

HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

P.O. Box 1011 | Washington, D.C. 20013-1011
www.hbadc.org

December 16, 2011

Via Facsimile (202-224-7327) & E-mail

Senator Harry Reid
Majority Leader

<http://www.reid.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm>

Re: Nomination of Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte

Dear Senator Reid:

We, the undersigned leaders of the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (“HBA-DC”), express our dismay at the failure of the United States Senate, on a vote of 49 to 37, to consider the merits of the nomination of Mari Carmen Aponte to be United States Ambassador to El Salvador. We urge the swift confirmation of Ambassador Aponte, which appears to us certain, but for a filibuster that serves the interests of neither the United States nor El Salvador.

Ambassador Aponte’s impeccable qualifications are well known by now to Senators who have subjected Ms. Aponte to scrutiny for the last two years. Born in Puerto Rico, Ambassador Aponte was first nominated by President Obama to serve as Ambassador to El Salvador on December 9, 2009, and was placed in her role via a recess appointment on August 19, 2010. Ambassador Aponte brought to her role the experience of a lawyer with a thirty-year career. She has been a longtime leader in the Hispanic legal community, having led such distinguished organizations as the National Council of La Raza, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration.

Ambassador Aponte also has been a trailblazer for Hispanic attorneys, having served as a past president of our organization as well as the first female president of the Hispanic National Bar Association. Scores of Hispanic attorneys have benefitted from Ambassador Aponte’s guidance and generosity over the years.

The people of the United States have benefitted considerably from Ambassador Aponte’s brief tenure in El Salvador since her recess appointment. She has served as a strong advocate for U.S. companies in El Salvador while strengthening ties between the U.S. and El Salvador business communities, as reflected in the support of her confirmation by the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Ambassador Aponte has vocally promoted American national security through, among other things, her efforts to negotiate a monitoring center to fight transnational crime. She also has advocated for the values of democratic decision-making by pushing

Salvadoran President Funes to discuss democracy and human rights with Fidel Castro during his first official visit to Cuba.

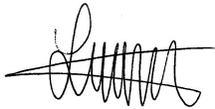
Ambassador Aponte's achievements to date should win praise from Senators of all political persuasions who have professed to support American security and democratic values. Two years of constant scrutiny have not produced a single valid reason why the Senate cannot give Ambassador Aponte an up-or-down vote on her nomination. Indeed, no such reason exists to those of us who are intimately acquainted with Ambassador Aponte's unshakable integrity, professional temperament, and warm demeanor. She has all of the qualities of an ambassador that will make the American people proud, as she has aptly shown over the last 14 months.

Therefore, we urge the U.S. Senate to confirm Mari Carmen Aponte to the position of United States Ambassador to El Salvador. The confirmation would serve the long-term interests of the United States in El Salvador and shine a light on Ambassador Aponte as an exemplar of the Hispanic community.

Sincerely,



William Alvarado Rivera
President



Lyzka DeLaCruz
President-elect



Kenia Seoane López
Immediate Past President