the most powerful of these experiences is a weekly healing circle, held in CRI's office. Sandra and a former CRI client co-facilitate this group for formerly incarcerated people as an opportunity to share and explore with others the trauma, feelings, and experiences of their lives. Sandra's kindness and transparency in the group helps people open up about their own fears and concerns.

I look forward to seeing all that Sandra will do in the future. I have watched her over these two years become a confident self advocate who is committed to changing lives for the better. I can't imagine she would ever find herself in the position she was in when she committed her crime. She has built a reliable support system and is recreating her life in meaningful ways. Sandra

has been working for the Housing Authority since April 2022 and she still finds time to hold on to relationships with the people she helps at CRI. She is committed to continuing her facilitation of the healing circle. And just yesterday, in what I consider to be a brave and fearless act, Sandra raised money for CRI by swimming from Alcatraz to Aquatic Park.

I am truly grateful for Sandra and all that she has done to inspire and lead me and many other people who have come to truly love and need her.

Sincerely,
Kendra Mastain

CRI Board of Directors
Director of Development at Episcopal Day School of St. Matthew

DocuSigned by:
Kendra Mastain
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SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kat Morgan, a member of the Restorative Justice community in the Bay Area. I am writing in support of Sandra Zuniga, who I have come to know well over the last year and a half through a weekly restorative justice group we both attend.

One of the first things I learned about Sandra was the crime she committed, as she shared her actions transparently at the first group I attended with her. I was immediately impressed with the level of accountability she expressed for her wrong-doings and for her deep and earnest commitment to making amends in her daily life. She has dedicated so much of her life since I have known her to being of support to her community, to engaging in authentic dialogue about challenging subjects, and to doing the difficult work of honest self examination and rebuilding.

Sandra has been a pillar of our group, attending nearly every week without fail, even as others have passed in and out over time. And her contributions to our group discussions have been incredibly valuable to myself and others I have spoken with. She models vulnerability by sharing openly, listens attentively to others, and offers support and encouragement when people in our group are going through hard times. Among the many admirable traits I have witnessed in Sandra, one of the most pronounced is her openness and graciousness with people who have differing perspectives. I recall an instance where a group conversation had become heated, with myself and several other members engaging in intense and conflicting discussion about our experiences of gendered harm and violence. During the conversation, Sandra took multiple opportunities to reflect affirmingly to those of us who were sharing and afterwards, came up to me and thanked me for sharing my perspective and ideas; she shared that they were new to her and that she was appreciative to have the opportunity to consider where I was coming from.

Understanding the gravity and seriousness of Sandra's crime, I write this letter in hopes that it will help paint a picture of Sandra as I know her. I didn't know Sandra when she committed her crime, but I know her now and I know of the tremendous amount of work she has done to reflect, heal, and transform her life. I do not believe Sandra will pose further risk to the community. Rather, I believe that her dedication to self reflection and improvement, to restorative justice, and to being a good community member make Sandra exactly the kind of person you would hope would be in your community. I am certainly incredibly grateful that she is a part of mine.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to be in touch with me should you have any questions regarding this letter or need for any more information.

Sincerely,



Kat Morgan
e.kat.morgan@gmail.com | 703-541-8740



September 21, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for Sandra Zuniga

To Whom It May Concern:

As a founder, former director, and mitigation specialist with Community Resource Initiative (CRI), I write to offer my enthusiastic support for Sandra Zuniga, who has become an integral member of our organization and a reliable open water swimming companion.

We are a very small agency whose impacts rise and fall on the actions taken by each staff member. When Sandra first came to us in May of 2021, she came as a volunteer. Because of the current case, she was carrying a lot of shame and drew upon the support of our staff to make sense of her actions and their consequences. Not once did she offer excuses or avoid honest self-reflection. In fact, she did the opposite. Over that first year, Sandra threw herself into the work, and quickly began to incorporate the tools of our work into her own healing and amends-making. She began attending a restorative justice circle at the Ella Baker Center in Oakland. She stayed on with us as an intern, learning and working alongside students and formerly incarcerated clients - relying on her own experiences with the legal system to teach and learn from her fellow interns and CRI staff. When it became clear to us that she was committed to the health and mission of our organization, we made the decision to hire her.


