



Superior Court of California County of Fresno

CHAMBERS OF
VIRNA L. SANTOS
Judge

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May 10, 2023

Senator Richard Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter of Support for Judge Ana de Alba's Nomination the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

Dear Senators and Graham:

It is an honor to support the nomination of U.S. District Judge Ana de Alba to serve in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Aside from her unimpeachable academic and judicial credentials, Judge de Alba is a superb example of how the combination of lived experience and devotion to public service can enrich our judiciary for the benefit our community.

As practicing attorney, I appeared before Judge de Alba when she served as Superior Court Judge for the County of Fresno. She impressed me with her efficient handling of the voluminous misdemeanor and juvenile justice calendars. Regardless of time constraints, I observed Judge de Alba take the necessary time with each case, guaranteeing litigants their opportunity to be heard in what for many would be their first contact with the court system. Most important, she treated attorneys, court staff, and litigants with respect for their time and contributions.

Judge de Alba likewise displayed an excellent command of the juvenile justice law as it has been recently transformed in California to focus on evidence-based programs to assist minors as they grow and mature. Judge de Alba took her charge to heart, applying the law evenly to hold minors accountable for delinquent behavior. While a significant percentage of the youth who appear in juvenile court come from disadvantaged backgrounds, Judge de Alba had high expectations of them and meted individual justice by fashioning conditions that would support their rehabilitation and deter future delinquency. Because of her background, she understood what is like to be underestimated due to family or financial circumstances. She also recognized

Senator Richard Durbin
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that there is dignity in poverty that does not require that we lower expectations for these children. That is why she encouraged minors to work hard to achieve their potential, just as she would any family member.

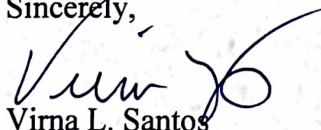
While Judge de Alba was awaiting Senate confirmation last year, I was fortunate to have been appointed to serve as a Superior Court Judge. Due in large part to the impact she had on me when I appeared in her courtroom, I requested the same assignment. Judge de Alba became my mentor, showing me the important differences between adult and juvenile court. As a colleague, Judge de Alba was available to answer any questions and share her experience. I learned how respectful she is towards the entire court family--from fellow judges, staff, and interpreters to custodial staff. I was able to see how the youth who appeared before her held her in high regard because they could see that she was genuinely invested in their rehabilitation. This is because Judge de Alba, while knowledgeable and highly professional, has maintained her humanity, humility, and sincerity in all that she does.

Finally, I have also gotten to know Judge de Alba as a devoted mother and sister. Amid her professional demands, Judge de Alba is raising a kind and well-grounded daughter. She is also dedicating much of her free time to ministering to her brother, who recently underwent a challenging surgery. Judge de Alba still finds time to volunteer to read to elementary school students and serve on multiple bar committees in a substantial capacity.

Given her keen intellect, judicial temperament, respect for litigants, and proven commitment to her community, I cannot think of anyone more qualified than Judge de Alba to serve in the appellate court. And that is why her nomination is so well deserved and celebrated by our community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have about Judge de Alba's qualifications and moral character.

Sincerely,



Virna L. Santos
Superior Court Judge