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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

Dear Senator Durbin and Senator Graham:

As a former federal prosecutor, judicial clerk, Skadden lawyer, and adjunct professor, I've encountered a lot of lawyers and judges. Few of them impress in the way that the Honorable Eumi Lee does. Her incisive mind, her decisiveness, her excellent judgment, and her ingrained integrity intermingle in a manner befitting the federal judiciary better than any candidate for the bench I've ever supported.

I've known and observed Judge Lee for more than two decades now. We first met at the commencement of our Ninth Circuit clerkships—hers with the Honorable Warren J. Ferguson, mine with the Honorable Ferdinand F. Fernandez. We had both attended Georgetown for law school and clerked for district court judges before our circuit clerkships. And we both shared a fascination with the law and solving legal problems.

We stayed in touch throughout our clerkships, unpacking legal issues together and navigating career decisions. While our paths diverged following the clerkship, they were complementary—I headed into the United States Attorney's Office in Los Angeles, while she embarked on a distinguished legal career, first with a renowned trial firm and then into academia, but she always kept herself grounded in the practice of law and unique challenges of courtroom litigation through her clinical efforts. As I progressed into adjunct teaching and then to a big firm, we continued to connect over legal issues and career choices, to this day. I supported her candidacy for the state bench, and have watched her grow and excel in her judicial role over the past five years.

I've always been particularly impressed by how Judge Lee's mind works. As an advocate, a teacher of the law, and now a judge, she's always been both insightful and practical—she has a knack for quickly grasping legal issues, separating the wheat from the chaff, and getting to the heart of the matter at hand. The clarity of her thinking and analysis has always

impressed me. I particularly recall a series of conversations with her about a difficult privilege issue during my time at Skadden, and as with most issues I brought to her, I came away with a better sense of what really mattered to the analysis, and a stronger sense of direction. I suppose this is what comes from starting your career as a judicial clerk at the trial and appellate level—you start always by asking what the law is (rather than defending a particular position), and letting the law be your light.

This is what Judge Lee has done—she has let the law be her light throughout her career. From her advocacy to her cultivation of young legal minds to her time on the bench, she has always cared deeply about the law itself, and taken seriously her role in upholding and promoting the rule of law. And she’s always acted with unimpeachable integrity, always seeking to do the right thing under the law in every role she’s played.

I’ve appeared before hundreds of judges in my career, and I’ve watched as several of my contemporaries have ascended to the bench. I can say without reservation that Judge Lee is the most qualified judicial candidate I’ve ever supported. Regardless of what side I’m on, I’d want to appear before a jurist with the intelligence, discipline, and fairness of Judge Lee. I urge you to approve her nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Umhofer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Umhofer
Managing Partner
Umhofer, Mitchell & King LLP