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For Immediate Release

NYSACDL SENDS GOVERNOR RATINGS OF CANDIDATES FOR ASSOCIATE JUDGE VACANCY

Contact:

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April 22, 2021

Alan Lewis, Judicial Screening Committee Chair, 212-238-8647

Albany, NY - The New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NYSACDL) has sent a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo with its ratings for the seven nominees under consideration for Associate Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, in connection with the vacancy created by the retirement of Hon. Leslie E. Stein.

To assist with the appointment process, the NYSACDL's Judicial Screening Committee reviewed each nominee's background and evaluated their decisions/writings. The Committee then conducted personal interviews with each of the nominees on April 22, 2021.

In evaluating the nominees, NYSACDL's Judicial Screening Committee considered: a commitment to fairness to those accused or convicted of crimes; judicial temperament; legal ability and experience; legal writing ability; academic aptitude; reputation, character and fitness; work ethic, diligence and efficiency; impartiality and independence; and freedom from bias and prejudice. Applicants have been ranked on a four-level scale: Not Recommended, Qualified, Well Qualified, and Superior.

Based on those evaluations, the NYSACDL has rated the nominees as follows:

- Hon. Ellen Nachtigall Biben: Not Recommended
- Kathy H. Chin: Not Recommended
- Caitlin J. Halligan: Well Qualified (Recommended)
- Hon. Valerie Brathwaite Nelson: Well Qualified
- Hon. Erin M. Peradotto: Well Qualified
- Madeline Singas: Not Recommended
- Hon. Shirley Troutman: Well Qualified (Recommended)

NYSACDL also took into consideration that none of the seven nominees have significant experience representing individual criminal defendants. This consideration, while not dispositive, informed our decision not to award the highest ranking to any of the nominated candidates. Additionally, five of the nominees have been or are prosecutors. While the Court of Appeals currently has two former prosecutors and no former criminal defense lawyers as judges, NYSACDL hopes and expects that the criminal defense perspective will be represented among the nominees for the two additional appointments that will be made to the Court of Appeals later this year.

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New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NYSACDL) is a statewide organization of criminal defense attorneys, representing over 1,000 private attorneys and public defenders who practice in courthouses in all parts of New York State and at all levels of the court system. NYSACDL is a New York State affiliate of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, a professional bar association founded in 1958 that has over 40,000 affiliated members nationally.