



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Insurance Building, PO Box 43113 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3113 • (360) 902-0555

April 1, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am thrilled to be able to write a letter of recommendation for Erika Peters to attend the Master of Public Administration Program with The Evergreen State College. As a 2010 graduate of the program and currently in the role of leading State HR for the State of Washington, I am confident that Erika is an ideal candidate for the MPA program because of her passion for public service, her growth mindset, and her passion for social and racial justice.

I first met Erika when she began working at the Employment Security Department (ESD) during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though our organization was in the midst of one of its busiest times since its inception, Erika was part of a small group of passionate and caring individuals who saw the need to create spaces for our Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander employees to come together and create community. Although she was new to Washington, new to ESD and to state government, she quickly picked up the intricacies of our workplace culture and helped to build an Employee Resource Group (ERG) that elected her into its inaugural leadership team.

Through both her work in the Paid Family Medical Leave team and as an ERG leader, Erika helped highlight how systemic inequities were impacting our multi-lingual employees who although hired to support clients with limited English proficiency, weren't given the adequate training resources to help them learn this unique part of their work. Erika has a talent of being able to assess the larger system, see where inequities exist, and then bring people together to find common ground to improve the system without causing shame or defensiveness. This is both a rare and much needed skillset in state government. She is both understanding of how difficult it can be to make systemic changes but also relentless in her pursuit to do so because of her commitment to social justice and public service.

As a recent immigrant to the US, Erika also brings a unique lens into how she assesses our government structure, mores, and laws. Unlike many who assume this is the only way it can be done because it's all they know; Erika comes into the work with an understanding that how our systems are set up and our work flows is just one way it can be done. Because of that, she came to the work with more creativity and a critical thinking that is much needed in state government.

When I think about who the TESC MPA program is looking for to join their program, Erika is one of the first people who comes to mind for me. Not only does she want to make the world a better place, she is actively and purposefully doing that every day. Her curiosity to seek a master's from TESC is so that she can continue to hone her critical thinking skills, her understanding of the public system, and how to impact policy at a much broader scale. By choosing to accept Erika, you would not just be investing in her. You would be investing in every person she works with, every system she touches, and our local community at large.

So, I end my letter to you both with my full support for Erika but also my request. As the leader of State HR, I know that the only way we'll work to build a state workforce where every person belongs, can thrive in their work, and are here because they care deeply about public service, is if we can hire and invest

in people and systemic leaders like Erika. It's only together that we'll be able to make the impact that I truly believe our generation can make.

If you have any further questions, please know that I would be happy to speak with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "M Doelman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "M" at the beginning.

Michaela G. Doelman
State Chief Human Resources Officer, Office of Financial Management