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Promoting Public-Interest Law and Pro Bono Service

January 10, 2022

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Mr. Jon S. Bouker

Co-Chair, Norton Federal Law Enforcement Nominating Commission

Re: Letter of Support for The Honorable Zia Faruqui, Nominee for Appointment to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Dear Mr. Bouker:

Washington Council of Lawyers is pleased to submit this letter in support of the Honorable Zia Faruqui for appointment to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Judge Faruqui's record demonstrates a deep commitment to pro bono representation, public interest law, fairness, and diversity—as well as keen analytical skills and sound judicial decision-making.

Washington Council of Lawyers is a public interest bar association located in the District of Columbia. Our membership includes a broad range of lawyers, legal professionals, law students, and others committed to advancing issues important to the public interest legal community. We base our endorsements on a candidate's demonstrated commitment to pro bono and public interest law issues, and personal experience in promoting equal access to justice.

Judge Faruqui has served as a United States Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court of the District of Columbia since September 2020. As a Magistrate Judge, he has presided over a wide array of both federal criminal and civil matters, including the U.S. Capitol insurrection cases.

In his role as a judge, Judge Faruqui has led efforts to reform the criminal justice system. Mindful that equal access to justice requires a fair and compassionate system of justice, Judge Faruqui is one of the presiding judges of D.C.'s Reentry Court. This program is a specialized program which assists returning citizens as they seek to reenter society after leaving prison. The program provides professional mentoring, therapeutic services, financial planning, and connections to employment opportunities.

Judge Faruqui's work on criminal justice reform does not end there. Judge Faruqui is working with D.C. Jail to increase educational opportunities via remote learning technology and he is currently spearheading a new pilot program called the Restorative Justice Initiative. His work in the criminal justice system has helped to reaffirm the dignity and safety of our most vulnerable community members.

As the first Muslim Judge to be appointed to the Federal Court in Washington D.C., Judge Faruqui has also devoted much of his career to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. In 2011, the U.S. Attorney appointed Judge Faruqui as the Muslim-Arab outreach coordinator. In that position, Judge Faruqui has led religious and cultural sensitivity training programs for law enforcement and spoken regularly at community events about civil liberties and tolerance. Judge Faruqui also serves on the Advisory Council of the Islamic Scholarship Foundation (ISF).

Driving by his deep commitment to public service, Judge Faruqui served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney from 2008 to 2020 prior to serving as a Magistrate Judge. His work as an AUSA focused on national security and cybercrime prosecutions. From 2004 to 2008, Judge Faruqui was an associate at Wilkie Farr and Gallagher LLP, where he litigated complex corporate litigation cases. While there, he also dedicated hundreds of hours to pro bono work, representing survivors of domestic violence and homeless individuals trying to access much needed benefits.

Reflecting his consistent commitment to community service in our city, Judge Faruqui serves on the Board of the Washington D.C.-based nonprofit, Jobs for Homeless People, which operates multiple shelters and vocational programs throughout D.C. and Maryland. In his role as a board member, he has conducted site visits, fundraised, and engaged in community outreach on behalf of some of our most vulnerable community members.

Throughout his legal career, Judge Faruqui has demonstrated his commitment to public interest law, pro bono work, and community service on behalf of the low-income residents of the District of Columbia. Washington Council of Lawyers believes Judge Faruqui would be a strong addition to the federal court bench, and we enthusiastically endorse his application for appointment to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Kovner".

Mark L. Kovner
President
Washington Council of Lawyers