



2021 SABA-DC Board

Priya L. Bhanu
President

Nandu Machiraju
President-Elect

Avni Amin
Vice President of
Programming

Jyoti Kuvelker
Vice President of
Communications

Deb Sengupta
Vice President of
Membership

Suparna Reddy
Treasurer

Avani Uppalapati
Secretary

Zain Jinnah
Director

Ravi Kambhampaty
Director

Snehal Massey
Director

Devika Persaud
Director

Archith Ramkumar
Director

Neaha Raol
Director

Amandeep Sidhu
Director

Nina Tandon
Director

Pooja Tolani
Director

Amisha R. Patel
Immediate Past President

March 9, 2021

Dana Remus
White House Counsel
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500
Dana.A.Remus@who.eop.gov

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

Dear Ms. Remus:

On behalf of the South Asian Bar Association of Washington, D.C. (“SABA-DC”), I write to express our continued unequivocal support of Vijay Shanker’s potential appointment to fill one of the current vacancies on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. We initially endorsed Mr. Shanker for this position in March 2020 and were thrilled that President Trump nominated him to the Court in June 2020. While Mr. Shanker’s nomination was not considered in the 116th Congress, he was re-nominated by President Trump in January 2021 after the 117th Congress went into session, but that nomination was withdrawn by President Biden. We respectfully urge President Biden to re-nominate Mr. Shanker. SABA-DC is joined in this request by its undersigned sister chapters around the United States.

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. Mr. Shanker has extensive experience handling appeals—he has briefed and argued over 60 cases, including four en banc rehearings, in 12 courts of appeal and has drafted briefs for the Solicitor General for filing in the U.S. Supreme Court. Throughout his time at DOJ, he has been promoted to roles with greater responsibility time and time again—a testament to his superior legal skills, performance, and dedication to his work.

As important, we are confident that Mr. Shanker will readily contribute to the Court’s goal of increased access to justice. Likewise, Mr. Shanker’s nomination would further President Biden’s commitment to equality, equity, and justice in the criminal justice system. As a federal prosecutor, Mr. Shanker knows all too well how reforming the criminal justice system could drastically alter the outlook for many communities in the United States.

Mr. Shanker is also deeply committed to pro bono legal work, having participated in the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Advice and Referral Clinic and currently 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); a 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 to justice and ensure fair treatment of all litigants and attorneys. Moreover, nomination of Mr. Shanker to the Court is completely 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 believes Mr. Shanker is an exceptional candidate



for the vacancy on the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. We renew our enthusiastic support for him and respectfully request that President Biden re-nominate Mr. Shanker.

Sincerely,

Amandeep S. Sidhu
Chairman, SABA-DC Endorsements Committee

South Asian Bar Association of Chicago
Saranya Raghavan, President

South Asian Bar Association of Dallas
Shivan Mehta, President

South Asian Bar Association of Florida
Madhurima Paturi, President

South Asian Bar Association of Houston
Neal Sarkar, President

South Asian Bar Association of New York
Ruchi Shah, President

South Asian Bar Association of Philadelphia
Vishal Shah, President

South Asian Bar Association of San Diego
Tarina Mand, President

South Asian Bar Association of Southern California
Vandana Kapur and Gopi Panchapakesan, Co-Presidents

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