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May 3, 2021

Via Email and U.S. Mail

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Tracy Brinkley Nutall, Executive Director  
D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission  
515 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 235  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Support for Bonnie Robin-Vergeer for the Position of  
Associate Judge, District of Columbia Court of Appeals

Dear Honorable Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

Washington Council of Lawyers is pleased to express its support for Ms. Bonnie Robin-Vergeer for the position of Associate Judge on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Washington Council of Lawyers has determined that Ms. Robin-Vergeer is not only exceptionally qualified to serve as a jurist, but she has dedicated herself to a career in public service. Washington Council of Lawyers wholeheartedly endorses Ms. Robin-Vergeer for 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. Ms. Robin-Vergeer has demonstrated that commitment throughout her career.

Ms. Robin-Vergeer has devoted her legal career to providing pro bono and public interest legal services and ensuring access to justice for disenfranchised citizens and communities. Following a federal clerkship with the Honorable Stanley A. Weigel for the Northern District of California, she provided pro bono services while working as an associate in two private law firms, Williams & Connolly LLP and Zuckerman Spaeder LLP, where she spent a substantial number of hours researching and preparing post-conviction briefs in a death penalty case. She also handled other criminal and habeas corpus appeals on a pro bono basis.

Ms. Robin-Vergeer served as an interim staff attorney in the Employment Project of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, where she provided free legal services to fight unlawful discrimination and to promote social justice, including combating unlawful discrimination in the workplace. In addition, she provided public interest legal services while serving as a supervising attorney and teaching fellow in the Appellate Litigation Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center, where she supervised law students in providing free legal services in court-appointed appeals in federal appellate courts. She represented low-income clients, many of whom were incarcerated, in civil rights, criminal, and habeas corpus actions, primarily in the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the District of Columbia and Fourth Circuits. She also prepared petitions for certiorari in the United States Supreme Court on behalf of her clients. From January 1999 – October 2000, Ms. Robin-Vergeer served as Minority Counsel for the Subcommittee on Youth Violence for then-Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. on the Senate Judiciary Committee, where she was responsible for addressing civil rights, constitutional issues, federal court administration, civil legal reform and reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 aimed at protecting women from domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and facilitating enforcement of protection orders and improving access to immigration protections for battered immigrant women.

Ms. Robin-Vergeer then became senior attorney at the Public Citizen Litigation Group, a non-profit, public interest law firm that provides free legal services to both individual clients and organizations in consumer health and safety, open government, administrative law, First Amendment, and class action cases in courts across the country. She had the opportunity to brief and argue cases in federal district courts, federal courts of appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court, including a Supreme Court case in which she represented a state prisoner who brought a federal habeas corpus petition claiming he was denied due process. Although Public Citizen does not usually handle criminal cases, it made an exception when the Supreme Court appointed her to represent the defendant and the Court ruled 6-3 that the defendant had not procedurally defaulted his federal constitutional claims, remanding for further proceedings.

Ms. Robin-Vergeer served as the Director of the Barbara McDowell Appellate Advocacy Project at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, where she supervised the organization's litigation of appeals, primarily in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, worked with staff attorneys and other organizations to identify significant emerging or unresolved legal issues in the District and to develop ways of addressing them that would benefit persons living in poverty. She supervised attorneys in areas of law, such as family law, housing, consumer protections, unemployment compensation, other public benefits, and small claims court.

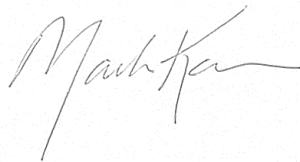
Following her work at the Legal Aid Society, Ms. Robin-Vergeer joined the Office of Legal Counsel in the United States Department of Justice as an Attorney-Advisor, where she researched and prepared formal written opinions and gave informal advice to help resolve challenging legal questions raised by the White House, Executive Branch agencies, and other Department of Justice components. She also reviewed pending legislations for constitutionality, and Executive Orders and proposed Justice Department regulations for form and legality, providing legal advice regarding how to correct deficiencies.

Since April 2014, Ms. Robin-Vergeer has served in numerous capacities in the Appellate Section of the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice, first as a line attorney, then as Special Litigation Counsel, and currently as Deputy Chief, where she has litigated appeals in the federal appellate courts to enforce federal civil rights laws on behalf of the United States. She has successfully handled and supervised both civil and criminal appeals enforcing numerous federal statutes that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, national origin, and other grounds. She has also handled, supervised, and argued appeals in the U.S. courts of appeals and assisted the Office of the Solicitor General in briefing before the U.S. Supreme Court cases involving civil rights issues.

Ms. Robin-Vergeer has been a staunch advocate in protecting and expanding access to justice, both legally and legislatively, by protecting the rights of consumers, enforcing civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination on various bases, helping clients living in poverty, and advocating for prisoners' rights. Her exemplary record of professional service illustrates her fitness to serve as a jurist based upon the fundamental professional, communication and organizational skills used to evaluate candidates for judicial appointments. Her life-long commitment to pro bono service and her leadership roles reflect her passion for public service and the Court will be well-served by her appointment as an Associate Judge on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

Ms. Robin-Vergeer has advanced the goal of equal access to justice throughout her career, and Washington Council of Lawyers is pleased to recommend her to you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark Kovner".

Mark Kovner  
President  
Washington Council of Lawyers