

**Opening Statement of Steven M. Wellner**  
**Nominee to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court**  
**March 27, 2014**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as a nominee for Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. I would like to thank the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission and its chair, Judge Emmet Sullivan, for recommending me to the White House, and President Barack Obama for nominating me. I sincerely appreciate Congresswoman Norton's kind introduction. And I am grateful to Committee members and staff for their attention and courtesy throughout the confirmation process.

I would like to introduce members of my family here today: my wife, Amy Saltzman; my daughter, Rebecca Wellner; my mother, Carole Wellner; and my sister and her husband, Lisa and Robert Wack. I am delighted they could be with me here this afternoon. My son Jacob was unable to make it back from the University of Michigan, but I know he would have enjoyed being here too. I want to recognize friends and colleagues in attendance. I would not be here without their support and encouragement.

I have lived and worked in the District of Columbia for nearly 30 years. I have spent most of my career as a lawyer in private practice, but for the last eight years I have served as an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) with the D.C. Office of Administrative Hearings. I enjoy the day-to-day work of being a judge. In my current position, I rule on motions, conduct evidentiary hearings, and issue written decisions, simple and complex, in a broad range of subject areas, most of which were entirely new to me when I first became an ALJ in 2006. I deal with litigants of varying degrees of sophistication, including many who are self-represented. As Principal Administrative Law Judge for Unemployment Appeals, I have successfully coordinated operations for a team that handles more than two thousand contested cases a year, subject to stringent federal standards for timeliness and quality. For me, the job is a perfect mix of public interaction, intellectual challenge, variety, and logistics.

My work as an administrative law judge complements the very different experience I had earlier in my career as a law firm associate and partner. I left private practice for my current position in 2006 because I wanted to be more directly involved in public service and, in particular, efforts to improve access to justice in the District of Columbia. My work at the Office of Administrative Hearings has convinced me that being a judge is a good fit for my interests and skills. It would be a privilege and an honor to continue my public service as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.