

*The Justice Harry J. Elam Judicial Conference*

September 11, 2022

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

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: Nomination of Margaret Guzman to the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

As the President of the Justice Harry J. Elam Judicial Conference, I am honored to have this opportunity to write in support of the nomination of our member, the Honorable Margaret Guzman to the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Without question, she is exceptionally well qualified for this position and we applaud the President's decision to nominate her to this very important position.

Apart from my role as President of the Elam Judicial Conference (an organization of judges of color in Massachusetts), I can speak from personal knowledge as I have known Judge Guzman since 1992 when she began a long and distinguished turn as a public defender with the Committee for Public Counsel Services. I was then a practicing attorney specializing in criminal defense and civil rights so our paths crossed on occasion in the pursuit of justice for our respective clients. What I can say without fear of contradiction is that as an attorney, Judge Guzman was a dedicated and highly skilled advocate who took on some of the toughest cases for defendants who, in the eyes of many, did not deserve the excellent representation she provided to them. She served in that same capacity in the federal courts of Massachusetts where her work on behalf of indigent criminal defendants was equally laudable.

When Judge Guzman was appointed to the bench in 2009, our paths crossed once again as I was then a judge on the Massachusetts Superior Court. As a judge, I know that she earned the respect of the bar and her colleagues for her diligence, intellect and commitment to justice. Her reputation as a fair jurist who always came into the courtroom prepared with a sound knowledge of the law of the case before her has long been cemented. She is extremely smart but she never wielded her intelligence as a cudgel over lawyers who may have underestimated her or who may simply have been unprepared on the issues to be decided. Her temperament is one that other judges admire and aspire to emulate. She is one who appreciates that being a judge carries

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responsibilities beyond the courtroom. As you will see from the summary of her extra-judicial activities, she has been fully engaged in serving the bar and the profession as a lecturer and participant in continuing education programs for judges and lawyers. It is a testament to her standing in the judiciary that her participation has been sought so often and that she has responded generously with her time and expertise. It is little wonder then that she was chosen as First Justice of the Ayer District Court, a job that demands prodigious energy, the skill to manage the expectations of an often skeptical and untrusting public, and the ability to work collaboratively with her colleagues in carrying out the mission of the court.

Inasmuch as the Elam Judicial Conference is an organization committed to the goal of a diverse judiciary, we add one last note on the historic nature of this nomination. While we applaud this nomination of the first Hispanic person to the federal bench in the District of Massachusetts, we hasten to add that nothing is lost in this nod to history. As her record reflects, Judge Guzman is exceptionally well qualified for this honor. Her journey in the law exemplifies that of the many well-qualified lawyers and judges of color who await an opportunity to serve without the constraint of traditions that, more often than not, have disfavored their judicial aspirations.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Judge Guzman's nomination. Thank you for your attention.

Very truly yours,



Geraldine S. Hines  
Associate Justice  
Massachusetts Supreme  
Judicial Court (Ret.)