



**HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

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August 21, 2017

Via Electronic Mail to jnc@dcd.uscourts.gov

The Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan
Chair
U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
United States Courthouse
333 Constitution Avenue, NW
Chambers 4935-Annex
Washington, DC 20001

Katherine L. Garrett
Executive Director
Judicial Nomination Commission
515 5th Street, NW
Suite 235
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Highest Endorsement of Magistrate Judge Kenia Seoane López for Associate Judge,
Superior Court of the District of Columbia**

Dear Judge Sullivan & Ms. Garrett:

On behalf of the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (HBA-DC), I am honored to give our highest endorsement to the Honorable Magistrate Judge Kenia Seoane López for an Associate Judge position on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (Superior Court). Few candidates who have sought HBA-DC's endorsement have shown as much commitment to public service and to the professional of law as Magistrate Judge Seoane López. Her professional qualifications and disposition ensure that she would serve as an exemplary Associate Judge in the Superior Court.

Magistrate Judge Seoane López has had a distinguished legal career. Most recently, prior to her appointment as a Magistrate Judge, she was a Bilingual Attorney Negotiator for the Domestic Violence Unit in Superior Court and worked at the Office of the Attorney General. Throughout her legal career, Magistrate Judge Seoane López has exhibited the communication and interpersonal skills that are requisite to being a fair and neutral arbiter. While these characteristics are essential for any judicial officer, alone they are not sufficient, in the eyes of the HBA-DC, to be an effective judge. Commitment to the District's legal community and to the principles of equity and justice are necessary traits which every member of the judiciary should have. Magistrate Judge Seoane López has these characteristics in spades.

Magistrate Judge Seoane López impact on Latino legal community cannot be understated. During her time as President, she transformed HBA-DC and started a number of initiatives that now define the organization. The most important change was the creation HBA-DC Judicial Council. Since its founding, the Judicial Counsel has served as a support network and a forum for

matters of importance to Latino members of the Judiciary. The Judicial Council members have also been a resource to Latino attorneys who are interested in pursuing careers in the judiciary. During her HBA-DC tenure, Magistrate Judge Seoane López also launched the Judicial Council's Summer Judicial Internship Program. Through this program, dozens of young Latino law students have been placed in the chambers of judges at the Superior Court, DC Court of Appeals, United States District Court, and various Circuit courts. Many of the Judicial Internship participants have gone on to serve as law clerks. Magistrate Judge Seoane López's efforts to start the Judicial Internship Program has manifestly changed the careers of many attorneys and has directly translated into a more diverse profession.

As HBA-DC President, Magistrate Judge Seoane López also selflessly offered her time and expertise to other voluntary bar associations seeking to establish themselves in the local legal community. Her collaborative efforts and welcoming spirit helped develop institutional relationships that continue to this day. Magistrate Judge Seoane López willingness to mentor attorneys has continued unabated since her appointment to the bench. In addition to participating in HBA-DC's formal mentorship programs, Magistrate Judge Kenia Seoane López has fostered relationships with many of the attorneys who appear before her.

Magistrate Judge Seoane López's commitment extends well beyond the courtroom. As a long-time District resident, she has been a committed and tireless advocate for the District's underserved communities. Before her appointment to the bench, she regularly volunteered at the quarterly DC Bar Pro Bono and HBA-DC Spanish advice and referral legal clinics. As a board member of the Spanish Education and Development Center, she contributes to its mission to provide high-quality, bilingual academic programs with the goal of empowering low-income, Spanish-speaking District residents.

For the justice system to maintain the trust and respect of the community, it must reflect the diversity of that community. HBA-DC prizes candidates who display a commitment to diversity and to the rights of historically disadvantaged groups. In this regard, Magistrate Judge Seoane Lopez stands leagues above her peers. The District Latino community has long benefited from Magistrate Judge Seoane López's admirable and unmatched dedication. HBA-DC is both proud and honored to give its highest endorsement to Magistrate Judge Kenia Seoane López for an Associate Judge position on the Superior Court. She is a well-regarded judicial officer and an indefatigable advocate for access to justice and the advancement of diversity in the legal profession. Magistrate Judge Kenia Seoane López possesses the requisite professional experience and personal qualities to serve as a successful Associate Judge.

It is HBA-DC's distinct honor to recommend her with its highest endorsement.

Very Respectfully,

S/

Ben Hernández-Stern

President

Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia

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