



## CONFIRMATION OF CAROL ISEN AS HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**SAN FRANCISCO  
BLACK EMPLOYEE  
ALLIANCE(BEA)**

Approximately two weeks ago, many of you heard from members of the Black Employees Alliance and Coalition Against Anti-Blackness regarding the upcoming confirmation hearing for Mayor Breed's nomination of acting DHR Director Carol Isen.

### Leadership Team

Jumoke Akin-Taylor  
Alisha Willis  
Demarris Evans  
Irella Blackwood  
Cheryl Taylor  
Kathy Broussard  
Jessica Brown  
Brenda Barros  
Dante King  
Madeline McMillian  
Nikki Mixon

The concerns expressed by many of the BEA members are reflective of the views of many Black employees throughout the City and County of San Francisco. We are sending this final letter to you to reinforce our position that we do not support the Mayor's nomination of Carol Isen becoming the next HR Director. As we expressed to the Civil Service Commission through the letter addressed to them in early January, the workforce deserves to have a competent Human Resources leader with in-depth HR experience in all areas of Human Resources Management (e.g., Worker's Compensation, EEO, Leaves, Performance Management, Recruitment, Workforce Development, etc.). Much of acting Director Isen's experience is limited to one aspect of public-sector Human Resources practice, Employee Relations. The limited experience noted here is reminiscent of our last HR Director, Margaret Callahan, and under her leadership, many other aspects of HR failed tremendously, including:

- Biased testing practices
- Over-enforcement of discipline and corrective actions to Black employees across every department,
- Wage/Merit inequities
- Involuntary attrition of Black employees
- Inability to develop holistic strategies to improve recruitment efforts to diversify City staff.

The list goes on.

If a HR leader does not possess generalist expertise in such areas, then how can there be any reasonable expectation or anticipation that these issues will change? And in these challenging times where racial disparities are plaguing San Francisco, and are primary societal concerns, Carol Isen's track record clearly demonstrates that she has no experience working through such challenging issues. Simply put she does not have the knowledge, skills, or abilities to manage or implement the changes needed for a workforce of over 38,000 employees. This will be a situation where she will be learning on the job, and the ramifications are the continued dismantling of Black employment, leading to the further demise of Black families.

Director Isen was the former head of Employee Relations, beginning in 2017, and is directly implicated in the exacerbation of discipline and corrective

action disparities. While she might assert that the DHR-Employee and Labor Relations division's oversight of the grievance process is limited (to the step 3 grievance process only; and/or lead on bargaining), that is a partial truth. As we know, DHR has tremendous influence on steering HR practices across all departments, per the Charter. **DHR has the authority to overrule any department at level 3 of the grievance process for every MOU.** In addition, during Director Isen's tenure, she could have developed specific policies, processes, practices, and systems to correct inconsistent, imbalanced, and unfair employment practices leading to inequitable applications of discipline and corrective actions. All of this was in Director Isen's control, and she allowed racist disciplinary actions to ensue in the form of terminations.

We have also learned that there may have been substantial bias in this recruitment process, as former DHR-Director Margaret (Micki) Callahan was responsible for writing the questions for this selection process. If this is true, then this means that this process was rigged in favor of ensuring Director Isen was elevated to the top of potential candidates; there was no such good faith effort in conducting a nationwide search; and that taxpayers' monies were spent on a process that did not need to occur – since Director Isen was set-up to be the candidate of choice the entire time. Please confirm in writing, through Alliance Resource Consulting and the Civil Service Commission that this was not the case.

Acting DHR Director Isen has yet to share any vision about how she plans to improve and/or influence the deficiencies existing across the City. She appeared almost aloof during the [Government Audit and Oversight Committee](#) meeting back in October. She was unprepared for that meeting (where she misstated, she had taken the management test battery, knowing that she has never taken the test), and she is unprepared to fulfill this role.

Again, if Director Isen is confirmed into this role by the Board of Supervisors, the issues plaguing San Francisco regarding inequitable workforce disparities and disparate treatment will not change. The future of workforce outcomes for the City, is in your hands.

Best,

Black Employees Alliance and Coalition Against Anti-Blackness



**From:** Callahan, Micki (HRD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 26, 2017 4:21 PM  
**To:** MYR-ALL Department Heads  
**Cc:** DHR-Personnel Officers  
**Subject:** Employee Relations Director

Dear Colleagues:

It is with mixed emotions that I write to announce a change in the City's Employee Relations Director.

