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*Promoting Public-Interest Law and Pro Bono Service*

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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 two presiding judges on D.C.'s Reentry Court, 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. In 2022, he worked with a team of psychologists to establish a program through which graduate students will offer cognitive behavioral therapy to those re-entering society. Since its inception, graduates of the program have had a zero-recidivism rate.

Judge Faruqui's work on criminal justice reform does not end there. Judge Faruqui is working with the D.C. Jail to increase educational opportunities via remote learning technology, and he spearheaded the Restorative Justice Initiative. Judge Faruqui recently led a program at the D.C. Jail to hear from the residents about their ideas on how to tackle gun violence in the city. He has

has worked on expanding education initiatives at the D.C. Jail, including creating a partnership between the Georgetown Prison and Justice Initiative and MIT to begin coding classes for the residents. Judge Faruqi also successfully spearheaded an effort to hire the first-ever in-house social worker for the Court, who will play a much-needed role in connecting returning citizens with available resources from community partners.

Judge Faruqi provides encouragement and inspiration through his community activities, criminal justice reform work, and speaking engagements. In December 2022, he spoke at the Anacostia Arts Center event, *"Powering Up Returning Citizens."* The event, led by the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizens, centered on technology barriers that impede reentry and allowed community partners the opportunity to promote computer literacy and used government grant funds to give returning citizens—including re-entry court participants—new laptops and free internet access. He served as the commencement speaker at the 2022 graduation ceremony at the D.C. Jail, where over 20 students received diplomas, GEDs, and vocational certificates. Judge Faruqi served as a panelist at the 2022 Juvenile Justice Reform Symposium at the UDC David A. Clarke School of Law and partnered with MIT to start an annual science fair at the D.C. Juvenile Detention Facility (YSC). 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 Faruqi has also devoted much of his career to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. In 2011, the U.S. Attorney appointed Judge Faruqi as the Muslim-Arab outreach coordinator. In that position, Judge Faruqi has led religious and cultural sensitivity training programs for law enforcement and spoken regularly at community events about civil liberties and tolerance. Judge Faruqi also serves on the Advisory Council of the Islamic Scholarship Foundation (ISF).

Driven by his deep commitment to public service, Judge Faruqi 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 Faruqi was an associate at Wilkie Farr and Gallagher LLP. While at Wilkie, he dedicated many 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 Faruqi 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 Faruqi 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 Faruqi 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,



Deborah Cuevas Hill  
President  
Washington Council of Lawyers