

October 12, 2021

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

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

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are board members of the State Justice Institute (SJI), and we are writing in strong support of our colleague, Judge Hernán Vera, for the position of federal district judge.

SJI is a non-profit corporation created by federal law to improve the quality of justice by providing grants to state court systems throughout the country. We are governed by an 11-member board of directors appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Prior to the COVID pandemic, our normal practice was to hold each of our quarterly board meetings in a different state, and to visit with representatives from that state's Supreme Court to learn more about the specific challenges facing those local courts.

Hernán was appointed to the SJI in 2010. As a nationally-recognized leader in the legal aid community, Hernán has brought a unique perspective to our board, and has helped us analyze and assess grant applications in areas of vital need to our courts – including grants involving language access, *pro se* litigants, immigration issues affecting the courts, and many others crucial programmatic areas.

Judge Vera's experience on the national and local stages as an advocate for litigants of limited means, coupled with his collegial working style, strong work ethic, breadth of legal knowledge, and firm stance for equal and fair access to the courts, have made him an invaluable ally in the cause for justice.

He has the package of skill sets that we admire in the best judges, and we endorse him without reservation for appointment to the federal bench.

Sincerely,

Chase T. Rogers
Chief Justice, Connecticut Supreme Court (Ret.)
Former SJI Board Chair

John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Kentucky
SJI Board Chair

Jonathan Lippman
Chief Judge of New York Court of Appeal (Ret.)

David V. Brewer
Associate Justice, Oregon Supreme Court (Ret.)