

September 20, 2022

Dear DC City Council and Public Safety Chairman:

I am writing a letter of support to confirm Director Karima Holmes as the DC Director of the Office of Unified Communications.

She is a seasoned public safety professional and a recognized 9-1-1 industry leader. She has served as executive director at emergency communications centers (ECC) across the U.S. where she overhauled their technical infrastructure and critical public safety programs. Holmes also leveraged her industry experience to establish partnerships with local and federal law enforcement and homeland security agencies in every jurisdiction in which she served. She served as the DC Director in 2015, replacing the previous Director and enhanced performance and improved the team that was suffering from fatigue and lack of leadership and motivation. Due to her efforts, manpower was increased and trained; trained being the key word to respond to the high call demand for both emergency and non-emergency calls for service.

I am a retired DC public safety official from the Metropolitan Police Department and appreciated Director Holmes progressive thought on "911" and how to streamline dispatch to both Police and Fire members in the field. Call triage; whereas calltakers were able to take time and talk to the caller and ensure that it was not just dispatched to police but to the appropriate agency; one that would be able to offer the best services for the situation. Her team was rebuilt during her tenure and sustained high performance; one challenge that faces all such Directors is the technology – government must catch up to technology to enhance performance and she made major recommendations for our City.

Also of note is her national participation and credits for the advancement of Emergency communications such as her oversight of Washington, DC's deployment of its cache of 8,000 radios for National Special Security Events, State of the Union Addresses, and the 2017 and 2020 Presidential Inaugurations. In fact, Ms. Holmes was at the helm of the sole ECC in the nation's capital throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing civil unrest of 2020, and the January 6, 2021 insurrection on the U.S. Capitol.

In October 2019, she was appointed to the FirstNet Authority Board by the U.S. Commerce Secretary. Chosen for her public safety expertise and substantive

technical experience, in this role she supports the development and operation of the country's first and only nationwide public safety broadband network dedicated to first responders. Due to her skillset she was hired as Senior Director at ShotSpotter where she led a team of analysts in the use of patented technology to detect, locate and alert police to gunshots in real time.

Karima Holmes returned back to DC Government as the acting Director of OUC, earlier this year to again work on ensuring that the DC OUC is functioning at a high level of service to the residents of Washington DC.

I find that she is determined to create a highly trained team of professionals to handle the significant calls for service; both emergency and non emergency in nature. She is one to take criticism and also accept responsibility for those instances a call was not handled appropriately and remedy the error.

As a retired DC Public Safety official and current DC resident I feel strongly that we must have a Director that possesses the skillset and fortitude that she does; also maintain a continuity in service whereas she is connected to the vast Public safety network in DC – both the local and federal... she is collaborative and again supports strong relationships to enhance the agency's performance. One of the most critical factors is that she has in the past and currently built a high functioning team at OUC. She is progressively fighting for federal technology resources and advancements and is in the forefront of keeping Washington DC's OUC – the leader in the field.

I highly recommend her to be confirmed and feel confident that Karima Holmes is the Director we need at this time in the City.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane C. Groomes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Diane C. Groomes

Retired Assistant Chief of Police, Washington DC

Director of Security and Public Safety, Wharf -SW Waterfront