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Asian Pacific American Bar Association

2021-2022
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June 14, 2022

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By E-Mail

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Re: Letter in Support of the Confirmation of the Honorable Florence Y. Pan as Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

VP FOR PROGRAMS
Clinton Yu

Dear Chair Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

SECRETARY
Sophia Chen

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association of the Greater Washington, D.C. Area, Inc. (“APABA-DC”) is pleased to support the nomination of the Honorable Florence Y. Pan to serve as Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

TREASURER
Alex Yi

APABA-DC, a 501(c)(6) organization in its forty-first year, is the oldest and largest association of Asian Pacific American attorneys in the greater Washington, D.C. area. APABA-DC’s Nominations Committee (the “Committee”) is co-chaired by Minsuk Han and Yiyang Wu. The Committee members include APABA-DC’s president, president-elect, and immediate past president, and seven experienced attorneys from the APABA-DC membership selected through an application process. The Committee evaluates candidates for judicial positions or political appointments who seek APABA-DC’s endorsement based on a candidate’s professional qualifications and

Asian Pacific American Bar Association of the Greater Washington, D.C. Area, Inc.

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experience; demonstrated commitment to diversity, including involvement in the Asian Pacific American community or in other minority organizations or underrepresented communities; and ties to the District of Columbia. A copy of our complete endorsement policy is available on the APABA-DC website at <https://www.apaba-dc.org/endorsements>.

APABA-DC endorsed Judge Pan in 2009 when she successfully sought to become an Associate Judge of the D.C. Superior Court. In 2016 and 2021, we endorsed Judge Pan when President Obama and President Biden, respectively, nominated her to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. In September 2021, with strong bipartisan support, Judge Pan became the first Asian Pacific American woman to serve on that court. We now urge you to confirm Judge Pan to join the bench of the D.C. Circuit.

Judge Pan is well known to APABA-DC, thanks to her longstanding engagement in our organization's professional activities. In 2011, she received our prestigious Membership Appreciation Award. Judge Pan has participated in numerous APABA-DC programs, including our annual conference on clerkship and internship opportunities for law students, other substantive panel discussions, and historical re-enactments of Supreme Court cases that had an impact on the legal rights of Asian Pacific Americans. She has also worked closely with other diverse bar associations in the District of Columbia, including the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

Judge Pan's professional qualifications are myriad. She began her legal career with two prestigious federal court clerkships: first with the Honorable Michael B. Mukasey of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, and then the Honorable Ralph K. Winter of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. She gained valuable appellate litigation experience during her fifteen years at the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, where she rose to the position of Deputy Chief of the Appellate Division and supervised appeals in criminal cases before the D.C. Circuit and D.C. Court of Appeals. In her nearly 12 years on the D.C. Superior Court, she served in the Family, Criminal, and Civil divisions, and also sat by designation on the D.C. Court of Appeals and authored two published opinions. Most recently, as United States District Judge, Judge Pan has been praised for her work ethic, drive, and collegiality.

Judge Pan's commitment to public service extends beyond her professional career. Through volunteering and mentoring, Judge Pan has demonstrated an impressive commitment to the Asian Pacific American community and to the larger D.C. community. Judge Pan has always made time to mentor law students and interns in her chambers, and she is actively involved in her children's schools. In 2009, she was given the APA Trailblazer Award by the Georgetown Asian Pacific American Law Students Association.

Judge Pan demonstrates the kind of judicial temperament that one would want to see in a federal circuit judge. Through her interactions with a wide variety of parties, counsel, pro se litigants, and types of cases, Judge Pan appreciates that not only is it important to work hard and make the right rulings, but it is also important to appreciate the human element of each case, and to exercise judgment and empathy to ensure that all parties feel that the judicial process is fair, and that they have been heard.

Judge Pan's personal background is compelling. Judge Pan's grandparents fled from mainland China to Taiwan in 1948, when the Communist Party came to power. Her parents emigrated to the United States from Taiwan in 1961. Judge Pan was born in New York, and raised in Tenafly, New Jersey, where she attended public schools. As a teenager, she worked at a Chinese restaurant owned by her aunt and uncle. She received her two undergraduate degrees, *summa cum laude*, from the University of Pennsylvania, and her law degree, with distinction, from Stanford Law School. Judge Pan has said that becoming a judge was particularly meaningful to her and her family, because her grandfather was a judge on an administrative court in China, before being forced to flee to Taiwan. If confirmed, she would be the first Chinese American judge to serve on the D.C. Circuit.

APABA-DC strongly believes that the federal courts – including appellate courts – should reflect the communities they serve. Judge Pan has served as a role model and mentor to many, especially to those in the Asian Pacific American community. Considering the troubling rise of hate crimes and acts of discrimination targeting the Asian Pacific American community throughout the United States, including in the D.C. area, it is vitally important that the D.C. Circuit reflect the diversity of the country and the local community, and that it include jurists who are sensitive and responsive to the needs and concerns of the Asian Pacific American community.

For all of these reasons, we urge the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate to confirm Judge Pan as Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Thank you for your consideration of APABA-DC's comments in support of Judge Pan. Please contact us if we can provide further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ethel Hong Badawi
President, APABA-DC