



## Asian Pacific American Bar Association

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### ***VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL***

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

***Re: Letter in Support of the Confirmation of the Honorable  
Florence Y. Pan for District Judge of the U.S. District Court for  
the District of Columbia***

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Durbin,  
and Ranking Member Grassley:

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association of the Greater Washington, D.C. Area, Inc. ("APABA-DC"), a 501(c)(6) organization now in its 40th year, is the oldest and largest association of Asian Pacific American attorneys in the greater Washington, D.C. area. APABA-DC is pleased to support the Honorable Florence Y. Pan, who President Biden has nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Judge Pan is well known to APABA-DC, thanks to her longstanding engagement in our organization's professional activities. She has participated in numerous APABA-DC programs, including our annual conference on clerkship and internship opportunities for law students, other substantive panel discussions, and historical re-enactments of Supreme Court cases that had an impact on the

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legal rights of Asian Pacific Americans. She has also worked closely with other diverse bar associations in the District of Columbia, including the Hispanic Bar Association of D.C.

APABA-DC endorsed Judge Pan in 2009, when she successfully sought to become an Associate Judge of the D.C. Superior Court, and we endorsed her when she previously sought to become a District Judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In 2016, Judge Pan's nomination was unanimously approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee, but unfortunately, her nomination expired before a Senate vote. Judge Pan's confirmation to join the bench of the U.S. District Court at this time would contribute greatly to the administration of justice in the District of Columbia.

Judge Pan's professional qualifications are myriad. In her nearly 12 years on the D.C. Superior Court, she has served in the Family, Criminal, and Civil divisions. During her recent tenure in the Civil division, she has presided over roughly 400 cases, many of which have involved numerous parties and complex issues, similar to cases that are brought before the District Court. As a former federal prosecutor who practiced in the D.C. District Court for years, she is very familiar with this particular court and those who practice there. She is well versed in the federal and local rules of civil and criminal procedure, and knows how to run a courtroom and manage a busy docket.

Judge Pan demonstrates the kind of judicial temperament that one would want to see in a federal district judge. Through her interactions with a wide variety of parties, counsel, pro se litigants, and types of cases, Judge Pan appreciates that not only is it important to work hard and make the right rulings, but it is also important to appreciate the human element of each case, and to exercise judgment and empathy to ensure that all parties feel that the judicial process is fair, and that they have been heard.

Judge Pan has devoted her career to public service. She began her legal career with two prestigious federal court clerkships with the Honorable Michael B. Mukasey, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, and then the Honorable Ralph K. Winter, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. She also gained valuable trial and appellate litigation experience during her 15 years at the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia,

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where she rose to the position of Deputy Chief of the Appellate Division, and at the U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division.

Judge Pan's commitment to public service extends beyond her professional career. Through volunteering and mentoring, Judge Pan has demonstrated an impressive commitment to the Asian Pacific American community and to the larger D.C. community. Judge Pan has always made time to mentor law students and interns in the chambers of D.C. Superior Court judges, and she is actively involved in her children's school, where she recently formed a competitive debate team, now in its second year.

Judge Pan's personal background is compelling. Judge Pan's grandparents fled from mainland China to Taiwan in 1948, when the Communist Party came to power. Her parents emigrated to the United States from Taiwan in 1961. Judge Pan was born in New York, and raised in Tenafly, New Jersey, where she attended public schools. As a teenager, she worked at a Chinese restaurant owned by her aunt and uncle. She received her two undergraduate degrees, *summa cum laude*, from the University of Pennsylvania, and her law degree, with distinction, from Stanford Law School. Judge Pan has said that becoming a judge was particularly meaningful to her and her family, because her grandfather was a judge on an administrative court in China, before being forced to flee to Taiwan.

APABA-DC strongly believes that the federal courts should reflect the communities they serve. Judge Pan has served as a role model and mentor to many, especially to those in the Asian Pacific American community. Through her conduct, she demonstrates her recognition of the important role that judges play in their communities, on and off the bench. Judge Pan was the first Asian Pacific American to be appointed to any court in the District of Columbia, and if confirmed, she would be the first Asian Pacific American female judge to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Considering the troubling rise of hate crimes and acts of discrimination targeting the Asian Pacific American community throughout the United States, including in the D.C. area, it is vitally important that the District Court reflect the diversity of the country and the local community, and that it include jurists who are sensitive and responsive to the needs and concerns of the Asian Pacific American community.

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For all of these reasons, we urge the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate to confirm Judge Pan to become a judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Thank you for your consideration of APABA-DC's comments in support of Judge Pan. Please contact us if we can provide further assistance.

Sincerely,

Erica Lai  
President, 2020-2021