

Opening Statement of Jennifer A. Di Toro
Nominee to be Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia
June 15, 2011

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for considering my qualifications for a position as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. It is a great honor to be nominated. I want to thank the Judicial Nomination Commission, in particular the Chair of the Commission, The Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan, for recommending me to the White House, and President Barack Obama for nominating me. My thanks also to the Senate Committee staff for their hard work in preparing for this hearing and for the courtesy and professionalism they have extended to me throughout this process.

I would like to introduce the members of my family who are here with me today: Marilyn and Dominic Di Toro, Ellen Feder, and Dominic, Zoey and Enza. It was my extreme good fortune to grow up in a household where curiosity, creativity and excellence were actively encouraged. My parents, my brother Joe, and my aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents all contributed directly to my being before you today. I am grateful for their example and unflagging support. A number of my friends, colleagues and mentors are here as well. I am thankful for their steadfast encouragement and sustaining good humor. I would finally like to extend my special thanks to Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield, for his encouragement and exemplary leadership.

I attended law school in order to work on behalf of people who needed it most – because they are living in poverty, facing the loss of liberty or property, or because they are children who require safety, stability and health to live productive lives. I have been very fortunate to have worked at several of the District's premier organizations in service to those ideals. At Georgetown University Law Center's Criminal Justice Clinic, the Public Defender Service, Zuckerman Spaeder and Children's Law Center, I have had the honor of using my degree to enable people seeking solutions to pressing problems, in environments that were challenging, rewarding, and inspiring. My commitment to public service and to access to justice is also what motivates me to seek appointment to the bench.

As the Committee knows, I have been practicing law in the District of Columbia for nearly 15 years, handling all of my cases in Superior Court. I am, as one Superior Court judge put it to me, "home grown," and I am quite moved to be before you as a nominee to the very Court where I learned my craft, and by the prospect of joining such an engaged and demanding bench. From them I have learned much of what I know about the law, about ensuring access to justice, fairness, and the demands and rewards of public service. I am humbled to be considered for this position; I thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you.