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A California bar association

Advancing the status of women in the law and society since 1972

October 4, 2018

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown
Governor of California
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Judicial Appointments

Dear Governor Brown,

Lawyers Club of San Diego, a specialty bar association with over 1,300 members, seeks to advance the status of women in the law and society. Our members are attorneys, judges, law students and others in the San Diego community of all genders, who share our interests and goals. We are honored that under your leadership, you have helped support this mission. We write to ask that in the coming months, you continue to appoint more women to the San Diego Superior Court, the Court of Appeal, and the California Supreme Court.

Lawyers Club was founded in the early 1970's when there were few women lawyers in San Diego County. However, San Diego was the focus of the movement in California to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, which was facing opposition from the then President Pro Tem of the California State Senate. Presently, 51.27 percent of law students in the United States today are women.¹ Further, women make up half of California's population.² Nevertheless, only one-third of California state judgeships are occupied by women.³

Recently in San Diego we have seen the appointments to the San Diego Superior Court bench of some stellar local attorneys who reflect our diverse community including; Judge Loren Freestone, Judge James Simmons and Commissioner Victor Torres. Earlier this year, we also recognized with pleasure your appointments of Judge Truc Do, Judge Marcella McLaughlin, Commissioner Edlene McKenzie and Judge Saba Sheibani - all women who have demonstrated strong intellectual curiosities and who have helped to advance the status of women in the law.

On behalf of Lawyers Club of San Diego, we humbly believe now, more than ever, we need your help to continue to appoint exceptionally well qualified women to move toward a balance of equality and diversity on the bench.

¹ ²ABA Required Disclosures (Standard 509 Reports), American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. The ABA reported a total enrollment of 110,156 students as of Dec. 15, 2017.

² United States Census Bureau-Quick Facts, California July 1, 2017. Female Population 50.3 percent

³ <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/2018-JO-Demographic-Data.pdf>

Lawyers Club of San Diego supports increasing the number and advancement of women judges in our community and throughout the California judiciary in order to promote the continuous advancement of women. In fact, our Judicial Endorsements Committee (JEC) is committed to providing objective, confidential evaluations of judicial applicants to help support the highest quality judges for these important positions and is inspired by many of the exceptional applicants we have seen come before us.

We know you are committed to the ideals of inclusion and diversity and thank you for taking the mission of Lawyers Club to heart. We welcome any questions from your office and would be happy to discuss further how Lawyers Club can help facilitate an increase in women judge appointments.

Most sincerely,

Lawyers Club San Diego

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danna J. Cotman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

By: Danna J. Cotman, President