

July 6, 2020

Hon. Charles D. Baker
Hon. Karyn Polito

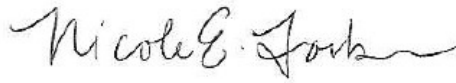
Dear Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito:

The Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts in conjunction with Greater Boston Legal Services, Lawyers for Civil Rights, Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys, Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association, Committee for Public Counsel Services, Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston, and Massachusetts Law Reform Institute write this letter in support of fostering diversity on the bench in all forms. The organizations signing this letter know from experience that representation matters. Having a judiciary that looks like the people of the Commonwealth who come before it seeking justice is important--adding significantly to both the experience of those being heard and the richness of the top-notch jurisprudence in Massachusetts. We thank the administration for its work to advance these goals.

We write with respect to the tremendous opportunity presented by the upcoming vacancy on the Supreme Judicial Court that will result from Justice Lenk's retirement later this year. Since its establishment in 1692, nearly three hundred and twenty-eight years ago, the Supreme Judicial Court has had only a few justices who are not white men. We respectfully ask that you ensure that the applicant pool includes, and that you strongly consider applicants with a wide-range of lived experiences, diverse backgrounds, and legal careers as you make this historic appointment.

More specifically, in this unique moment while people in the Commonwealth and across the nation are calling out—and demanding the dismantling of—systemic racism, we hope you will consider applicants to the state's highest court with a background in racial justice, civil rights, criminal defense, or legal services, so that the next justice of the Supreme Judicial Court is ready to meet the challenge of this moment. Often it is our courts, particularly the Supreme Judicial Court, that serve as the critical line of defense of our constitutional rights and realizing equality. Thank you for your consideration and diligent work on this important appointment.

Sincerely,



Nicole Forbes, President
Women's Bar Association of MA



Stesha Emmanuel, President
Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association



Carol Rose, Executive Director
ACLU of Massachusetts



Jacquelynne Bowman, Executive Director
Greater Boston Legal Services



Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, Executive Director
Lawyers for Civil Rights



Tinia L. Snow, President
Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys



Mario D. Nimock, Board Co-Chair
Annika Bockius-Suwyn, Board Co-Chair
Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association



Anthony Benedetti, Chief Counsel
Committee for Public Counsel Services



Victoria Kelleher, President
Massachusetts Association of Criminal
Defense Lawyers



Zaheer Samee, President
South Asian Bar Association of
Greater Boston



Georgia Katsoulomitis, Executive Director
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

cc: Robert Ross, Governor's Chief Legal Counsel
Governor's Council
Paul T. Dacier, Judicial Nominating Committee Chair
Roberto M. Bracerás, Judicial Nominating Committee Vice Chair