

**Opening Statement of Rupa Ranga Puttagunta
Nominee to be Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am humbled and grateful to appear before you today as a nominee to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court for the District of Columbia. I would like to thank each of you for considering my nomination, and the Committee's staff for their hard work in preparing for this hearing. I thank the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission and its chair, Judge Emmet Sullivan, for recommending me to the White House. I thank President Joseph Biden for nominating me. I would also like to recognize Chief Judge Michael Spencer of the D.C. Rental Housing Commission for his unflagging support and encouragement, and Judges William Jackson, Todd Edelman, and Rainey Brandt of D.C. Superior Court for their mentorship and guidance.

I would like to take a moment to introduce my husband, Shiva Nagaraj. I would not be sitting here today without his patience, support, and encouragement. We are blessed to have two children, four-year-old Anya and 6-month Taran. They bring endless joy and purpose to my life, and inspire me every day to do good, to be better, to work harder. Being a mother and a wife is my greatest accomplishment, and I cannot imagine this journey without them by my side.

I reserve a special thanks to the elders in my life. When my mother, Dr. Punnama Kalapala, unexpectedly passed away when I was five-years-old, an entire community stepped up and supported my family so that I never felt the sting of such a loss. Many of you are watching this hearing live; with you I share all of my accomplishments. I thank my late grandparents, Visweswarao and Seetamma Puttagunta, who inspired me to go to law school. I thank Sheshigiri and Sandhya Rani Kalapala for sharing their home with my family; I am forever grateful for your guidance. I thank my in-laws, Krishnaswamy and Vimala Nagaraj, who are always so kind and generous with their love. Above all, I thank my parents, Dr. Ranga Puttagunta, Bharati Ranga Puttagunta, and Dr. Punnama Kalapala, for their love, sacrifice, and hard work. You have given me your everything. Whatever is best in me that I have to offer, I owe to you.

I care deeply about the D.C. Superior Court as a forum for all parties to be fairly heard. For many years, I worked in Superior Court every day—it is the courthouse where I learned how to practice law. I have profound admiration for the judges, the attorneys, and the staff of the Court. In particular, I appreciate how committed the Court's bench and administration are to serving justice. The judges I observed were patient, kind, and respectful and they went out of their way to ensure that even the most vulnerable litigant felt heard. They maintained fidelity to the law and issued rulings fairly and impartially. These are the values that guide me in my current role as an appellate Administrative Judge, and if confirmed, I would uphold these values in Superior Court as well.

My father grew up in poverty in India and came to this country almost fifty years ago with seven dollars in hand. He was successful and was able to provide for his loved ones. He is a shining example of the "American Dream." I was raised to be thankful for every opportunity, to value the ethos of hard work, and most importantly, to always give back to the community. This is what inspired me to pursue a career in public service, to spend hundreds of hours providing *pro bono* services, to represent indigent criminal defendants, and most recently, to serve as an

Administrative Law Judge. It is what inspires me to pursue a vacancy in Superior Court: serving as an Associate Judge would be the ideal opportunity to use my skills and experience to continue contributing to the D.C. community where I have resided for fourteen years.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering any questions the Committee might have about my qualifications.