


**ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

**JUDICIAL CANDIDATE PLEDGE**

I, Jill Beck, a candidate for judicial office, have familiarized myself with the Code of Judicial Conduct and the Code of Civility, as promulgated by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. I have directed special attention to Canon 4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, including Rules 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4. I agree to conduct my judicial campaign consistent therewith and further consistent with *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White*, 536 U.S. (2002). I further pledge that all campaign advertising will be done fairly, accurately, truthfully, and will maintain the dignity appropriate to the judicial office which I am seeking.

Amended 11/18/2014

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate

11/14/2022  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR LAWYER APPLICANTS**

I am seeking a rating for the following court:

- Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas
- Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court
- Pennsylvania Superior Court
- Pennsylvania Supreme Court
- United States District Court for Western District of Pennsylvania
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

1. State your full name:

Jill Lipman Beck

Have you ever been known by any other name? If so, please list.

Jill Erika Lipman (maiden name)

2. Office address (include zip code):

501 Grant Street  
Suite 850  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Office telephone (include area code):

(412) 932-2741

Name of law firm, if associated:

Blank Rome, LLP

3. Date and place of birth:

October 16, 1979, Atlanta, Georgia

4. Are you a naturalized citizen? If so, give date and place of naturalization:

No.

5. Family status:
- a) Are you married? If so, state the date of marriage and your spouse's full name, including maiden name, if applicable:

Yes. I married Patrick Joseph Beck on July 14, 2007.

- b) Have you been divorced? If so, state the date, the number of the case and the court:

No.

6. Have you had any military service?

No.

7. List each college and law school you attended, including dates of attendance, and the degrees awarded and, if you left any institution without receiving a degree, the reason for leaving. List scholastic honors:

**University of Pittsburgh College in High School Program**

- January 1998-May 1998
- No degree; earned 3 credits for college calculus

**The George Washington University**

- August 1998-May 2002
- BA in criminal justice, minor in psychology
- Scholastic honors:
  - Dean's List
  - National Society of Collegiate Scholars
  - Graduated cum laude

**University College Dublin**

- January 2001-May 2001
- No degree; semester abroad

**Duquesne University School of Law**

- August 2003-May 2006
- Juris Doctor
- Scholastic honors:
  - 1L appellate oral argument semifinalist
  - CALI Award for Legal Research and Writing (highest grade)
  - Selected as a member of the competitive trial team in my 2L and 3L years
  - Law Review (graded on)
  - Recent Decision article selected for publication (*see* Jill Lipman, *A Parent with Primary Custody of the Couple's Children May Be Ordered to Pay Child Support to a Parent with*

*Partial Custody Under Pennsylvania Law: Colonna v. Colonna*, 43 Duq. L. Rev. 481 (2005))

- Elected Recent Decisions Editor of the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of the Law Review
- CALI Award for Juvenile Law (highest grade)
- International Academy of Trial Lawyers Student Advocacy Award
- Distinguished Student Award (presented to the graduating law student who has demonstrated excellence in academics and performed meritorious service to Duquesne's law school)
- Graduated cum laude
- Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in my class at the time of my graduation

8. List all jurisdictions in which you have applied to take a bar examination, have applied for admission or have been admitted to practice. Include dates of admissions and if not admitted, give application dates and explain the outcome.

Pennsylvania – admitted November 2006

Federal District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania – admitted November 2006

Tennessee – admitted pro hac vice 2021

Florida – pro hac vice admission pending (by motion) 2022

United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit – admitted 2022

9. Describe chronologically your law practice and experience after your graduation from law school, including:

- a) Whether you served as clerk to a judge and, if so, the name of the judge, the court, and the dates of the period you were a clerk:

Judge Christine Donohue  
Pennsylvania Superior Court  
January 2010-December 2015

Justice Christine Donohue  
Pennsylvania Supreme Court  
January 2016-October 2019

