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The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

It is my pleasure to submit this letter in support of the nomination of my friend, Judge Hernán Vera, for the position of United States District Judge.

I first met Hernán in 1993, when he was a promising young law student participating in our firm's summer program. He was a standout Summer Associate, and a prized recruit. We were delighted when he accepted our invitation to return to our firm following a federal court clerkship and service as a MALDEF staff attorney.

For the next several years, I worked closely with Hernán on a variety of state and federal commercial litigation cases, and came to know him well. Even as a young associate, Hernán distinguished himself as a sophisticated lawyer with strong writing and analytical skills, a tireless work ethic, and a mature, calming way with clients and opposing counsel. He demonstrated the ability quickly to grasp difficult, nuanced legal concepts in a broad range of subjects. I also had the opportunity to observe Hernán in court, where he was unfailingly courteous, forthright and balanced as an advocate. As the years went by, I became comfortable giving Hernán ever-greater responsibility on cases, and he eagerly accepted that responsibility and demonstrated himself to be a master strategist. It was a pleasure observing sophisticated clients, as well as laypeople, immediately trust and admire Hernán and feel comfortable in his care.

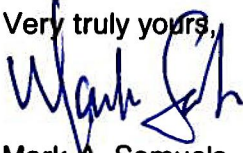
Hernán was always interested in pro bono work, and it therefore seemed natural when he decided to accept the CEO position at Public Counsel. For most of Hernán's tenure as CEO, I was a member of the Public Counsel board, and in that capacity was able to observe how effectively he oversaw that organization and drove it to tremendous success in a large number of impact cases, as well as many thousands of individual client representations. Along with the responsibility of running Public Counsel—a large, sprawling law firm in its own right—Hernán

also developed strong personal ties with each and every one of its many volunteer board members. It is not an exaggeration to say that Hernán was, and is, a beloved friend to all of us who were privileged to serve as a member of the Public Counsel board while he was its CEO.

Over the decades, I have known Hernán, I have also come to know him and his family on a personal level. Hernán is a gentle soul who cares for others in a most genuine, humble and endearing way. Hernán is a person of tremendous integrity, honor and personal character, and I cannot imagine him having made an enemy at any point in his life. His personal odyssey as the son of immigrants is truly inspirational, and I know him to be a role model and effective mentor to young lawyers of color.

I cannot recommend Judge Vera more highly for this position of tremendous public trust. I know that he would be a credit to our esteemed Central District of California bench, and I urge his speedy confirmation.

Very truly yours,



Mark A. Samuels
Partner & Vice-Chair
of O'MELVENY & MYERS LLP

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