

July 19, 2022



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE ELIZABETH HANES  
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 230 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Judge Elizabeth Hanes to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Judge Hanes' impressive judicial and legal experience protecting the rights of all people makes her well-qualified to serve on this district court. Since 2020, Judge Hanes has served as a magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Prior to this, she worked as a managing attorney and attorney for Consumer Litigation Associates, P.C. She also served as an assistant federal public defender for the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Eastern District of Virginia. Judge Hanes has trained future lawyers as a professor at the University of Richmond School of Law and Virginia Commonwealth University. A graduate of the University of Richmond and the University of Richmond School of Law, she clerked for Judge Robert B. King on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Judge Joseph R. Goodwin on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia. Prior to her legal career, Judge Hanes served as an AmeriCorps VISTA member at the Greenbrier Child and Youth Advocacy Center in West Virginia. Throughout her career, Judge Hanes has shown a strong commitment to public service and equal justice.

Judge Hanes is eminently qualified to serve on the district court given her background as a federal public defender and her commitment to pursuing equal justice for all people. For seven years, she represented clients involved in the criminal-legal system who could not afford an attorney, ensuring they had access to justice. Public defenders play a critical role in our legal system, yet they are vastly underrepresented on the federal bench. If confirmed, Judge Hanes would be only the fourth public defender to ever serve on this court.<sup>1</sup> In addition to her work as a federal public defender, Judge Hanes also possesses experience in consumer protection litigation. For example, she successfully challenged a consumer reporting agency that jeopardized the employment opportunities of people based on inaccurate reports about their criminal backgrounds.<sup>2</sup> She also successfully represented consumers with lower incomes and means who were subject to predatory lending practices.<sup>3</sup> As a magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, she has continued to protect the rights of all people. Judge Hanes leads the drug court program for the Richmond

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<sup>1</sup> *Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present*, FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER (Accessed July 2022) (Search includes all judges for the Eastern District of Virginia who listed “community defender”, “public defender” or “federal defender” as non-volunteer work experience).

<sup>2</sup> *Spendlove v. RapidCourt, LLC*, No. 3:18-cv-856, 2019 WL 7143664 (E.D. Va. Dec. 23, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> *In re Think Finance, LLC*, No. 17-33964, 2019 WL 8272638 (N.D. Tex. Dec. 2, 2019); *Gibbs v. Plain Green, LLC*, No. 3:17-cv-495 (E.D. Va. Dec. 13, 2019).

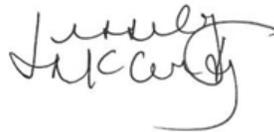
Division, which seeks to help people on probation or supervised release with a history of substance abuse by providing treatment and mental health resources.<sup>4</sup> Upon successful completion of this program, participants are eligible to have their supervision shortened or terminated.<sup>5</sup> Judge Hanes' legal career demonstrates her commitment to upholding the rights of all people, which will be an asset to the district court.

Judge Hanes is an excellent choice to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, and we strongly urge you to confirm her nomination. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Lena Zwarenstejn, senior director of the fair courts program, at (202) 466-3311. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Maya Wiley  
President & CEO



Jesselyn McCurdy  
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs

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<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of Virginia, [Reentry Program](#), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (May 27, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*