- b) Whether you practiced alone and, if so, the addresses and the dates:

N/A

- c) The dates, names and addresses of law firms or offices, companies or governmental

agencies with which you have been connected and the nature of your connection with each:

KidsVoice  
700 Frick Building  
437 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
August 2006-January 2010

Blank Rome, LLP  
501 Grant Street  
Suite 850  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
October 2019-December 2020; July 2021-Present

d) Any other relevant particulars:

In the summer of 2004, the President Judge of Butler County hired me to research and draft two sets of procedures for the detention of juveniles – the first for Butler County Children and Youth Services and the second for Butler County’s Juvenile Court Services (juvenile probation). He further commissioned me to draft procedures for the Butler County Court of Common Pleas to use for the emancipation of minors. In my downtime that summer, on my own initiative, I authored plain-language pamphlets explaining the dependency and delinquency process. I also had the opportunity to draft judicial decisions at the trial court level addressing family, criminal and civil matters.

I served as an intern with KidsVoice from September 2004-August 2005. Upon receiving my certification in January 2005, I regularly represented my supervising attorneys’ clients as guardian ad litem and legal counsel in dependency proceedings (discussed in detail below in response to question 10(a)).

I worked as an intern with the Allegheny County Office of the District Attorney in the Child Abuse and Narcotics Units from August 2005-December 2005, during which I helped the Deputy and Assistant District Attorneys prepare cases for trial.

From 2010-2017, I volunteered as the race director and coordinator of sue’s run4kids, a charity event that I founded with my father, which raised money for a fund at KidsVoice to benefit teenagers in the foster care system. The fund and the event were both created to honor the memory of my mother, Sue Lipman.

10. With respect to your practice:

- a) What has been the general character of your practice, dividing it into periods with dates if its character has changed over the years?

**2006-2010**

Following my completion of the Pennsylvania Bar Exam, I began my legal career with KidsVoice, a private nonprofit organization that represents abused, neglected and at-risk children from Allegheny County in dependency and ancillary matters. I started on a Monday and that Wednesday I was in court representing clients. During my tenure at KidsVoice, I represented approximately 200 clients at a given time and was typically in court 3 to 4 days every week. When I was not in court or preparing for trial, I was otherwise meeting with clients and witnesses or attending client-related meetings.

The majority of my trial practice was in the Allegheny County Family Division, where I represented clients at shelter hearings (hearings held within 72 hours of a child's removal from his/her/their home), adjudicatory hearings (determining whether the child satisfies the definition of a "dependent child" pursuant to section 6302 of the Juvenile Act, 42 Pa.C.S. § 6302), dependency review hearings (held every 3 to 6 months following adjudication), and goal change hearings (advocating for or against a change in the child's permanency goal). My role was either as guardian ad litem or counsel, depending on the allegations that brought the child before the court. *See* 42 Pa.C.S. § 6302 (defining "dependent child"); Pa.R.J.C.P. 1151. I sat second chair in a termination of parental rights hearing before the Allegheny County Orphans' Court for 2 of my long-term clients to assist in the litigation of the factually complicated matter. I also filed, defended and/or argued several appeals before the Pennsylvania Superior Court. In my last year at KidsVoice, I began representing my clients who had been accused of summary criminal offenses in hearings before Magisterial District Judges.

In addition to my robust litigation practice, I assumed leadership positions on several committees, the members of which served as in-house specialists and consultants in areas of law that regularly impacted KidsVoice clients. From 2008 through 2010, I chaired the Criminal Representation Committee, the School Expulsion Committee and the McKinney-Vento Committee. I also served as the training coordinator for the Independent Living Advocacy Group from 2007 through 2010.

Further, I regularly volunteered to supervise interns and externs at KidsVoice. I helped them engage with clients and service providers, taught them how to prepare a case for court, worked with them on their direct and cross-examinations, identified areas for legal research, supervised them in court, and taught them about all facets of the dependency system in Allegheny County.

