

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DECEMBER 2017 FAIRFAX JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT
COURT JUDICIAL SCREENING

JOHN ARA KASSABIAN

John A. Kassabian resides in Annandale, Virginia. He was awarded a B.S. from Old Dominion University in 1988 and a J.D. from the District of Columbia School of Law in 1993. He was admitted to practice in all Virginia State Courts and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in 1995. Since October 2004, Mr. Kassabian has been a partner at the law firm of Kassabian & Kassabian, P.L.C. (after approximately two years as an associate with the firm), actively engaged in the private practice of law with an emphasis in criminal defense. Appointed in March of 2007 and reappointed without interruption thereafter, Mr. Kassabian has served for more than ten years as a substitute judge of the General District Court and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for the 19th Judicial District. Since May 2010 and continuing to present date, Mr. Kassabian has also served as an independent contractor to the Fairfax City Attorney as the City Prosecutor for the City of Fairfax.

EXPERIENCE AND LEGAL ABILITY

In his private practice, Mr. Kassabian maintains a general practice emphasizing criminal and traffic defense work, primarily in Fairfax County. As City Prosecutor, he has a broad range of responsibilities including misdemeanor and traffic-related infractions, violations of local ordinances, misdemeanor appeals. As a substitute judge for more than 10 years, Mr. Kassabian regularly sits approximately 2 to 3 times per month in either the General District Court or Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for Fairfax and surrounding counties. As reported to the Committee, Mr. Kassabian's significant litigation experience has included substantial matters involving juvenile victims and alleged perpetrators of sexual and violent crimes as well as domestic violence/protective order cases. At no point have these types of issues represented a substantial part of his practice, and his exposure to such issues on the civil side has been predominantly, if not exclusively, through his substitute judging experience.

FAIRNESS AND TEMPERAMENT

The Committee has no reservations about Mr. Kassabian's demeanor and temperament.

PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY

The Committee believes Mr. Kassabian's integrity to be beyond reproach and his service to both state and local bar associations to be reflective of his commitment to assuring high standards within the profession. Since 2015 Mr. Kassabian has served on the VSB's Special Committee on Lawyer Referral Service and since 2016 he has served on the VSB's Lawyer Disciplinary Committee (Fifth District, Section III). Mr. Kassabian is a two-time recipient of the Fairfax Bar Association's President's Award (2012 and 2013), and currently serves as a Director on the FBA's Board of Directors, and as Ombudsman of the FBA's GDC Judicial Feedback Program. He also serves as a mentor in the FBA's Mentorship Pilot Program and as "Super-Mentor" for the George Mason American Inn of Court.

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mr. Kassabian's concurrent positions as criminal defense counsel, substitute judge, and prosecutor—sometimes transitioning between or among them in the same day—uniquely positions him among the candidates with a diversity of perspectives and opportunities to expand his knowledge in practice areas within the purview of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court with which Mr. Kassabian has not otherwise developed much depth of experience in his private practice. The Committee believes the nature and breadth of Mr. Kassabian's substantial record of public service and his ongoing pursuit of opportunities to continue developing his proficiency with relevant domestic relations issues to demonstrate and be consistent with his expressed commitment to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. The Committee further believes that Mr. Kassabian's demonstrated degree of knowledge and ability in the field of juvenile criminal law and expanding familiarity with relevant domestic relations matters warrant recommending him for the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court at this time.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: RECOMMENDED