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January 15, 2021

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

Re: Endorsement of Professor Jayesh Rathod for Vacancy on District of Columbia Superior Court

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the South Asian Bar Association of Washington, D.C. (SABA-DC), I write to express our unequivocal support for the potential appointment of Jayesh Rathod, Associate Dean for Experiential Education, Professor of Law, and Director of the Immigrant Justice Clinic at American University Washington College of Law, to fill the current Associate Judge vacancy on the District of Columbia Superior Court. Through his extensive experience in practice and academia—with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable communities—Professor Rathod would add an important perspective to the Court.

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 Professor Rathod is immensely qualified to be elevated to the D.C. Superior Court as an Associate Judge. Though he is a scholar and an expert with a focus in immigration law, labor and employment law, and clinical legal education, Professor Rathod brings a wealth of experience across the full



spectrum of legal issues that come before the D.C. Superior Court. He began his legal career as an Associate at Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering before moving to a clerkship with The Honorable Louis F. Oberdorfer on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In line with his passion for social justice and advocacy, Professor Rathod then spent several years as a staff attorney with CASA of Maryland, where he represented low-wage immigrant workers on employment claims and ironworkers on immigration matters.

Since 2006, Professor Rathod has held various roles at American University Washington College of Law (AUWCL). Culminating in his current role as Associate Dean for Experiential Education and Director of the Clinical Program, Professor of Law, and Director of the Immigrant Justice Clinic, Professor Rathod has contributed to the legal profession in countless ways. From teaching students through experiential learning and clinical engagement to scholarly writing to leadership at AUWCL for over a decade, Professor Rathod would bring an important and diverse legal perspective to the D.C. Superior Court.

Professor Rathod has also contributed to several not-for-profit legal and advocacy organizations on a voluntary basis. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks that left members of the South Asian American community vulnerable to violent hate crimes, employment discrimination, and profiling, Professor Rathod was instrumental in the growth of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) from a volunteer-led group to a staffed organization with a national presence. He also serves on the board of directors for Ayuda, a DC-area organization that provides services to the immigrant community.

Equally important to his professional and voluntary experience, however, is the rich and diverse perspective that Professor Rathod would bring to the court through his personal life experience. As the son of immigrants who came to the United States in the 1970s, Professor Rathod grew up aspiring to achieve success and to give back to the country that allowed his parents to build a life and support their family. Since English was the second language spoken in his home growing up, he is acutely aware of the challenges facing many litigants in the District's court system. His near-native fluency in Spanish only adds to his credentials that would help the D.C. Superior Court continue to build trust with immigrant communities in the District. As an openly gay man, Professor Rathod would also bring that lived experience to the bench and add a perspective that is lacking in court systems throughout the country.



Representation does truly matter and Professor Rathod's background would undoubtedly enhance the diversity of the D.C. Superior Court bench.

Based on the information highlighted in this letter, combined with the extensive materials you have received regarding his qualifications, SABA-DC believes that Professor Rathod is an exceptional candidate for the vacancy on the D.C. Superior Court 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,

Amandeep S. Sidhu
Chairman, SABA-DC Endorsements Committee

cc: Priya Bhanu, President, SABA-DC
Nandu Machiraju, President-Elect, SABA-DC