

Opening Statement of Sherry Moore Trafford
Nominee to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court
March 27, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. It is my honor to appear before you today as a nominee to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. I would like to thank the District of Columbia Judicial Nominations Committee and especially its chair, Judge Emmet Sullivan, for forwarding my name for consideration by the White House, and President Barack Obama for nominating me to serve on the Superior Court. And thank you, Representative Eleanor Homes Norton, for introducing me this afternoon and for your service to the citizens of the District of Columbia.

My daughter, Ann Elise Trafford, is a graduate of the District of Columbia Public Schools and now is a student at the University of Wisconsin. She was not able to be here for this hearing, but I am certain she will get a full report later this evening. My mother, Ann Moore, and my brother, John Moore, traveled from Indiana to be present today. My brother followed in my father's footsteps as a public school teacher, and his spring break happened to coincide with the timing of this hearing. I could not be more proud to have him and my mother present. My father passed away two-and-a-half years ago, but would have been proud to be here. My sister, Laura Sabatelli, is also a teacher, but more importantly, she manages a household of four children, three of whom are teenagers; understandably, she could not be here today. Members of my D.C. community who make up my "extended family" are here today and I want to thank them: my former minister, John Wimberly; my role model and friend, Suzanne Wells; and my law school classmate and friend, Eric Angel, who continues to inspire me in his current work as director of the Legal Aid Society for the District of Columbia.

I come from a family of public school teachers and was inspired to go into public service over many dinner-time conversations about how best to inspire young people to live up to their potential. I also had the good fortune to cross paths and work for several people whom I consider to be giants in the law. When I was an undergraduate at Indiana University, I was a teaching assistant for Thomas Ehrlich, who had previously served as the first director of the Legal Services Corporation. After law school, I had the extraordinary opportunity to work as a law clerk for Judge William Bryant, whose name now yields itself to our District of Columbia federal court annex, a few blocks away from here. Inspired by those mentors and many other colleagues, I have spent my legal career in public service here in the District of Columbia. For the past fifteen years, I have been an attorney for the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, ten of them working in the Mental Health Division. My work has provided me a great appreciation for the vital role of the Superior Court in the life of this city, and the importance of having a judiciary that understands not only the law, but also how the law can impact the day-to-day lives of the individuals who appear before it.

It would be my honor to serve the people of this city as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court, and I would strive to honor the legacy of people who taught me so much – my colleagues, supervisors, judges, and opposing counsel, as well as my individual clients over the years. I am happy to answer any questions that the Committee might have.