

ROSA E. RODRIGUEZ-VELEZ  
1700 McLeary Ave.  
Condado Real – Apt. 1302  
San Juan, PR 00911

Telephone: (787) 409-7552

Email: [rosaemilia4@yahoo.com](mailto:rosaemilia4@yahoo.com)

July 6, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

As the Former U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, I write to recommend María Antongiorgi, Esq. for the position of U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, which currently has three judicial vacancies. As evidenced by her Curriculum Vitae, and what I assume must have been an excellent background report, Ms. Antongiorgi is uniquely qualified for the position, being an excellent professional and public servant.

Personally, I have devoted my entire life to public service, first devoting ten (10) years of service to the P.R. Department of Justice and later, by devoting 30 years of service to the U.S. Department of Justice, where I held the position of Assistant U.S. Attorney (1988 – 1994), Executive Assistant (1994 – 2002), First Assistant (2002 – 2006) and that of United States Attorney (2006 – 2019).

Having closely worked with members of the P.R. District federal judiciary, I can personally attest to the need of upholding the highest standards of professionalism and substantive qualifications from those chosen to fill such an honorable position. I know the caliber of those who have integrated and currently serve the federal judiciary, the prestige and public confidence deposited in our federal court and have first-hand knowledge of society's needs in Puerto Rico.

The Court is about to experience seismic transformational changes, as three (3) of its seven (7) active judgeships have turned vacant within a year, while the two (2) junior members of the court, although highly competent and qualified judges, have been on the district bench for only three years or less. This makes the court vulnerable. Puerto Rico needs a judicial nominee with vast and proven litigation experience, integrity, and unquestionable commitment to the rule of law who can hit the ground running upon appointment. That candidate, without a doubt, is María Antongiorgi.

I have known Ms. Antongiorgi for over twenty (20) years, and I can attest that it is rare for someone to possess the vast and well-rounded experience and credentials that Ms. Antongiorgi has for the position of District Judge. A trailblazer on her own right, Ms. Antongiorgi attained partner status in the firm of McConnell Valdés, LLC, Puerto Rico's largest and premier law firm, in record time (only five years); becoming one of only five (5) female partners out of thirty-six (36) at the time of her appointment. Regarded as one of the best litigators of the Firm, Ms. Antongiorgi served the Firm for twenty-three (23) years during which she developed a vast experience in federal and state civil litigation, having been the lead counsel in over forty-five (45) trials, and managing hundreds of cases, including class actions, group actions and complex cases with issues of first impression. She was the lead counsel in some of the most important cases handled by the firm, some of which were precedent setting in Puerto Rico. Her command of the law and the rules of evidence is exceptional.

María also has several years of experience in federal criminal defense work under Criminal Justice Act, providing criminal defense to indigent individuals charged in federal court. Thus, I can attest to her commitment to the rule of law.

For the past four (4) years she has held the positions of Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Court. Because of her current duties she stands in a privileged position, partnering with the Chief Judge in the Court's administration, and in the design of protocols and guidelines regarding case management, trial proceedings and jury selection processes, among others. In the development of these procedures, Ms. Antongiorgi's knowledge on 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> amendment rights proved to be crucial. She has a superb knowledge of court governance and federal judiciary policies and practices. Since her years in private practice, Ms. Antongiorgi has been a regular collaborator of the Court as it pertains to training for judicial officers and court personnel on EEO or EDR matters, protocols and procedures and Outreach programs. More so, currently she is also an active member of all court committees (Local Rules, Bar Examination, Criminal Justice Act, and Jury Utilization, among others), distinction that she shares only with the Chief

Judge. Her experience and knowledge in federal litigation, criminal matters, and court governance, makes her a unique and ideal candidate for the federal bench.

Ms. Antongiorgi is well respected in the legal community and possess the trust and confidence of members of the bar and all District Judges.

I have no doubt that Ms. Antongiorgi has all the credentials, the necessary substantive knowledge, the required litigation experience, and the matured balanced character and soundness of judgment that are necessary to become an outstanding district judge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rosa E. Rodríguez-Vélez'.

Rosa E. Rodríguez-Vélez, Esq.