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February 26, 2021

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Via U.S. Mail

The Hon. Dana Remus, Esq.
White House Counsel
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Support for The Honorable John P. Howard, III
for the position of Associate Judge
District of Columbia Court of Appeals

Dear White House Counsel:

Washington Council of Lawyers is pleased to express its support for The Honorable John P. Howard, III, for the position of Associate Judge on the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. It is based upon Judge Howard's impressive record of tireless pro bono service, distinguished work as a solo practitioner and an administrative law judge, and his commitment to serving his community that Washington Council of Lawyers submits this letter of support to the Judicial Nomination Commission to consider Judge P. Howard, III, for appointment to this position.

Washington Council of Lawyers is the public-interest bar association for the District of Columbia. Our membership includes lawyers from all sectors of the legal community, legal professionals, law students, and others committed to advancing access to justice issues in our community. Washington Council of Lawyers supports strong judicial candidates who have shown a firm commitment to promoting equal access to justice and serving marginalized populations. Judge Howard's legal career is consistent with our mission of public and professional service.

During his time as a law student, a practicing attorney and now as an administrative law judge, Judge Howard's legal journey has bent toward public interest and pro bono work and he is an advocate for access to justice for all. In his first year of law school, Judge Howard was hired as part of the inaugural class of Pro Bono Scholars at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld LLP ("Akin Gump"). During his second year of law school, he worked at the Tahirih Justice Center as a legal intern taking on representation of indigent veterans, asylum work, and joining the firm's team for a Supreme Court appeal of a capital case.

He also has experience handling Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) immigration claims. Before leaving law school, Judge Howard earned enough pro bono hours to exceed Georgetown Law’s Pro Bono Pledge, clerked at the D.C. Commission on Human Rights, and developed an immigration workplace raid first responder program and training with his classmates that was ultimately taught at local law schools, presented at Yale’s Rebellious Lawyering Conference, and pitched to the Monthly Pro Bono Luncheon of area law firms. He also began volunteering with the Street Law Program at that time.

Following a federal clerkship with the United States District Court for Maryland, Judge Howard joined the Washington, D.C. office of Akin Gump as one of the firm’s first two Pro Bono Scholars, where he handled several pro bono cases as part of the firm’s SSI SWAT team and successfully represented indigent individuals before the Social Security Administration. His practice also included asylum matters, VAWA immigration claims, landlord tenant matters, small business matters, and he volunteered with local schools and intake clinics.

Following his time with Akin Gump, Judge Howard briefly relocated to Houston, Texas, to join his wife, where he was a solo practitioner and continued to provide pro bono representation to indigent clients. As a note, Judge Howard represented two long-standing historically African American churches in litigation that threatened their existence, one of which that resulted in a significant ruling from a Texas court of appeal on the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine after he returned to the District. After two and a half years in Texas, Judge Howard returned to the District as an Administrative Law Judge at the D.C. Commission on Human Rights (“Commission”). During his time as an administrative law judge, Judge Howard has authored two manuals, reviewed by his Chief Judge, aimed at non-attorneys on the process at the D.C. Commission on Human Rights in hopes of helping unrepresented individuals. He has also taught the D.C. Human Rights Act at Georgetown Law and across high schools in the District through the D.C. Youth Human Rights Ambassadors partnership with the Street Law Program.

Since his appointment as an administrative law judge with the D.C. Office of Administrative Hearings (“OAH”) in May 2018, Judge Howard has served as a member of the Executive Court Technology, Court Management, and Law Student Recruitment Committees. He has led the Court’s Judicial Clerkship Pilot Program Initiative hiring recent graduates to support the judges and providing services in the Court’s Resource Center. Judge Howard has gone above and beyond to advocate for and provide equal access to justice for all so that unrepresented parties are able to understand and meaningfully participate in their respective hearings. His decisions are written in plain language that is more easily understood and fully explains legal terms and concepts and individuals’ rights.

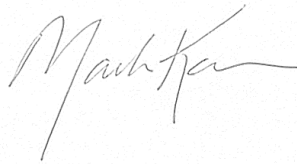
In addition to his work, Judge Howard has taught continuing legal education courses with the D.C. Bar and the Washington Bar Association on topics including litigating at the D.C. Commission on Human Rights, court technology, evidence and e-discovery. He also volunteered his time with the D.C. Office of Human Rights Fair Housing Symposium for a number of years. He has served as a guest lecturer in the employment discrimination class at Georgetown University Law Center for the past six years.

Judge Howard has taught in the externship program at Georgetown Law and recruited diverse faculty into the program to aid in ensuring that law students are educated on their options for post-graduate employment to include public interest opportunities.

Judge Howard is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and providing extraordinary opportunities to underrepresented and marginalized communities. His former and current law clerks come from diverse backgrounds, such as Native Washingtonians, veterans, asylees, and non-traditional students, and possess many diverse traits, skills and abilities. Judge Howard has held numerous leadership positions in prestigious organizations and institutions, including the D.C. Association of Administrative Law Judges, the Washington Bar Association, Georgetown Law Black Law Students Association, Howard University Law School, George Washington Law School, and the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, just to name a few.

Judge Howard's knowledge of the law, professional experience, and his deep commitment to serving the residents of the District undoubtedly distinguish him as a candidate for the position of Associate Judge on the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Accordingly, Washington Council of Lawyers supports his nomination to this position and submits that the Honorable John P. Howard, III, is uniquely qualified to serve in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Kovner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Kovner
President
Washington Council of Lawyers