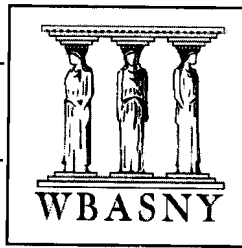


Women's Bar

OF THE STATE



Association

OF NEW YORK

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October 4, 2011

Honorable Patrick J. Leahy

Chairman

Committee on the Judiciary

United States Senate

224 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Ronnie Abrams, Esq. to the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

Dear Senator Leahy:

On behalf of the more than 3,800 members of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York ("WBASNY"), I have the honor to support the nomination of Ronnie Abrams, Esq. as a United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York. Ms. Abrams is clearly very well qualified to become a United States District Judge. WBASNY believes that Ms. Abrams will serve with great distinction, that her nomination should be promptly approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and that she should be confirmed quickly by the full Senate. Throughout New York State, there are eminently qualified women lawyers and judges who are ready to serve on the Federal courts with distinction. WBASNY remains concerned that we not lose the progress made in the Southern District of New York to include women on the court in meaningful numbers. Ms. Abrams' confirmation, which should and will proceed on its merits, will further that important goal.

Ms. Abrams is the first nominee of our respected Senator Kirsten Gillibrand to the Federal courts in the State of New York. WBASNY applauds Senator Gillibrand for her thoughtful, excellent choice. Not only is Ms. Abrams well qualified by reason of her professional background, as we detail below, but her personal qualities and her own efforts to increase the diversity of the legal profession add further depth to a career marked by stellar accomplishment and devotion to public service.

After winning a clerkship for the Honorable Thomas P. Griesa, then Chief Judge of the District Court for the Southern District of New York, Ms. Abrams joined Davis Polk & Wardwell as a litigation associate. There she not only represented a wide variety of corporate clients in matters involving legal theories ranging from the Lanham Act to the Securities Act to libel, but she also handled a number of pro bono cases, including representation of battered women. From 1998 to 2008, Ms. Abrams served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York in a number of units where she gained experience in a broad range of cases. Her abilities were recognized by promotions to the positions of Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division and Chief of the General Crimes Unit. In those roles, she oversaw and was responsible for the training of hundreds of prosecutors, and participated in policy-making and management decisions. In both positions, Ms. Abrams supervised cases involving crimes against children, in addition to the cases involving violent crime and financial fraud of all types that are the most typical workload of a United States Attorney's office.

WBASNY is particularly impressed by Ms. Abrams' decision, on leaving her position at the US Attorney's office, to change the focus of her legal work entirely to pro bono work. Her commitment to public service is extraordinary evidence of a fundamental belief in the need to do justice, and, we believe, is an important reason why the Judiciary Committee should look favorably on her nomination. As Special Counsel for Pro Bono at Davis Polk, Ms. Abrams has personally handled and also supervised pro bono matters ranging from criminal cases to Fair Labor Standards Act litigations to veterans' disability claims and matters for battered women. Among other things, she has supervised trials in Family Court on behalf of women seeking orders of protection and FLSA cases brought by workers seeking to enforce the minimum wage and overtime laws. In addition, she has been an adjunct professor at Columbia Law School since 2008.

Ms. Abrams serves as counsel to New York's Justice Task Force, a permanent task force created by the Honorable Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York, to examine the causes of wrongful convictions and recommend reforms to safeguard against any such convictions in the future. Because a representative of WBASNY serves on the Task Force, we have had an opportunity to observe and to form a very favorable view of Ms. Abram's professionalism and skill. Ms. Abrams' work on the Task Force demonstrates that she cares very much about getting the right answer. Participants in the work of the Task Force have told us that she has even-handedly given thoughtful attention to the multiple, often conflicting viewpoints held by members of the Task Force and has skillfully reconciled those views to enable the Task Force to achieve meaningful recommendations.

Finally, in all of her senior positions, Ms. Abrams has made it a priority to mentor young lawyers. She has personally mentored both men and women, and has been sensitive to the particular issues that women lawyers face and the differences in men's and women's strengths and weaknesses. Women lawyers who benefited from her mentoring have said that Ms. Abrams never stints on the time and advice that she offers to her younger colleagues, and that her support has been of great assistance in their ability to navigate the legal profession and rise to positions of responsibility themselves. She empowers young lawyers who work with her to speak on those matters and to get credit for their contributions. WBASNY holds mentoring in the highest regard as a means of improving the diversity of our legal profession, and we know that women lawyers still face a lack of mentors and role models. She is conscious of the need for female role models. Her efforts in this regard reflect very favorably on Ms. Abrams and further evidence her professionalism and commitment to justice.

WBASNY urges the members of the Judiciary Committee to act favorably and quickly to send the nomination of Ronnie Abrams to the full Senate for prompt action.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Karen Richardson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" and last name "Richardson" clearly distinguishable.

Karen Richardson
President, WBASNY