



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

July 11, 2022

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing more than 130 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to strongly support the confirmation of Roopali H. Desai to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Ms. Desai is extremely qualified to join the Ninth Circuit. During her sixteen years in private practice, she has handled hundreds of trial and appellate matters across a wide range of issues, including representing hospitals in peer review proceedings; business clients in commercial disputes; and labor unions and individual candidates in political matters. No matter the legal dispute or client involved, Ms. Desai has consistently demonstrated a commitment to equal justice for all. This also proves to be a full circle moment, as she began her career clerking for the Honorable Mary Schroeder on the Ninth Circuit, the court to which she is now nominated.

Born in Canada to East Indian parents, Ms. Desai settled with her family in Phoenix, Arizona, as a child and went on to become a triple graduate of the University of Arizona. She originally planned a career in medicine and spent her summers volunteering in geriatric facilities. After receiving a master's degree in public health, however, she witnessed the troubling systems survivors of domestic and family violence faced and decided to pursue a career in public interest law.

Following her clerkship, Ms. Desai spent a year in the litigation practice group of Lewis & Roca LLP before joining her current firm, Coppersmith Brockelman PLC. Although Ms. Desai initially worked across practice areas ranging from complex civil litigation to employment law, over time she developed an expertise in constitutional law, election law, public law, and campaign finance. She was promoted to partner in 2013 and began leading the firm's Elections, Political, and Public Law practice group in 2014.

Ms. Desai has tried approximately 70 cases to verdict, judgment, or final decision and is known for her work on some of the highest-profile election lawsuits in Arizona. For example, she was instrumental in crafting and defending [Proposition 207](#), a voter initiative which led to the legalization of recreational marijuana in Arizona, and [Proposition 305](#), which overturned a massive expansion of Arizona's school-voucher program. In an

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ongoing case [Fann v. Kemp](#), she represents a nonprofit organization suing the Arizona Senate to compel disclosure of records relating to an audit of Maricopa County's 2020 election results. Outside of the election realm, Ms. Desai has fought for equal justice across a variety of other subject areas: she represented [labor unions](#) challenging the constitutionality of a law that made it more difficult to pay union dues; protected the tribal rights of the [Tohono O'odham Nation](#) to build a casino on its land; and wrote an *amicus* brief on behalf of [faith and nonsectarian organizations](#) arguing Arizona businesses should not have an unfettered right to refuse to serve same-sex couples.

Guided by the mantra of "pay it forward," Ms. Desai incorporates service into both her professional and personal life. In addition to her civil litigation caseload, she maintains a robust *pro bono* practice. Since 2013, she has represented the ACLU of Arizona in a public records case to obtain documents evidencing the Department of Child Safety's mishandling of child abuse and negligence cases. Ms. Desai also serves on the boards of the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, Save our Schools Arizona, and Just Communities Arizona. She has received national and local accolades for her public interest work, including being named one of *USA Today's* 2022 Women of the Year and the *Valle del Sol* 2021 Mom of the Year.

Finally, if confirmed, Ms. Desai would be the first South Asian person to serve on the Ninth Circuit. Despite its highly diverse general population, judges on our nation's largest appeals court are extremely homogenous in terms of race and gender. Ms. Desai's confirmation would bring critical demographic diversity to better reflect the diversity of our nation and this region. Given her exemplary qualifications and proven track record seeking justice, the Senate should swiftly confirm Roopali H. Desai to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Sincerely,

Rakim H.D. Brooks

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice