

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

Date: January 20, 2012

To: The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
United States Senate

Fax No: 202.224.9516

From: Brenda Skinner on behalf of Mehpara A. Suleman

No. of Pages (inc. this page): 4

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PLEASE CALL 312-321-4200 AND ASK FOR: Brenda Skinner, ext. 3488

COVER MESSAGE:

Please deliver to The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman.



ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
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VIA Fax: 202.224.9516

January 20, 2012

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The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

United States Senate

224 Senate Dirksen Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Application of **John Z. Lee** for Judicial Vacancy,
United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois

Dear Senator Leahy:

On behalf of the Asian American Bar Association of Greater Chicago ("AABA"), I am pleased to write this letter in support of John Z. Lee's nomination to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. If he is confirmed, Mr. Lee would be only the second Asian American to serve as an Article III judge in Illinois, and the first Korean American Article III judge in the Midwest.

AABA is the largest bar organization representing the interests of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students in the Midwest. We are deeply committed to supporting the appointment of qualified Asian Pacific Americans ("APAs") to the judiciary, where Asian Pacific Americans are significantly underrepresented. Nowhere is the underrepresentation of APAs more apparent than on the federal bench. Mr. Lee has a distinguished record of professional accomplishments, and a long record of service to the community. It is therefore our distinct pleasure to recommend and support the confirmation of Mr. Lee, as he is exceedingly well-qualified to serve as a United States District Court Judge.

First and foremost, Mr. Lee is a highly skilled lawyer who has years of significant experience in the federal courts. After graduating *magna cum laude* from Harvard University and *cum laude* from Harvard Law School, Mr. Lee served as a trial attorney at the United States Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division. There, he tried cases arising under federal environmental statutes. Mr. Lee has also practiced with Mayer, Brown & Platt, Grippo & Elden and, since 1999, Freeborn & Peters, where he is

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a partner. For most of Mr. Lee's private practice career, he has focused on the litigation of complex commercial disputes involving antitrust, intellectual property, and business tort issues. In this regard, Mr. Lee is well-known as a lawyer with tremendous ability who can meticulously evaluate legal and factual issues while remaining focused on the needs of his client. Mr. Lee also has significant experience in negotiating complex settlements. He is well-known for his practical, common-sense approach to legal issues and disputes.

Other organizations have recognized Mr. Lee during his distinguished legal career, cementing his outstanding reputation in the legal community. For example, in 2004, Mr. Lee was selected by the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and Chicago Lawyer publications as one of "40 Attorneys Under 40 in Illinois to Watch." He has also been selected as a "Leading Lawyer" in Commercial Litigation and Class Action/Mass Tort Defense Law by the Leading Lawyers Network.

Despite his busy litigation practice, Mr. Lee has given generously of his time to the local community. Indeed, he has gone beyond mere participation by taking on leadership positions within numerous public-interest institutions that assist minority and low-income communities. He is currently president of the Board of Directors for the Coordinated Advice and Referral Program for Legal Services ("CARPLS"), a legal aid service that provides assistance to low-income residents of Cook County through a Legal Aid Hotline and several court-based advice desks. Mr. Lee is also President of the Board of Directors of Asian Human Services, which provides social services to low-income, Asian American immigrant and refugee communities. He has served on its board since 2006. Through Asian Human Services, Mr. Lee has had the privilege of using his Korean language skills to better represent non-English speaking clients.

As a partner and co-chair of the Diversity Committee at Freeborn & Peters, Mr. Lee has encouraged his firm to become a major supporter of the programs of AABA. Through the support of influential attorneys such as Mr. Lee, AABA has been able to expand its programming, including opening a second *pro bono* legal clinic, establishing a law foundation, and creating a mentoring program. In the interest of full disclosure, Mr. Lee currently serves as a director on AABA's Board of Directors. His participation with AABA as a board member underscores his commitment to the APA community, and his involvement informs AABA's direct knowledge of Mr. Lee's accomplishments and qualifications. Mr. Lee is an active member or co-chair of several AABA board committees, including the Business Development and In House Counsel/Partners Committees, which provide networking opportunities and training sessions to help both younger and more experienced Asian American attorneys advance their careers.

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AABA proudly and unequivocally supports the nomination of John Z. Lee to serve as a Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. We respectfully urge his swift confirmation for the benefit of this distinguished Court.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mehpara A. Suleman
President
Asian American Bar Association
of Greater Chicago