

JONES DAY

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March 11, 2024

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chair
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Sparkle Sooknanan

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate:

We are partners in the law firm Jones Day. It is with great pleasure that we deliver this letter, which expresses our enthusiastic support for the United States Senate's confirmation of our former partner, Sparkle Sooknanan, to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Jones Day ranks among the most accomplished law firms in the world, and has more than 2,400 lawyers in 40 offices across five continents. Our current and former partners have served the United States in various capacities, in each branch of the government, in Democratic and Republican Administrations, for more than 100 years. Many of our country's most esteemed jurists had their start at Jones Day. Former Justice Antonin Scalia was an associate at Jones Day, and former partners Gregory Katsas on the District of Columbia Circuit and Jeffrey Sutton on the Sixth Circuit are currently among the many judges who are or have been a part of Jones Day. We are proud of the contributions our colleagues have made in service of this nation. We are confident that Sparkle, who has already devoted a substantial portion of her career to public service, will continue this proud tradition.

Sparkle is a gifted and fair-minded legal thinker who impressed clients and colleagues alike, initially as a Jones Day associate, and then as a Jones Day partner. She came to Jones Day following three judicial clerkships, first with Judge Eric Vitaliano of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, and then with Judge Guido Calabresi on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. After clerking for Judge Calabresi, Sparkle joined the United States Department of Justice as an Honors Program attorney in the Civil Division, Appellate Section, in 2012. Following her first tenure at the Justice Department, Sparkle was hired to clerk for the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor of the Supreme Court of the United States. Clerking for Justice Sotomayor during the 2013–2014 Term, Sparkle was the first—and is still the only—graduate of Brooklyn Law School to serve as a law clerk on the Supreme Court.

In October 2014, after her Supreme Court clerkship, Sparkle joined Jones Day in the Issues & Appeals practice in Washington, where she quickly established herself as a standout. As an Issues & Appeals lawyer, Sparkle proved a natural at the appellate skills of writing, analysis, and oral advocacy. She routinely crafted persuasive arguments in clear, elegant prose, often in remarkably short timeframes. She is a terrific oral advocate and often argued for Firm clients in both district and appellate courts.

Sparkle is well acquainted with the effort required to prepare for district court litigation. During her time at the Firm, Sparkle oversaw complex litigation teams and managed every phase of a case. She prepared pleadings, managed discovery and other fact development in large cases, worked with lay and expert witnesses and handled relationships with clients, co-counsel, and opposing counsel in skillful and exemplary fashion.

In a practice group full of extremely talented lawyers, including many former Supreme Court clerks, Sparkle distinguished herself through her extraordinary intellect, her stellar writing skills and her unparalleled work ethic. Sparkle also possesses an almost uncanny ability to process and digest high volumes of new information and quickly put it to effective use—all skills that will serve her particularly well as a district court judge.

Many of us bore witness to these traits when working directly with Sparkle on a series of complex cases. For several years, Sparkle headed a team handling a complicated bankruptcy matter that required her to manage multiple litigations proceeding through several different courts at the same time. The matter also required Sparkle, who was then an associate, to craft and make sophisticated and novel legal arguments. She performed well beyond her years, as evidenced by the fact that Sparkle appeared for argument in the First Circuit and prevailed over more experienced partners and seasoned Supreme Court advocates.

Sparkle brought the same energy and skills to representing pro bono clients. Sparkle spearheaded the defense of Charlottesville city council members who were sued for voting to remove Confederate monuments at the center of political violence there; represented indigent criminal defendants in a number of contexts; and participated in the Firm's Laredo Project, which provides representation to individuals in immigration detention at the border. She passionately embarked on these important pro bono matters on top of her substantial and time-consuming work for paying clients.

Sparkle's intellectual gifts are matched perhaps only by her work ethic and interpersonal skills. Sparkle left her home in Trinidad and Tobago at the age of 16 to attend college in the United States and worked her way through law school while maintaining a 4.0 grade point average. So it was no surprise to us that Sparkle did not take opportunity lightly, or that she worked incredibly hard to capitalize on it. And Sparkle showed that she is just as skilled at listening, understanding other points of view and connecting with everyone with whom she interacts. Throughout her time at Jones Day, Sparkle was known as someone who could

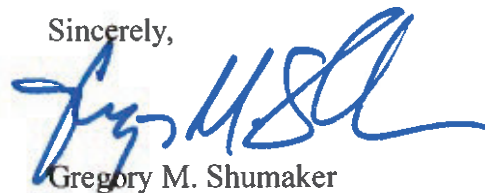
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appreciate all sides of an argument and make people feel heard. Sparkle formed strong relationships and worked with colleagues across the Firm, finding common ground even in areas of disagreement. In addition, Sparkle consistently used her talents and skills to mentor other lawyers. Even in the most demanding periods of work at the Firm, Sparkle took a special interest in helping more junior lawyers develop their own skills and judgment, guiding them in growth opportunities.

It likewise has been no surprise, but nevertheless a source of pride for the Firm, that Sparkle has had such a distinguished career in senior leadership roles at the Department of Justice in the past several years—first serving as Deputy Associate Attorney General in the Office of the Associate Attorney General and most recently as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division.

The qualities that Sparkle exhibited during her tenure at Jones Day earned her the respect and admiration of everyone she encountered—from the most junior paralegal to the Managing Partner of the Firm, from liberal Democrats to the most conservative Republicans. The scope of that sentiment is demonstrated by the many signatories to this letter, who span a broad range of political opinions and professional backgrounds. Those qualities make us confident that Sparkle will not only hit the ground running as a district court judge, but also that she will one day be recognized as among the finest jurists to take the bench. We respectfully urge you to advance her nomination to the full Senate and confirm her to the bench swiftly.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Shumaker

cc: Attachments

**JONES DAY US PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF
CONFIRMATION OF SPARKLE SOOKNANAN**

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