Last year we welcomed Suzanne Mason to the position, and under her steady leadership the Employee Relations Division of DHR added staff and was restructured to improve service to our department clients. Suzanne coordinated our Citywide 2017 Labor Project, which led to the successful two-year extension of all the City's expiring labor agreements. Unfortunately, Suzanne's family commitments have recently become incompatible with continued full-time employment in this important position. She has therefore tendered her resignation from the City, effective May 26, 2017.

While we are sorry to lose Suzanne so quickly, I am happy to report that an old friend and colleague will be stepping directly into her shoes. Carol Isen will be leaving her position as Chief Labor Relations Officer at BART to take the position of the City's Employee Relations Director, effective June 5, 2017. Carol has a long and accomplished career in public sector labor relations, including the benefit of many years of City service working directly with our labor partners. Carol has previously served as the City's chief negotiator for SEIU, the Crafts Coalition, and Stationary Engineers Local 39. She was awarded the 2016 "Moving Forward" award by the California Public Employers Labor Relations Association (CALPELRA) for her successful navigation of BART's many post-strike labor relations challenges, including a two year extension of its labor agreements.

Please join me in thanking Suzanne for her work for the City, and in welcoming Carol back into the City family.

Regards,



**Micki Callahan**  
**Human Resources Director**  
Department of Human Resources  
One South Van Ness Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: (415) 557-4845  
Website: [www.sfdhr.org](http://www.sfdhr.org)

March 22, 2021

Good Morning,

My name is April Ward. Currently, I work for the Office of Community Investment & Infrastructure (OCII) (Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency) as a Principal Personnel Analyst. I'm calling to speak in support of the appointment of Carol Isen as the Director of Human Resources for the City and County of San Francisco. (CCSF) (OCII is an entity "POI" of CCSF)

I've professionally come to know Carol while working for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency during dissolution, when she was assigned to lead the negotiation team during an extremely trying time. I had previously participated in many negotiations on the union side of the table, but under Carol's leadership, I was offered the opportunity to sit on the management side of the table. My position / title during that time was Management Assistant III and Carol not only added me to her team, but she also gave me the chance to speak and answer questions. Under her lead, I was afforded the opportunity to familiarize myself with the policies and procedures of negotiations from the management side of the table. It was invaluable training and led to me being promoted from Management Assistant III to a Senior Personnel Analyst.

Later, in 2019, Carol added me to CCSF MEA negotiations which provided me new insights and skill sets. Specifically, I was able to be head the direct communication across the negotiation table with attorneys and the union team and was instrumental in the revision of all policies which resulted in successful contracts with our bargaining unit. This experience ultimately paved the way for my second promotion- from Senior Personnel Analyst to Principal Personnel Analyst.

I'm eternally grateful to Carol for seeing that I was able to go further in my career. She is an exemplary leader who recognized my talent and provided me the tools and training to advance my career. Carol is a wonderful person not just to work for- but work with.

I look forward to working with her in the future as Director of Human Resources.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'April Ward', is positioned below the text 'Respectfully Submitted,'.

April Ward

**From:** [Board of Supervisors, \(BOS\)](#)  
**To:** [BOS-Supervisors](#)  
**Cc:** [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [Somera, Alisa \(BOS\)](#); [Ng, Wilson \(BOS\)](#); [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Carol Isen appointment  
**Date:** Monday, March 22, 2021 4:42:18 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Ron Dicks <[rondd5@me.com](mailto:rondd5@me.com)>  
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 4:14 PM  
To: Board of Supervisors, (BOS) <[board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org](mailto:board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org)>  
Subject: Carol Isen appointment

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Good day board of supervisors clerk,

My name is Ron Dicks. I am a retired city employee ( I worked for the city and county for 32 years. 30 years as a housing inspector at the department of building inspection ( DBI). I submit that I was the longest serving black inspector at dbi. As a former employee of DBI I know dysfunction. Carol Isen is the antithesis. I have known Carol for over 30 years. I have seen her operate in a plethora of environments. Carol is a high functioning individual. I have witnessed Carol under stress, in pressure situations with deadlines looming. She is very intelligent, insightful and quick witted. She is able to process complex information and disparate opinions and establish a program forward. Carol nurtures a supportive environment where people feel free to express their concerns and participate fully. She is particularly sensitive to disenfranchised, marginalized communities and always seeks their participation. Carol is a highly skilled listener, and she enhances any environment where she is present. She can converse intelligently on many different subjects, and her life experiences, coupled with a union background affords her a unique perspective .

I'm proud to have her as a friend, and proud to endorse her. Thank you.

Sent from my iPad