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May 3, 2021

Tracy Nutall
Executive Director
Judicial Nomination Commission
515 5th Street, NW, Suite 235
Washington, D.C. 20001
dc.jnc@dc.gov

**Re: Endorsement of Vikram Swaruup for Vacancy on District of
Columbia Court of Appeals**

Dear Ms. Nutall:

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 Vikram Swaruup to fill the current vacancy for the role of Associate Judge on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Mr. Swaruup would bring to the bench a career of public service across various levels and branches of government, including an excellent knowledge of local government in Washington, D.C. We respectfully urge consideration of Mr. Swaruup in the list of nominees to be provided to President Biden.

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. Swaruup is immensely qualified to join the bench of the D.C. Court of Appeals. His work with the District’s Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”), the United States Department of Justice (“DOJ”), and as a federal law clerk has provided him with the depth and quality of experience necessary for the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. Mr. Swaruup has extensive experience handling both appellate and trial court litigation—he has briefed and argued both types of cases in civil and criminal matters, before the D.C. courts and federal courts. This wide range of litigation experience grants him a breadth of perspective that will prove valuable in adjudicating the wide range of matters before the D.C. Court of Appeals. Moreover, in his current advisory role with OAG, Mr. Swaruup has developed intimate familiarity with the District’s lawmaking and adjudication processes. As Senior Counsel to the Attorney General, he engages with and advises on difficult questions of D.C. law, including the District’s relationship with the federal government and separation of powers, and issues like zoning and family law, which implicate the District’s treatment of vulnerable populations. His promotion within OAG to this senior role also serves as a testament to his superior legal skills, performance, and dedication to his work.

As important, we are confident that Mr. Swaruup will readily contribute to the Court’s goal of increased access to justice. The majority of his government service, both in OAG and DOJ, has focused specifically on civil rights and spans a wide range of substantive areas, such as hate crimes, voting rights, and employment discrimination. In his present role, Mr. Swaruup routinely engages with District residents impacted by OAG’s work. For example, he has convened several listening sessions to hear directly from marginalized residents of the District about their civil rights concerns and priorities. These sessions led to the drafting and passage of a civil hate violence bill, allowing OAG to bring civil claims against perpetrators of bias-motivated violent acts. This is just one of many examples of Mr. Swaruup’s efforts to promote greater protection of the rights of the District’s most vulnerable communities.

Mr. Swaruup is also deeply committed to pro bono legal work, as he regularly volunteers in several capacities to assist indigent individuals with issues ranging from name and gender changes to resisting detention for inability to pay traffic fines and fees. Moreover, he regularly engages with his law school’s alumni organization as well as D.C.-area law schools to help prospective and current minority students succeed in the legal profession, with a particular emphasis on supporting their pursuit of judicial clerkships.

In addition to Mr. Swaruup’s strong qualifications, we note that his appointment to this position would enhance the diversity of the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. As an openly identifying LGBTQ+ individual and a first-generation South Asian American—the son of immigrants from



India who moved to the United States in search of the American dream—Mr. Swaruup 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 diverse city like the District, we can think of no more important perspective to bring to the Court to increase access to justice and ensure fair treatment of all litigants and attorneys. Moreover, the nomination of Mr. Swaruup to the Court is consistent with President Biden’s unwavering commitment to increasing diversity across all of government, including the judiciary.

Based on the information highlighted in this letter, combined with the extensive materials you have received regarding his qualifications, SABA-DC strongly believes that Mr. Swaruup is an exceptional candidate for the vacancy on the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. He exemplifies the qualities that will most benefit this position and will serve the diverse communities of the District of Columbia. We enthusiastically support him for this position and respectfully request that you extend him every possible consideration for inclusion in the group of nominations presented to the President for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Sidhu', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Amandeep S. Sidhu
Chairman, SABA-DC Endorsements Committee

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