



2020 SABA-DC Board

Amisha R. Patel
President

Priya Bhanu
President-Elect

Devika Persaud
Vice President of
Programming

Anu Sharma
Vice President of
Communications

Rukku Singla
Vice President of Gala

Avani Patel
Vice President of
Membership

Suparna Reddy
Treasurer

Adam Motiwala
Secretary

Avni Amin
Director

Shashi Khiani
Director

Namrata Lomba
Director

Archith Ramkumar
Director

Senal Ranatunga
Director

Neaha Raol
Director

Deb Sengupta
Director

Amandeep Sidhu
Director

Nina Tandon
Director

Moh Sharma
Immediate Past President

March 25, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission
515 5th Street, NW, Suite 235
Washington, DC 20001
jnc@dc.gov

**Re: Endorsement of Vijay Shanker for Vacancy on District of Columbia
Court of Appeals**

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the South Asian Bar Association of Washington, D.C. (SABA-DC), I write to express our unequivocal support of Vijay Shanker's potential appointment to fill one of the current vacancies on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

SABA-DC is a voluntary bar association dedicated to the needs, concerns, and interests of the South Asian American legal community in the Washington, D.C. area. The organization reaches approximately 1,000 attorneys and jurists of South Asian origin in the D.C. metropolitan area. SABA-DC's key objectives are to advance the professional development of South Asian American lawyers, increase awareness and dialogue regarding legal issues concerning South Asian Americans, and improve access to legal services for the South Asian American community. In making our endorsements, we consider a candidate's experience, past accomplishments, demonstrated interest in or commitment to the South Asian community, and broader efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession.

Based on his extensive personal and professional accomplishments, SABA-DC strongly believes that Mr. Shanker is immensely qualified to join the bench of the D.C. Court of Appeals. His work at the United States Department of Justice ("DOJ"), in the private sector, as a law clerk, and as a law professor have provided him with the depth and quality of experience necessary for the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. We are confident that Mr. Shanker will readily contribute to the Court's goal of increased access to justice.

For the past 15 years, Mr. Shanker has worked in the Criminal Division of DOJ, rising to his current role as the Deputy Chief of the Appellate Section and Senior Litigation Counsel in the Foreign Corrupt Practices Group. In his current role, he supervises 30



attorneys handling federal criminal appeals and drafting Supreme Court briefs. Mr. Shanker also has extensive experience handling appeals—he has briefed and argued over 60 cases, including four en banc rehearings in 12 courts of appeal. He has drafted briefs for the Solicitor General for filing in the U.S. Supreme Court and was part of a five-person team selected to litigate an aspect of the Guantanamo Bay military commission proceedings against Khalid Shaikh Mohammad and the other masterminds of 9/11. Throughout his time at DOJ, he been regularly promoted to roles with greater responsibility—a testament to his superior legal skills, performance and dedication.

Mr. Shanker also has litigation experience in the private sector and served as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Chester J. Straub of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit—where he assisted with the judge’s civil and criminal docket. Additionally, Mr. Shanker has demonstrated a commitment to legal scholarship and mentorship by serving as an adjunct associate professor for appellate advocacy at the Washington College of Law at American University. Given his exceptional abilities, appellate experience, intellect, and commitment to the law and scholarship, Mr. Shanker is particularly suited to preside successfully over appellate matters at the D.C. Court of Appeals.

Mr. Shanker is also deeply committed to pro bono legal work, currently participating in the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Advice and Referral Clinic and serving on the board of Calvary Women’s Services. While in private practice, he handled numerous pro bono matters, including representing plaintiff-appellant Marc Ramirez in *Ramirez v. Pugh*, 379 F.3d 122 (3d Cir. 2004), defendant-intervenor-appellee in *National Parks Conservation Association in McFarland v. Kempthorne*, 545 F.3d 1106 (9th Cir. 2008), a tenant in D.C. Superior Court, Landlord & Tenant Branch; and a Pennsylvania state prisoner challenging conditions of confinement.

In addition to Mr. Shanker’s strong qualifications, we note that his appointment to this position would enhance the diversity of the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. As a first-generation South Asian American—the son of immigrants from India who moved to the United States in the 1960s in search of the American dream—Mr. Shanker brings a unique perspective as someone who has been the subject of assumptions and stereotypes about himself and his family for his entire life. In a city full of immigrants like the District, we can think of no more important perspective to bring to the Court to increase access and acceptability of justice.



Based on the information highlighted in this letter, combined with the extensive materials you have received regarding his qualifications, SABA-DC believes Mr. Shanker is an exceptional candidate for the vacancy on the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. We enthusiastically support him for this position and respectfully request that you extend him every possible consideration for inclusion in the group of nominations sent to the President for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Amisha R. Patel', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Amisha R. Patel
President, SABA-DC

cc: Amandeep S. Sidhu, Chair of SABA-DC Endorsements Committee
Priya Bhanu, President-Elect, SABA-DC