### **2010-2015**

Based on my experience doing appellate work, I pursued a clerkship opportunity with the Honorable Christine Donohue. As a law clerk on the Pennsylvania Superior Court, I drafted Memoranda and published Opinions in all manner of cases under the Court's jurisdiction. This includes civil, criminal, family, orphans' court and juvenile matters. I drafted nearly 500 majority and minority decisions while working for the Superior Court.

## **2015-2019**

As a law clerk on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, I again drafted Opinions touching upon every area of the law that comes before that Court. In addition to the areas of law that I addressed while clerking in the Superior Court, I worked on election matters, workers' compensation cases, capital cases, cases involving grand juries, and congressional redistricting. I drafted approximately 30 decisions and 40 allocatur reports (recommending the grant or denial of a petition for allowance of appeal to the Supreme Court). I also reviewed, analyzed and made recommendations to the Justice regarding hundreds of proposed changes to Pennsylvania's Rules of Court for all areas of practice and the Boards of the Court. My role on the Supreme Court further included drafting and maintaining the style guide for writing and citations within chambers as well as reviewing and editing all Opinions that came out of chambers prior to publication.

I also organized and administered Justice Donohue's internship and externship program. This required me to conduct outreach to law schools across the Commonwealth to advertise our positions, interview with the law schools' representatives to ensure that our program was ABA compliant, and submit to them midterm and end-of-semester reports regarding the work of the students. I interviewed and hired the students who came through the program and, on my own initiative, I established a graduated curriculum for the students to follow that allowed me to assess their research and writing skills. This provided a framework for me to assign projects to students based on their ability and comfort level, with the goal ensuring that it was a mutually beneficial experience for the students and for chambers. My door was always open for work-related questions and general career or law school advice. I also competed assessments of the students' performance for various State Boards of Law Examiners and fielded calls and emails for references from future employers.

## **2019-2020; 2021-Present**<sup>1</sup>

The majority of my current practice is civil litigation and appellate work in state and federal court matters. I provide representation and advice to clients in a wide range of civil cases in both individual and class action lawsuits. I have also represented a number of clients on appeal, several of which were before the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

I regularly provide pro bono representation and/or advice in the areas of protection from abuse, wage theft, voter protection, housing insecurity, sensible gun laws, the right to protest, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, name changes, and in areas that help people without money get the same rights and legal protections as people who do.

In addition to my litigation practice, I currently Chair the Blank Rome Pittsburgh Pro Bono Committee. I also previously served as a member of the pro bono working groups of the firm at large addressing civil rights, systemic criminal justice reform, and voter protection

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<sup>1</sup> From December 2020 through May 2021, I was a candidate for the Superior Court. During that time, I took a leave of absence from my law firm and did not practice law.

efforts, and was co-chair of Blank Rome's pro bono working group aimed at protecting the right to protest prior to the firm disbanding these groups in 2021.

- b) Describe your typical clients and mention the areas, if any, in which you have concentrated your practice:

From 2006 to 2010, while at KidsVoice, I exclusively represented children from birth through age 21 who were involved in the child welfare system in Allegheny County. My representation included summary criminal matters before area Magistrates, shelter, dependency, goal change, and termination of parental right proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas, and appeals in the Pennsylvania Superior Court. I also investigated and initiated dependency cases by filing petitions for unaccompanied minors living in Allegheny County who were seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

When I was an appellate court law clerk, from 2010 to 2019, I was prohibited from representing clients.