Those of us who were helping her when she first came to us now rely on her. Of the many contributions she has made since she joined us, the most poignant might be her work developing our weekly healing circle. It was Sandra who, early in her tenure with us, took it upon herself to train in restorative justice circle facilitation, and then introduce the circle to our organization. For well over a year now, each Tuesday night, between 10 and 20 people ranging from teens to octogenarians come to our office for two hours to sit in circle and heal with each other - all but one facilitated by Sandra and a colleague. Most of the attendees have spent a lot of time behind bars and/or grew up with a caregiver behind bars. Having participated in several of these circles, I remain in awe of their empathy and community building powers.

Because we are a small nonprofit without a reliable funding stream outside of our legal work, we rely on donations and about 8 years ago began swimming from Alcatraz to raise money for our programs. Sandra began training with us, and swam from Alcatraz with us in 2021 and 2022, and is training to swim this year as well. Early most Saturday mornings, Sandra can be found at Aquatic Park, in water ranging between 52 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit, training for the swim.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th ST
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382

Sandra has consistently shown up for and supported our team. Her impact on our mission has been meaningful. We have been very fortunate that Sandra landed with us, and if the court allows, I look forward to working and swimming with her in the year to come.

Very truly yours,

DocuSigned by:

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Scarlet Nerad

September 20, 2023

Letter of Support for Sandra Zuniga

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tash Nguyen. I am the Interim Executive Director of Restore Oakland Inc. writing in support of Sandra Zuniga. Our organization is committed to advancing community-governed projects that build political power, create shared prosperity, and cultivate collective healing. We work with people who are impacted by the criminal legal system and our community space brings residents of Oakland together to build wholeness and a sense of safety. I have learned a great deal about personal growth and transformation by way of witnessing Sandra invest in her own healing while actively supporting others to do so. I hope that you consider this letter of support in your deliberations in spite of the crime that she committed.

I have known Sandra for more than 2 years through our healing justice programs, and I sit with her on a weekly basis in our community building circles. Sandra was one of our first program participants, who came through our doors seeking support to heal from significant trauma and fear she had recently experienced. She has since become one of the most dedicated members of our weekly circles. After Sandra attended our circle-keeper training in 2021, she immediately applied restorative practices in her circles of kin and in her work place.

Her leadership has supported countless people through transforming their trauma into possibility, accountability, and continuous learning. This is because community members view Sandra as a leader they can count on. She is a down-to-earth advocate who shows up for people and leads from her own lived experience as a Bay Area born and raised woman of color who has supported her family and community through numerous adversities and challenges. Amidst everything she has faced, she is skilled in creating a culture of care and brings a solutions-oriented approach into every space she is in.

Sandra is a beloved community member who deserves the reciprocity that countless people in her life have been afforded by her. She deserves to continue to be supported and given the resources she needs to nurture her well-being and leadership. We all benefit from having Sandra in their orbit. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Tash H. Nguyen

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sherman Redd, I am writing this letter in support of Sandra Zuniga, a very good friend, and person, however before I get into describing the joy that she has made possible in the lives of so many others by way of her testimony and story.

Please note that I truly understand the ripple effect of the crime in which she has been accused of, and do believe that she also has come to grips with the committed offense.

Reasons why I stand behind, and support her in these troubling times.

It is a pleasure for me to share with you and everyone else how Sandra has taken her personal downfalls and used them to help many other people in need of guidance, she is the living example of "one must hit the wall hard, before he/she realizes the mistakes made".

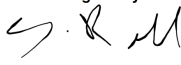
She has a special way when it comes to letting a person understand insight within one's own self, this is a gift that seasoned facilitators have, the ability to have a person want to do better, as she is supportive to everyone in the group setting.

Today I can only hope that the courts have a little mercy for Sandra who has a beautiful heart full of love and respect for everyone, and to have played a part in this crime no matter how small a role she played in such a crime, this is an experience that she is not proud of, something that will never happen again, as she is moving forward with her life.

As I end this I can only hope that the court sees Sandra the way her family and friends do, a loving and compassionate person.

Thank you for hearing me out

Sincerely,
Sherman Redd.

DocuSigned by:

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9/28/2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to show my support of Sandra Zuniga.

I met Sandra shortly after her arrest for financial crimes. Over the past few years I have grown to know her quite well. Sandra is someone I trust explicitly both as someone whom I know would drop and give everything to help a friend in need, and as someone I would trust to care for my children.

