



**COLORADO HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION**  
**1550 Larimer Street, #636**  
**Denver, CO 80202**

January 5, 2009

**Via E-mail**

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
United States Senator  
C/O Karen Hammond (**Via E-mail:** karen\_hammond@dpsk12.org)  
900 Grant Street  
Denver, CO 80203

***Re: Endorsement of Stephanie Villafuerte for the Position of United States Attorney  
for the District of Colorado***

Dear Senator Bennet:

It is with the full support of the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association (“CHBA”) that I write to endorse Stephanie Villafuerte for the position of United States Attorney for the District of Colorado.

Our due diligence process before endorsing a candidate involves reviewing the materials submitted by the candidate by members of the CHBA’s Nominations and Endorsements Committee; contacting and interviewing the references identified in those materials; and identifying, contacting and interviewing CHBA members who know the candidate’s work and qualifications. After conducting interviews of several of the many references provided by Ms. Villafuerte and reviewing recommendations made by members of our bar association, we wholeheartedly support her appointment.

Ms. Villafuerte has dedicated her life to public service. From 1991 to 1997, Ms. Villafuerte worked as a Deputy District Attorney in the Denver District Attorney’s Office. She then went on to serve as an Assistant United States Attorney for four years, where she prosecuted narcotics, organized crime and internet child exploitation cases. Her experience within the federal system allowed Ms. Villafuerte to develop a firm understanding of federal court practice, the internal workings of the United States Attorney’s office and the relationship between the United States Attorney’s Office and its many partners in federal, state and local law enforcement. In 2001, Ms. Villafuerte returned to the Denver District Attorney’s Office as Chief Deputy District Attorney in charge of the Family Violence Unit.

While at the District Attorney's Office, she managed the Family Violence Unit prosecuting all manner of child exploitation and sexual assault cases during a time when the law raced to catch-up with new forms of exploitation and sexual offender laws were completely revamped. Lead prosecutors at the Denver District Attorney's Office and heads of the Denver Public Defenders Office alike spoke of their unqualified respect for Ms. Villafuerte as a prosecutor and as manager of the sizeable and most difficult of Units at the District Attorney's Office.

Members of the Denver District Court bench before whom Ms. Villafuerte often appeared echoed the sentiments of those with whom Ms. Villafuerte worked with on a daily bases. They referred to Ms. Villafuerte as "a superb trial attorney" and "a star in the courtroom" who exercised excellent judgment inside and outside of the courtroom. Above all, one judge reported, Ms. Villafuerte was committed to justice and making fair decisions when determining how to proceed with pending cases. However, if she decided to proceed to trial, all whom we spoke with agreed that Ms. Villafuerte was without peer in the courtroom.

In January 2007, Governor Ritter appointed Ms. Villafuerte to serve as his Deputy Chief of Staff. In this position, Ms. Villafuerte has acted as the Governor's senior advisor on several important issues including, but not limited to, criminal justice, homeland security, immigration, and human services. She has also acted as a liaison and point of contact to numerous state agencies and coordinates and oversees special projects at the direction of Governor Ritter. Ms. Villafuerte is involved on a daily basis with public policy analysis and implementation – experience essential for anyone appointed as the United States Attorney for the District of Colorado.

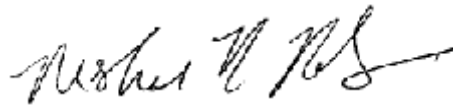
Truly, Ms. Villafuerte has a unique and unparalleled combination of prosecutorial and administrative experience. Given her experience and talents, she can readily assume the responsibilities of the office of United States Attorney. Moreover, her reputation in the community is beyond reproach. Her colleagues describe her as "absolutely wonderful, bright and talented." She has a reputation of being well-rounded, possessing good instincts and values, and exercising good judgment. Moreover, her reputation of integrity befits this position. She is profoundly dedicated to serving the legal profession and the community at-large. These attributes and skills will serve her well as the United States Attorney for the District of Colorado.

Ms. Villafuerte's life experience is also the portrait of success and reflects well the dynamic and changing face of America. Ms. Villafuerte's grandparents immigrated to the United States from Mexico. As a young girl she set for herself the goal of becoming a prosecutor. Since then, she has exceeded her goal by not only becoming an immensely successful prosecutor at both the Denver District Attorney's Office and the United States Attorney's Office, but as a manager of large and complex Unit of the District Attorney's Office and then as a state policy maker as Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Ritter. She is highly respected by her colleagues throughout the state for her professionalism, integrity, legal knowledge and selfless contributions to Colorado, its legal community, and the Hispanic community.

Finally, the CHBA recognizes the paramount need to increase diversity in state and federal offices. However, we do not endorse Ms. Villafuerte because she is diverse, but because she represents the epitome of what diversity can bring to a position: excellence and commitment to serving the needs of Colorado's diverse communities.

The CHBA has received an outpouring of support for Ms. Villafuerte's endorsement, and with the same enthusiasm, we respectfully request that you recommend her appointment to the position of United States Attorney for the District of Colorado. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 303-383-6644. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meshach Y. Rhoades". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Meshach Y. Rhoades  
President, Colorado Hispanic Bar Association

cc: Stephanie Villafuerte