From 2019 to present, I have:

- represented, advocated on behalf of, and advised businesses and financial institutions, both in the role of plaintiff and defendant, in matters of corporate and commercial litigation in various state and federal courts and on appeal in the Pennsylvania Superior Court;
- represented multiple plaintiffs in protection from abuse cases and, in one instance, a defendant who was falsely accused in a retaliatory filing of abusing his paramour, in the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas;
- represented the estate and surviving family members of two individuals who were murdered with guns illegally purchased from an online retailer, in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit;
- represented a minority-owned business in a racial discrimination case (42 U.S.C. §1981) in the Federal District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania;
- advised a client regarding questions of preemption under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act;
- represented several individuals in name change proceedings in the Allegheny Court of Common Pleas;
- represented an individual pursue claims related to wage theft against a former employer in the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas;
- provided advice to pro se litigants in civil and family law matters; and



- served as amici counsel in criminal appellate actions for groups of criminal defense attorneys and prosecutors, respectively, in several appellate courts.

11. With respect to the last five years:

- a) Did you appear in court regularly, occasionally, or not at all? If the frequency of your appearances in court has varied during this period, describe each such variance, giving the dates thereof:

From 2017 until October 2019, while working as a Supreme Court law clerk, I was in court frequently, hearing argument before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in preparation for drafting decisions in those matters.

From October 2019 through the beginning of December 2020, I regularly appeared in court (either in person or virtually) other than the several months when courts were closed because of the pandemic. Notably, my last day in the office prior to the shutdown, March 16, 2020, was spent in court, as was my last day before taking a leave of absence for my first Superior Court campaign in December of 2020.

From mid-December 2020 through June 2021, I was not in court because I took a leave of absence from my law firm to run for the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

From July 2021 to present, I have regularly appeared in court or have been actively working on appeals in state and federal court matters.

- b) What percentage of these appearances was in:

1. Federal courts: 10%
2. State courts of record: 90%
3. Other courts: 0%

- c) What percentage of your litigation was:

1. Civil: 95%
2. Criminal: 5%

- d) State the number of cases in courts of record you tried to verdict or judgment (rather than settled), indicating whether you were sole counsel, chief counsel or associate counsel:

I have tried two indirect criminal contempt cases stemming from a protection from abuse

matter in the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas where I was sole counsel. I obtained the affirmance of a judgment in the Pennsylvania Superior Court in a matter that I authored the brief and served as associate counsel. I have otherwise obtained successful settlements for my clients, the majority of which were obtained after lengthy pretrial litigation of preliminary objections, motions for summary judgment, and discovery disputes, or the cases/appeals currently remain pending in the courts of record.

- e) What percentage of these trials were:
  - 1. Jury: 0%
  - 2. Non-jury: 100%

12. Summarize your experience in court prior to the last five years, indicating as to that period:

- a) Whether your appearances in court were more or less frequent:

While working at KidsVoice, my appearances in court as a litigator were far more frequent than over the last five years. On average, I was in court three to four days per week, represented an average of 200 clients at a given time, and litigated over 1200 cases.

- b) Any significant changes in the percentages stated in your answers to question 11(b), (c) and (e):

Percentage of appearances:

- 1. Federal courts: 0%
- 2. State courts of record: 98%
- 3. Other courts: 2%

Percentage of litigation:

- 1. Civil: 98%
- 2. Criminal: 2%

- c) Any significant changes in the number of cases per year in courts of record you tried to verdict or judgment (rather than settled), as sole counsel, chief counsel or associate counsel.

While at KidsVoice, I tried approximately 400 cases per year in courts of record to decision. I served as sole counsel in all cases except two – (1) a Special Immigration Juvenile Status matter for which I served as chief counsel and arranged for an immigration attorney to sit second chair (discussed in detail below in response to question 13); and (2) the termination

of parental rights case, mentioned above, that I second chaired at the request of the assigned attorney to assist in litigating the complex case.