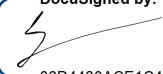
Over the past few years Sandra has shown me that she has the greatest work ethics of anyone I know. From working at Amazon at odd hours and for almost nothing, to her position at Oakland Housing Authority. She has invested great effort towards civic support projects such as CRI, where she has lead support groups for those individuals who are trying to get their lives back on track.

Sandra has shown me that she has learned a lot from this experience and is someone I trust inexplicably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steven Rhoades

Past Master Argonaut Lodge #8 F&AM of California, 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason Valley of Oakland, and friend of Sandra's.

DocuSigned by:

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September 12, 2023

Re: Support for Sandra Zuniga

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tommy Ross. I facilitate RJOY's (Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth) weekly Monday Freedom Circle. The Freedom Circle hosts formerly incarcerated participants and those impacted by the carceral system. We discuss a whole range of topics including but not limited to employment, housing, transportation, healthy relationships, grief, the various challenges we all face, as well as some of our successes.


Sandra Zuniga has been regularly attending RJOY's Freedom Circle since September of 2022. She takes full responsibility for her actions, and is accountable for the crime she committed. Ms. Zuniga is a willing participant who models openness, honesty and vulnerability. She adds a lot of value to our group, sharing her personal history. Ms. Zuniga is remorseful for the harm she caused and is serving her community by hosting a circle on Tuesdays in San Francisco. I find Ms. Zuniga to be a thoughtful, compassionate and intelligent person with a strong sense of values.

In sum, Ms. Zuniga is a self-aware, humble, reflective, and hard-working person committed to being a positive and peaceful force in the world. I have no doubt that she will thrive and continue to give back to the people around her.

Thank you for listening to my words and taking into consideration how Sandra Zuniga shows up for herself and others today. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

TOMMY ROSS
Restorative Justice Associate
RJOY Freedom Circle Host
Shakur@rjoyoakland.org (510) 301-0283

DocuSigned by:

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Dashka Slater
4200 Park Blvd, #239
Oakland, CA 94602
dashkaslater@comcast.net

September 7, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of Sandra Zuniga, who is appearing before you for sentencing. I have been a member of a restorative justice circle with Sandra for the past two years and have heard her speak frankly and candidly about her crime. Her thoughtfulness about the circumstances that led to her committing it, and her interest in true accountability, healing, and community have made a big impression on me.

Our circle is a place where both formerly incarcerated and never incarcerated people talk intimately about our personal lives and the ways in which we are each working to be healthier, kinder, more balanced, and thoughtful people and to strengthen our communities by working for justice and social change. Sandra embodies these values in the gentle and empathic way she listens to others and in the personal stories she shares. I love hearing about her large and complicated family, particularly her late father, and about the pursuits that we both enjoy. Like Sandra, I am an open water swimmer and I was impressed by her decision to swim from Alcatraz (without a wetsuit!) as a fundraiser for an organization that opposes the death penalty.

Sandra is an optimistic, kind, and sweet-natured person and I have loved getting to know her. She has never shrunk from taking responsibility for her crime. I hope that you will keep her many fine qualities in mind as you determine her future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dashka Slater". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dashka Slater

9/25/2023

To Whom it May Concern.

I am writing this letter in support of my good friend and colleague, Sandra Zuniga. I know about Sandra's charges and despite the harm she has done, I want to acknowledge who Sandra is to me and what she brings to the larger community.

Over the past couple of years I have come to know Sandra through her work with our organization, Community Resource Initiative. Sandra co-facilitates the Healing Circle which is one of our most impactful community programs.

There are seven rounds to the Healing Circle. Round three is the values round where everyone is invited to share one value that they hope to bring to the circle and one they hope to take away from the circle. During this round Sandra always says the same thing, "I want to bring healthy, unconditional acceptance and take away healthy, unconditional acceptance." It's an homage to the person who trained her on facilitating healing circles, who shared the concept of healthy and unconditional acceptance with her. Sandra has shared that the concept resonates because up until recently she has sought acceptance and love from people even when it hasn't been healthy for her or for those around her.

