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Statement of Purpose

My father has always been the biggest inspiration in my life. He served the public for 35 years as a California State Fire Marshal and later as a Fire Chief for the Tulare County Fire Department in California. I can remember being 4 years old and seeing him return from a fire with a pungent smell of smoke on his clothing and the proud look on his face for a job well done. This, and subsequent memories, imprinted in me a strong desire to go into a public service career.

When I was 18 years old, I joined the California Conservation Corps, where I received my wild land firefighting certificate. I was trained in wildland firefighting and thoroughly enjoyed cutting fire-lines to stop the spread of fire, with the fire sometimes being very close. While this was dangerous, I also found it to be exciting. We interacted with the community often and I learned the importance of proper communication and community involvement.

On October 3rd, 2001, I joined the Army as an Infantry soldier. While I was overseas, in Iraq, we took part in setting up election sites as well as meeting the needs of the community through multiple tasks such as handing out food, water, providing security, etc. My time overseas really gave me a desire to give back in any way possible. It also illustrated the importance and benefits of a free society. In 2009 I became an Army Human Resource Instructor and instructed for 3 years at various military installations.

All my public service jobs gave me a tremendous sense of fulfillment. They allowed me the opportunity to act on my altruistic desires and gave me a sense of accomplishment by knowing I made a measurable difference in other people's lives. Although I had experience, I soon realized

that I needed academic knowledge to create balance and personal growth. My recent experience at Evergreen was very fulfilling and sparked the importance of further education.

The *Borders, Walls and Refugees in the Age of Climate Change* program was the most influential regarding why I want to pursue graduate study in public administration. As a second-generation migrant, I have a desire to understand why in a nation of immigrants, there is so much confusion and anger in our society in this age of mass migration. I now have a clearer understanding why global border hardening is on the rise, as well as an increase in policies that are designed to restrict migration, and the conditions migrants face causing them to voluntarily or involuntarily migrate to a new location. These migrations being a direct result of conditions such as economic, environmental, or social issues.

Our on the ground research in Morocco broadened my perspective in all aspects that we studied and was very eye-opening. We visited many Moroccan non-governmental organizations, where I learned the crucial role that civil society organizations play in the migration reform process, as well as providing medical care, education, vocational training, jobs, housing, legal services, basic needs, and other various types of resources. These NGOs have been successful by establishing a network of connections with each other, to maximize the resources they are providing to migrants.

The NGOs are non-political and work within the Moroccan system. They advocate for migrants from the bottom up, through participatory democracy. They advocate for the conception of migrant sustainability, and migrant policies, that are based on a rational approach, in hopes that the government sees the rationality in them and implements these policies. Though the United States immigration laws are different from Morocco's, we can learn from the successes of

Moroccan NGOs, and I would use this experience to make changes in our current immigration policies.

All the programs at Evergreen have provided me with the tools I need for a career in civil service. Whether it is in the policy making process, or working for a non-governmental organization, it has heightened my desire to give back to the community in a way that I believe can make a difference, but I still have much to learn.

I have chosen the MPA program at Evergreen because of its unique learning environment. It was astounding that all my undergrad professors established strong connections and communications with their students. They all encouraged students to participate in academic discourse. This gave me confidence to grow in my academic skills by always asking questions when I otherwise might not have, if I didn't feel such a connection, and acceptance from the professors.

I have had a life full of experience, and now that I have received academic knowledge from my undergraduate programs at Evergreen, I feel an aspiration to continue my education. My goal is to help formulate policies to improve the quality of life of people in society as well as facilitate socio-economic development. Through the MPA program I will learn how to develop my leadership and management skills so that I am able to make a positive change in our community.