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Supporting the South Asian legal community with a trusted forum for professional growth and development while promoting civil rights and access to justice for the South Asian community

September 25, 2024

The Honorable Dick Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
United States Senate
211 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Endorsement of Sharad Desai as United States District Judge for the District of Arizona

Dear Honorable Dick Durbin and Honorable Lindsey Graham:

The South Asian Bar Association of North America (“SABA North America”), the umbrella organization for 31 local chapters across the United States and Canada, writes in enthusiastic support of the historic nomination of Sharad Desai to serve as a United States District Judge for the District of Arizona. Mr. Desai’s breadth of experience, commitment to justice and fairness, and diverse perspective unequivocally qualify him to be a district court judge.

SABA North America represents the rapidly growing South Asian legal community across North America. The organization promotes the professional growth and advancement of attorneys of South Asian descent and strives to protect the rights and liberties of the South Asian community. In light of its mission and vision, SABA North America recognizes a critical need for greater participation by South Asian-Americans in the federal judiciary. Through the appointment of Mr. Desai as well as other highly qualified South Asians to federal courts nationwide, we expect that significant progress towards fulfilling that need will be achieved.

Mr. Desai’s legal experience underscores his qualifications to be a district court judge. He has 17 years of experience in both federal and state courts, first serving as a law clerk to Judge Rebecca White Berch with the Arizona Supreme Court, then as a civil litigator at Osborn Maledon, P.A. and Litigation Counsel at Honeywell International Inc. Over the course of his career, Mr. Desai’s work has spanned a wide subject-matter spectrum, from products liability and commercial cases to civil rights cases and lawyer ethics cases. He has worked at both the trial and appellate levels and represented single parties as well as certified classes. Through these experiences, Mr. Desai has shown that he has critical skills required of a U.S. District Court Judge, namely the ability to engage in high level legal analysis, writing, and oral communications. His extensive trial experience makes him an ideal candidate for the federal judiciary, and the district court.

Mr. Desai’s work is a testament to his commitment to promoting justice and fairness. Most notably, Mr. Desai served as *pro bono* counsel on a class action lawsuit brought



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by pretrial detainees against the Maricopa County Sheriff and Board of Supervisors. Mr. Desai did an extensive amount of work on the case, including conducting in-depth discovery, preparing and arguing motions and examining witnesses, and following the case past judgment. He continued representing the plaintiff class for more than seven years. His work has been critical in ensuring that pretrial detainees' civil rights are protected.

Mr. Desai has also been a committed supporter of his community and profession. He has been involved with both the South Asian Bar Association of Arizona and the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, organizations that promote diversity in the legal profession. He would bring a unique perspective to the bench as a person of color and a child of South Asian immigrants.

Mr. Desai is well qualified to serve on the federal bench, and his work ethic and commitment to public service would be an asset to the bench. If nominated and confirmed, Mr. Desai would be the first South Asian to serve on the United States District Court for the District of Arizona and only the second South Asian on the federal bench in Arizona – the other being his sister, the Honorable Roopali Desai. His appointment would be incredibly meaningful to the South Asian and Asian legal communities, and the community at large. For these reasons, SABA North America is proud to support Sharad Desai's historic nomination for District Judge in the United States District Court for the District of Arizona.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keerthi Sugumaran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Keerthi" being more prominent.

Keerthi Sugumaran, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nishi Kothari". The signature is more stylized and less legible than the one on the left, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Nishi Kothari, President-Elect