



March 19, 2024

Honorable Diane T. Capehart
Chairperson, Committee on Rules and Judiciary
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
P.O. Box 1690
St. Thomas, VI 00802

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT – AVERIL GEORGE, COMMISSIONER NOMINEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Dear Senator Capehart:

It gives me great pleasure to offer this letter of support on behalf of Ms. Averil George in her confirmation hearing as Commissioner Nominee of the Department of Human Services (DHS). As my former Assistant Commissioner at the Department of Public Works, I have no reservations that Ms. George will succeed in this role on behalf of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I had the pleasure of meeting and working with Ms. George at the Department of Public Works when I joined the Department in February 2021. In the short time I've worked with and known Averil, she has proven herself to be a consummate professional and leader. I depended on Ms. George heavily as she possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience in human resources, labor relations, accounting, management and operations. Averil offered more than the typical Human Resources Director and never shied away from accepting the challenge to improve the department in any way including managing the department's COVID-19 response and preparedness. Averil worked with each division and employee in both districts and her leadership was very evident.

When the opportunity came, I was very happy to appoint her as Assistant Commissioner on St. Croix but she continued her territorial role as Human Resources Director as it was her passion and allowed her to continue working with the people she had developed relationships with. Under her guidance, DPW revamped the employee handbook and accompanying policies, increased training opportunities and community engagement and led all employee engagement activities. She embodied our slogan, "DPW On the Move." I know this department is significant to her mother depends on and participates in many of the services and programs provided by DHS. While I was very sad to see her leave, I knew she would bring a spirit of reinvigoration and motivation to the men and women of the Department of Human Services. I strongly believe she will lead that Department to an unprecedented level of success and I wholeheartedly endorse her appointment.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and to vet Ms. Averil George for this important and auspicious position. With God's guidance and the support of our community, I know Ms. George will succeed. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Derek Gabriel'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'D' and 'G'.

Derek Gabriel
Commissioner, DPW