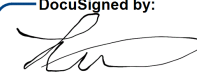
In the past year both in and out of healing circles, Sandra and I have spoken at length about how the conditions of childhood can cause codependent relationships and that those relationships can drive us to do things that hurt ourselves and others. She has also shared that no matter the cause of the harm, we have to take responsibility for the harm and do our best to repair it. Sandra has not only acknowledged the harm, but has examined the root cause, developed insight into her own history and behavior, and worked enthusiastically to address the community harm she has caused.

Watching Sandra help facilitate healing with complete strangers is one of the most beautiful experiences I have gotten to witness. People walk in not knowing what a healing circle is and through her vulnerability and strength they leave with a better sense of self and a brand new community that they know will support them. Week after week I sit in awe of the community Sandra has built and the way that she makes us feel because she greets us with the healthy, unconditional acceptance that she seeks to bring every time.

My conversations with Sandra have inspired me to think about my own behavior and relationships, take ownership of my decisions, and do the work to heal so I can better help my community. She has shared books, support groups, podcasts, and meditations that she has used to better herself. Sandra's perspective has been invaluable to myself and all the others that have been lucky enough to heal with her in our circle.

I'm consistently impressed by Sandra's ability to reflect on her life experiences, including mistakes and triumphs, and turn them into opportunities for growth. I'm forever grateful for her friendship and professional support.

Respectfully,
Lily Sorrentino

DocuSigned by:

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September 20, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for Sandra Zuniga

To Whom It May Concern:

Sandra Zuniga has my full support. I am the Board President of Community Resource Initiative (CRI), a nonprofit organization in San Francisco. Through my capacity as a member of CRI's Board of Directors, I have come to know Sandra Zuniga, the nature of her current charges, and the meaningful impact that she has made on our organization and community.

Sandra joined the CRI team in the middle of 2021. In her role co-directing the organization's community programs, Sandra regularly attended board meetings and organizational events. I found Sandra's professional experience in community work and nonprofits to be valuable. The great strides that our organization has experienced over the past few years, in the middle of a global pandemic, are in large part due to her contributions.

Sandra aptly identified areas of opportunity for CRI. She recognized a need to build capacity in our administrative operations and program development, and to this end, Sandra led an effort to enlist consultation from a team of business professionals through Stanford Business School. After CRI was admitted to the consulting program, Sandra was the point person who stewarded CRI's full participation, resulting in a number of recommendations that Sandra helped to implement. In addition, Sandra assisted in scaling our literacy program, was responsible for a holiday gift drive, and managed our communications through newsletters and blog posts.

In the wake of her present charges, Sandra has shown a commitment to accountability, redemption, and healing. She participated in weekly healing circles, became interested in implementing the circles into our program portfolio, attended an intensive training to learn how, and now runs CRI's most active program, Community Healing Circles. She and another team member have built this restorative justice program from the ground up to tremendous success.

Sandra has been open and up-front about her case, and it is still an honor to write in support of her. She has been a reliable resource for me and my colleagues at CRI, and she continues to impress me and inspire those around her. I have watched her become an inseparable part of CRI's community, and I hope she is able to continue in this partnership.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th ST
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382

Sincerely,



Jesse Stout
Community Resource Initiative
(415) 824-1424 office

COMMUNITY RESOURCE INITIATIVE
3030B 16th ST
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
Phone (415) 824-1424
Fax (415) 863-1382

Kendra Urton, LMFT #99166

411 Ferry St. #7

Martinez, CA 94553

925-822-2749

09/28/2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kendra Urton, and am a licensed Marriage Family Therapist (LMFT) As a LMFT I diagnose and treat a variety of mental health challenges including interpersonal difficulties, relationship difficulties, increasing coping skills, and decreasing symptoms. I have been licensed for 6 years.

I began working with Sandra Zuniga in September 2020. Initially we were meeting every week, in March 2022 we began meeting every other week. I diagnosed Sandra initially with Other Specified Anxiety Disorder, characterized by excessive worry, difficulty controlling worry, concentration difficulty, and restlessness. This was then changed to Persistent Depressive Disorder with Anxious distress due to low self esteem, persistent feelings of depression or low mood for over 2 years. Additionally she has struggled with codependency. Codependency is not a diagnosis, but a term which originated with family dynamics where substance abuse problems are present where a person engages in behaviors which allow an addict to continue using the substance while sacrificing their own needs, health, and well being. This term has since been generalized beyond addiction to unhealthy relationship dynamics where the codependent person still sacrifices their own needs, health, and well being in order to please the partner or loved one. Often there is a fear from the codependent person that either they will be alone and/or something bad will happen to the loved one if they do not put their needs aside. There is usually a diminished sense of self worth as well and difficulty saying no to requests from the loved one.