13. Describe five of the most significant litigated matters which you personally handled and give the citations thereto, if the cases were reported. Give a capsule summary of the substance of each case and a succinct statement of what you believe to be the particular significance of the case. Identify the party or parties whom you represented and describe in detail the nature of your participation in the litigation and the final disposition of the case. Also state as to each case a) the dates of the trial periods; b) the name of the court and the judge before whom the case was tried; and c) the individual name, address and telephone numbers of co-counsel for each of the other parties;

1. ***Webber v. Armlist, LLC*** and ***Bauer v. Armslist, LLC***, Nos. 21-3918 and 21-3207 (7th Cir. 2022) (consolidated)

United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit:

The Honorable Joel M. Flaum, Circuit Judge  
The Honorable Michael B. Brennan, Circuit Judge  
The Honorable Michael Y. Scudder, Circuit Judge

Co-Counsel

John Kimball  
Blank Rome LLP  
1271 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020  
(212) 885-5259

Jonathan Lowy  
Global Action Gun Violence (formerly with the Brady Center)  
1025 Connecticut Avenue NW  
#1210  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 415-0691

Opposing counsel:

Timothy Moore  
Law Offices of Timothy Moore  
811 Mason Street  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(619) 678-1588

Brian Sutherland  
Reed Smith LLP  
Suite 1800

101 Second Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 659-4843

Summary and significance:

These cases, consolidated for appeal before the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, are two in a series that have been brought by decedents' estates and surviving family members against Armslist, LLC ("Armslist") and its managing member, Jonathan Gibbon ("Gibbon"). The matters arise from the tortious conduct of Gibbon and Armslist in creating Armslist.com, a website that allows third party "private sellers" to market and sell firearms to anyone who wishes to purchase them, regardless of the legality of the sale. Armslist and Gibbon have known for years that the website's design has supplied guns to criminals, and despite the availability of simple safeguards that could be employed on the site to stop these illegal sales, they have continued the same business model.

In *Webber*, Gibbon and Armslist allowed an abusive man who was prohibited from possessing firearms to circumvent federal and state law and obtain the gun he used to kill his estranged wife, Sara Schmidt, a young mother of three children from Harrison, Wisconsin. In *Bauer*, they enabled a felon to circumvent federal law and purchase the gun he used to kill Commander Paul Bauer of the Chicago Police Department in an effort to evade arrest.

The cases were each initiated in the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin. In both cases, the trial courts dismissed the matters, holding that the claims of negligence and other related torts could not proceed because the negligence of Armslist and Gibbon was not a cause of the deaths. The appeal contends these decisions were erroneous, however, as the shooting deaths were the foreseeable consequence of the intentional design of Armslist.com—particularly as other murders had resulted from illegal gun sales made on Armslist.com many times before. Gibbon and Armslist breached a duty to exercise reasonable care in designing and operating a firearms marketplace that proactively included features designed to attract, encourage, and assist criminal buyers and sellers, resulting in these deaths. The cases were argued before the Seventh Circuit on September 13, 2022; decision remains pending as of the date of this submission.

These cases are of great significance because, for the very first time, the trial courts recognized the inapplicability of the Communications Decency Act, 47 U.S.C. § 230 (the "CDA"), to the claims raised. Nearly a half dozen other cases that had previously been brought in state courts across the United States against Armslist and Gibbon had been dismissed pursuant to the CDA, with courts holding that the law immunized the actors from liability for their conduct. *Webber* and *Bauer* constitute the first cases that provide true potential to get Gibbon and Armslist to impose safety measures on Armslist.com and to protect individuals from the catastrophic results of illegal gun sales that routinely occur on that website.

**2. *In re T.M., et al.*, CP-02-DP-0001851-2006, *aff'd*, 517–523 WDA 2009**

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge:

The Honorable John T. McVay, Jr.

Opposing counsel at trial:

Janis A. Domzal (Assistant County Solicitor representing the Office of Children Youth and Families)

Allegheny County Law Department  
Fort Pitt Commons  
445 Fort Pitt Boulevard, Suite 300  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 350-1120

Linda A. King (conflict parent advocate representing Fathers of Ty.M. and N.M.)

