

Opening Statement of Kenia Seoane López
Nominee to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am honored to appear before you as you consider my nomination to serve as an Associate Judge for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

There are many people I would like to thank today, without whose help I would not be here. First, thank you and your staff for the time and effort spent preparing for this hearing. Thank you to the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission and its chair, Judge Emmet Sullivan, for recommending me to the White House, to President Joseph Biden for nominating me, and to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton for her kind introduction. Thank you to my siblings, Juan Jose, Wilbert, and Katherine, for their love. Thank you to my Uncle Manolo and Aunt Carmen, who passed a year ago, for paving my family's path to this country. Thank you to my large extended family in Massachusetts and Florida, as well as my friends in D.C., for their faith in me and unwavering support. Thank you to my best friend and husband Ronald, who often takes on more than his share of the parenting duties with a smile, which allows me to focus on my work. Thank you to my children, Gabriel and Natalia, for their willingness to share their mother with the families I serve. They are my source for inspiration and the impetus for everything I do.

I was born in Cuba and was fortunate to come to the United States a few months before my tenth birthday. I can say with certainty that I would not be here today without the many sacrifices made by my parents Eloisa and Jose Seoane. I will always be in awe of my mother, a woman from a small town in the eastern part of Cuba, who had the courage to dream a better life for her four children- one that would allow them to be free and to forge their own futures. My mother's dream propelled her to make decisions that set-in motion a series of events that have brought me here today before the members of this Committee. As my mother watches today from Boston, there is no doubt that this is the fulfillment of her American Dream. Never in my mother's wildest dream could she conjure her youngest daughter being considered for a position where she is trusted with upholding the U.S Constitution and overseeing the application of the rule of law, which are the fundamental principles that compelled her to bring her children to this country.

I have dedicated my career to public service, hoping to give back to the country that has afforded me and so many others the opportunity to turn dreams into reality. I have spent the vast majority of my legal career in D.C. Superior Court. For the past nine years, I have served as a Magistrate Judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Before joining the bench, I spent the majority of my legal career in D.C. Superior Court, most recently as a Bilingual Attorney Negotiator in the Domestic Violence Division of the Court and prior to that as an Assistant Attorney General for the D.C. Office of the Attorney General. The people who make up the Court—from those who keep the floors clean and the lights on to those who rule from the bench—are a second family to me. For their kindness, support, friendship, and wise guidance, I am eternally grateful. I would specifically like to acknowledge Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring whose encouragement and mentorship has been invaluable.

Thank you again for your time today. If I am confirmed, it will be both an honor and a privilege to continue to serve the residents of the District of Columbia as an Associate Judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. I look forward to answering your questions.