Growing up, Sandra's brother and father both struggled with addictions, with both using frequently and selling. She was taught early on to not "snitch" on unhealthy behavior and not to talk about family business in general. For example, Sandra would frequently need to help her mom in getting her dad from the bar, or be told to not tell anyone he drove drunk. She also got in trouble for flushing drugs her brother was selling because it was his business. These types of occurrences skewed her experiences of what is normal as well as when it was ok to speak up. She then lost her mother to cancer as a teenager, then a few years later lost her father, which contributed to fears around losing people she cares about. She then was in a verbally and physically abusive marriage which she left prior to getting into a relationship with Muhammed. Because of this she romanticized her relationship with Muhammed, because he did not demean her, call her names, or harm her physically. This led her to be hesitant to question, criticize, or say no to him out of fear of losing what she saw as the best relationship she was capable of having.

When I began working with Sandra, she was grieving the loss of the relationship with not only Muhammed but also his children, as well as the loss of her job. Through our work as well as

her regular participation in CODA (codependents anonymous) meetings she was able to understand her role in the crime and take responsibility for her actions. She recognized that she participated in money laundering through accepting cash from Muhammed and then making payments for various things for him. Sandra saw that she ignored her feeling that something seemed odd about being asked to do this and went along in an attempt to keep him happy. We also worked on improving her self esteem, self worth, and being able to act more congruently with how she viewed herself such as being honest and giving. She has been open and eager to work on improving unhealthy relationship patterns. Sandra has steadily grown, becoming more comfortable setting boundaries, being more kind to herself, prioritizing her needs and values over codependent behaviors that would compromise these, and being honest in all areas of her life. She frequently shares insight into her behaviors and notes her successes. For example, distancing herself from people who are unhealthy, unwillingness to hold unhealthy secrets for others, and setting firm but fair boundaries with friends and family. Given her consistent growth this is likely to continue.

If you have any questions feel free to reach out.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kendra Urton' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kendra Urton, LMFT #99166

September 21, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Shanna Wills, and I have known Sandra Zuniga for 2 years when Sandra started working at Community Resource Initiative, a nonprofit that assisted me in my legal case almost ten years ago until my release in 2020. Sandra is someone I truly look up to, and I support her wholeheartedly.

For over a year now, I have been attending the healing circle that Sandra co-facilitates. I see firsthand that Sandra is hardworking, consistent, punctual, thoughtful, and organized. She always researches all the topics thoroughly before presenting them, and she has been present at every single circle, held weekly, since they've begun, with the exception of one or two because of health issues. Sandra is always on time, reliable, and remembers participants' names, pronouns, birthdays, and dietary restrictions. She writes everything down and takes notes to make sure she is successful.

Sandra is extremely generous with her time and energy. Even though she has a full time job, works part time with CRI, and attends 3 healing circles a week, she still makes time to help pass out presents to former clients' families and celebrate coworker birthdays. Sandra is non-judgmental. She is so open about her past she creates a space where people can be vulnerable talking about their mistakes and hardships.

I have seen Sandra's confidence grow while leading the healing circle. She has discussed with me and others in depth her regret for what she has done. She also talks of the importance of healing and encourages us all to center health in our relationships. Sandra has grown to be more than a coworker to me. She has become a close friend, and I will always support her.

Sincerely,


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shanna Wills', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Shanna Wills

APPENDIX C

To The Civil Service Commission:

1. As you are aware, I worked at the City of San Francisco for over 12 years.
2. On May 14, 2020, I entered into a plea agreement and pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. I take full responsibility for my offense, and deeply regret my actions. I would like to apologize to all of the people with whom I worked, and all of the people I have hurt and let down, including my former colleagues and my friends and family.
3. I regard public service as one of the defining aspects of my life and career, and I am devastated at having jeopardized the public's trust in me. My goal is to work to re-earn that trust, and to return to working with the City of San Francisco to better the lives of people in our community.

Sincerely,
DocuSigned by:

97BD35C4AE534AA...
Sandra Zuniga