

Opening Statement of Maribeth Raffinan
Nominee to be Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia
September 21, 2010

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am grateful for and honored by the opportunity 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 Committee for considering my nomination so expeditiously, and for the courtesy you and your staff have shown me throughout this process. I would also like to thank the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission for recommending me to the White House and President Barack Obama for nominating me.

It is my privilege to introduce the members of my family who are with me today: my husband, Efreem Levy; our children, Leah and Jonah; my mother and father, Jose and Maria Raffinan who have traveled here from Florida to be with me today; and my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Arthur and Betty Levy who flew in from Connecticut to support me. I thank my family not only for being here today but for the many years of support, encouragement and guidance that they have provided me. Additionally, I have friends, colleagues and mentors here today, and others who are watching on their computers, to whom I am forever grateful for the time, advice and inspiration they have given me throughout my life.

I have been a proud resident of the District of Columbia for 18 years, since I arrived in 1992 to begin my law study at the Columbus School of Law for Catholic University. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to learn about the law and about legal practice in a city and community where there is such an abundance of opportunity to use legal training and skills to help people. During law school, I worked with victims of domestic violence and pro se litigants in family court and, as a third year law student, represented indigent persons charged with misdemeanor offenses in the D.C. Superior Court. After law school, for approximately three years I worked with the Federal Public Defender's Office for the District of Columbia where I learned invaluable lessons about public service from both my appellate and trial lawyer colleagues.

It is in my proud association with the Public Service of the District of Columbia (PDS) for the last 11 years that I grew up as a lawyer representing clients before the Superior Court. PDS has taught me so much about hard work, commitment to public service and respect for every human being. I started at PDS as a staff attorney in 1999 and have served as a supervising attorney since 2006. If confirmed, I hope to carry with me to the bench the values I have learned from my work at PDS about what it means to be just and fair and to treat every human being with dignity.

I am humbled to be considered for a judgeship on the Superior Court—I know that when my parents moved and left their families in the Philippines in 1967 to relocate to Ohio, they never imagined that they would be sitting here with me as a nominee before this Committee, in this Senate building and in this city. I feel very privileged and honored to be here. Thank you for your time and your consideration of my nomination.