



April 16, 2010

The Honorable Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor
136 State Capitol Building
Denver, Colorado 80203-1792

Re: Endorsement of Michael Vallejos for the Second Judicial District Court

Dear Governor Ritter:

With the full support of the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association (“CHBA”), I write to endorse Michael Vallejos for the Second Judicial District Court. Mr. Vallejos’s experience, sterling reputation, and temperament make him well suited for the Denver District Court.

The CHBA dedicates itself to serving the public interest by promoting legal reform, facilitating the administration of justice, and advancing the interests of the more than 500 Hispanic attorneys in Colorado. Before endorsing a candidate for the bench, the CHBA’s Nominations and Endorsements Committee conducts due diligence. This typically involves a review of the candidate’s judicial application; interviewing references identified therein; identifying, contacting, and interviewing CHBA members who know the work of the judicial candidate; and, often, conducting a personal interview of the candidate.

Michael Vallejos would bring important experience to the Denver District Court. As a longtime member of the State Public Defender’s Office, he has devoted most of his career to assisting indigent people accused of crimes. Our investigation revealed that those who know his work well are universally impressed by his talents. His fellow public defenders extol his level-headed nature, his mastery of trial work, and his commitment to mentoring others. His adversaries in the courtroom—the deputy district attorneys—also give him high praise. The deputy district attorneys whom we interviewed were unequivocal in endorsing Mr. Vallejos for the bench because they consider him to be fair, trustworthy, and extremely skilled. Moreover, these prosecutors have no doubt that, despite his defense background, he will be impartial on the bench and will give equal treatment to all sides of a criminal case.

The Denver district court judges whom we interviewed gave similar plaudits to Mr. Vallejos. These judges found him to be an excellent trial lawyer, as well as someone who takes seriously his professional obligations as an officer of the court. One judge recounted a recent murder trial that was difficult for all involved; even though the jury convicted the defendant, several of the jurors walked to Mr. Vallejos’s office to tell him they greatly appreciated his professional handling of the case. The judges to whom we spoke also explained that all of the judges on the district court held a very high opinion of Mr. Vallejos and would be pleased to have him as a colleague. Further, these judges believed that, due to his intelligence

and work ethic, he could smoothly transition to adjudicating civil matters. Finally, the judges noted that, as Head of the Denver branch of the Public Defender's Office, Mr. Vallejos possesses the administrative experience necessary to run a docket and a courtroom efficiently. In short, those people with whom, against whom, and before whom he practices law all enthusiastically support his candidacy for the Denver District Court.

The CHBA is impressed by the sterling reputation that Mr. Vallejos has built in the legal community. Further, the CHBA finds it significant that his colleagues view his temperament as ideal for the bench. He possesses a calm, sensible demeanor, and he has demonstrated a commitment to treating all parties respectfully and without improper bias. Especially considering the significant number of Hispanics and other minorities in Denver, the CHBA believes that these qualities are absolutely essential among Denver judges. For these reasons, the CHBA wholeheartedly endorses his candidacy.

I add a final note about our endorsement process. It is our general policy to endorse only one candidate, at most, for a judicial position. In this case, however, we have made an exception because we believe that two candidates for the Denver District Court are extremely well-qualified and deserve appointment.¹ For the reasons given in a separate letter, the CHBA also endorses Magistrate Tijani Cole this position. Both Mr. Vallejos and Magistrate Cole have demonstrated professional excellence and a strong commitment to serving the Hispanic community as well as the community at large. The Denver District Court, and indeed Denver itself, are fortunate to have two worthy candidates for this position. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (303) 892-7411. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Damian J. Arguello
President, Colorado Hispanic Bar Association

cc: Michael Vallejos

¹ We note that the third candidate did not request the CHBA's endorsement.