



March 27, 2024

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Support for the Nomination of Sparkle Sooknanan to the United States  
District Court for the District of Columbia**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law ("Lawyers' Committee"), we urge you to support the nomination of Sparkle Sooknanan to the United States District Court of the District of Columbia. The Lawyers' Committee is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy that uses legal advocacy to achieve racial justice, fighting inside and outside the courts to ensure that Black people and other people of color have voice, opportunity, and power to make the promises of our democracy real. For more than sixty years, the Lawyers' Committee has been at the forefront of many of the most significant cases to advance racial equality and secure equal justice. Our mission and history make our organization uniquely qualified to comment on this nomination.

Sparkle Sooknanan's legal career has been inspiring and accomplished. As a judge, Sparkle Sooknanan would bring much-needed life experience to the federal appellate bench. At only 16 years old, Ms. Sooknanan immigrated to the United States from Trinidad and Tobago to attend St. Francis College. Ms. Sooknanan then went on to attend Brooklyn Law School, taking classes at night and working during the day. Ms. Sooknanan graduated summa cum laude from law school, while also serving as the president of Moot Court and as an editor on the Law Review.

Her extensive and superlative record as a lawyer makes her preeminently qualified to serve on the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Following law school, Ms. Sooknanan worked as a staff attorney at Department of Justice's Civil Division. She then went on to clerk for Judge Eric Vitaliano on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, Judge Guido Calabresi on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and Justice Sonia Sotomayor on the U.S. Supreme Court.

After working at Jones Day for six years and making partner at the firm, Ms. Sooknanan joined the Department of Justice as the Deputy Associate Attorney General in 2021 alongside Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta. Her duties included helping to oversee the Department's civil litigating divisions, including the Civil Division, Civil Rights Division, Antitrust Division, and Environmental and Natural Resources Division, as well as the important grantmaking components such as the Office of Justice Programs, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing

Services. From the beginning of the Administration, the Office of the Associate Attorney General helped advance the work of justice across a wide variety of issues within its vast portfolio: upholding voting rights, enforcing against hate crimes, promoting constitutional policing, advancing environmental justice, and working to implement the President’s landmark Executive Order on competition and economic opportunity.

Since 2023, Ms. Sooknanan has served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division. As the second highest ranking official in the Civil Rights Division, known as the “crown jewel” of the Justice Department, Ms. Sooknanan has played a key role in managing the Department’s work to uphold and enforce our nation’s civil rights laws—including federal statutes prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, education, and voting rights, as well as efforts to combat violence motivated by bias, hate, or bigotry based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, or other protected characteristics. The federal bench would greatly benefit from having more judges with this type of first-hand experience in civil rights enforcement.

Moreover, to ensure the federal courts remain impartial, committed to the rule of law and trusted by the American public, the Senate must confirm highly qualified judges from across the legal profession that represent the vast racial and ethnic diversity present in the United States. Currently, the federal judiciary lacks racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Ms. Sooknanan’s confirmation would contribute to making our courts look more like our country. People of color are forty percent of the population but are only thirty-two percent of Article III judges.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, despite women making up roughly half of the U.S.’s population, they only constitute thirty-nine percent of active Article III judges and thirty-eight percent of District Court judges.<sup>2</sup> If confirmed, Ms. Sooknanan would be one of very few federal lifetime judges who are Indo-Caribbean.

Thank you for your consideration of our support of the nomination of Sparkle Sooknanan to the United States District Court of the District of Columbia. We urge the Senate to swiftly confirm Ms. Sooknanan. We welcome the opportunity to discuss her nomination with your office further; if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Alex Ault, Policy Counsel, at [aault@lawyerscommittee.org](mailto:aault@lawyerscommittee.org) or Quinn Anex-Ries, Policy Associate, at [qanex-ries@lawyerscommittee.org](mailto:qanex-ries@lawyerscommittee.org).

Sincerely,



Damon T. Hewitt  
President & Executive Director  
Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights  
Under Law



Demelza Baer  
Director of Public Policy  
Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights  
Under Law

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<sup>1</sup> American Constitution Society, *Diversity of the Federal Bench*, <https://www.acslaw.org/judicial-nominations/diversity-of-the-federal-bench/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*