

May 15, 2023

Senator Richard Durbin  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Lindsey Graham  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

I write this letter to enthusiastically support Judge de Alba's nomination to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. I am an employment and labor attorney, representing the City of Fresno in administrative proceedings and also act as in-house counsel in personnel-related matters ensuring that disciplines are handled consistently and equitably throughout the various departments for the City of Fresno. Judge de Alba has been my mentor since 2018.

I had the pleasure of meeting Judge Ana de Alba in 2018 when she was presenting at an Elimination of Bias MCLE course; prior to Judge de Alba becoming a Judge on the Superior Court of the County of Fresno. I was so emotionally moved by her presentation as she shared her own personal experiences and struggles since they resonated so much with me. I immigrated to America with my parents, had to learn how to speak in English, am the first of my family to go to college, and to be in a professional career. After graduating from law school, I struggled with finding a job because of my unfamiliarity and lack of connection in the legal field. My parents did not speak English, not educated, and unable to provide any guidance or assistance as I attempted to navigate through the beginning of my professional career as a lawyer. I was starting to question whether I was meant to be an attorney because I lack the upbringing, background, and family support that most attorneys had. The fact that I was a minority Hmong woman and consistently mistaken as a court reporter or interpreter by judges and other attorneys contributed to more to the self-doubt.

Judge de Alba's compassion taught me I was not alone as a minority in the legal field. Without hesitation, I was immediately taken under Judge de Alba's wings as a mentee. Judge de Alba taught me the importance of having confidence in my knowledge and ability as an attorney. Because of her support and guidance, I obtained the confidence needed in my career as an attorney. I also learned how to be cognizant of my own biases to prevent others from experiencing what I had experienced. Her relentless effort of guiding and coaching has taught me how to positively handle the biases against minorities like me in the legal community. Most importantly, she taught me how to be an ethical, confident, compassionate, professional attorney. I have continued to look to Judge de Alba for leadership and guidance.

Judge de Alba is an exemplary jurist who is an excellent choice for the Ninth Circuit. Throughout the years that I have known Judge de Alba, she exhibits vast knowledge, passion, and respect for the law and the judicial system. She has always had a diligent and tireless work ethic in all that she does. I have witnessed her due diligence in handling important tasks by not only completing the task, but ensuring that all the procedural steps taken to complete the task are properly and ethically complied with. Although I have not appeared before Judge de Alba, those



that have had the opportunity to work for or appear before Judge de Alba have spoken extremely highly of her well-managed and organized courtroom. She is known to be meticulous in her case preparation to ensure that she understands each case thoroughly before she hears arguments. She is also known for the efficient, expeditious, and fair handling of her cases.

However, it is not just her professional qualities, but also her personal qualities that would make her a great appellate judge. Judge de Alba has a public servant's heart and is dedicated to serving her community. Even as a single parent, with a young child to take care of, Judge de Alba has selflessly devoted her time and effort to helping me and other young attorneys grow in our areas of practice. Through her powerful example, I have learned an immense amount, not only about the law, but also about how to navigate in my career with compassion and integrity. Judge de Alba's compassion for her community has influenced myself and others to follow in her footsteps.

In sum, Judge de Alba is an extraordinary and well-qualified nominee. Her humble upbringing gives her a perspective that is relatable to the majority of people in our society, which is very much needed in today's diverse society. I unconditionally support her nomination without hesitation and respectfully recommend that you confirm her to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Sincerely,



Mao Lee