220 S. Homewood Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15208  
(412) 491-2889

Robert Scott (Juvenile Court Project parent advocate representing Mother as co-counsel with Melinda Sala)

Deceased

Melinda Sala (Juvenile Court Project parent advocate representing Mother as co-counsel with Robert Scott)

Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania Administrative Office  
350 Frick Building  
437 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 303-9576

Pennsylvania Superior Court panel:

The Honorable Kate Ford Elliot, President Judge Emeritus

The Honorable John T. Bender, President Judge Emeritus

The Honorable Joan Orié Melvin

Opposing counsel on appeal:

Mark Greenblatt (Assistant County Solicitor representing the Office of Children Youth and Families)

Allegheny County Family Division  
440 Ross Street  
Pittsburgh, PA, 15219  
(412) 350-5600

Benjamin Zuckerman (Juvenile Court Project parent advocate representing Mother)

Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project  
Suite 1100, Koppers Building  
436 Seventh Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

(412) 391-4467

Summary and significance:

*In re T.M.* was a highly complex dependency matter in which I represented seven siblings, ranging in age at the inception of my representation from newborn to eight years old, who had been the victims of physical abuse, neglect, medical neglect, and/or suspected sexual abuse. All seven of my clients had some combination of severe mental health diagnoses, educational concerns, and medical problems, all of which the children's biological parents (more specifically, their mother, who was their caregiver) had failed to address. The family had been involved in the child welfare system on and off beginning in 2001, and I began representing the children in the dependency proceedings that commenced in 2006. As sole counsel, I fought tirelessly to protect the rights of my clients, including through my appointment by the Court as educational guardian of the children. This additional role required me to make educational decisions in the children's best interests when their mother refused to do so. The case required the filing of myriad motions and numerous hearings concerning the health, safety and welfare of the children and their parents' noncompliance with orders of Court.

My representation culminated with my petition, joined by the Office of Children, Youth and Families ("CYF"), to change the goal for the children from reunification with their mother to adoption. By that point, the children had again been removed from their mother's care, with new allegations of physical and sexual abuse, and with the children making extremely concerning (and consistent) disclosures about sexual activity and drug use that they regularly witnessed while in their mother's care. As had been the theme throughout the life of the case, the mother denied these reports. Judge McVay held a three-day bench trial on the goal change petition beginning February 6, 2009 and ending March 16, 2009. The trial involved the testimony of 22 witnesses, including the 6 oldest children (who were heard in camera) and 4 experts. There was no question that the children were bonded with their mother, but there was also copious evidence that she was unfit to care for them and unwilling to meet their many and varied needs. Proving my case as guardian ad litem therefore required showing that although there was a parental bond, it was detrimental to the children's best interests to continue to work towards reunifying with their mother. Because the outcome of the case depended so heavily on the credibility of the witnesses, I undertook a comprehensive review of the lengthy record to prepare my witnesses and to build the foundation for my cross-examination of adverse witnesses.

At the conclusion of the March 16, 2009 proceeding Judge McVay denied my goal change request. He then denied my motion for reconsideration the following day. I appealed these decisions to the Pennsylvania Superior Court. Based on the standard of review by which the case would be decided (for an abuse of discretion) and the concomitant heavy burden I carried to warrant reversal of the trial court's decision, I conducted extensive legal research to find case law in support of my position that discretion had in fact been abused. I methodically set forth the facts and the law in both my brief and oral argument for the Superior Court's consideration.

The Superior Court agreed with me. In an unreported decision entered on February 19, 2010, the Court reversed the order of the trial court, finding that it had abused its discretion by failing to change the goal from reunification with the mother to adoption.

This case is significant both in that it was undoubtedly one of the worst cases of abuse and neglect I had seen in my career and because it required careful strategy to obtain a good outcome for my clients. Additionally, it set the stage for precedent-changing law by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The Superior Court's reversal of the denial of goal change led CYF to file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the children's parents—a decision that was ultimately made by our Supreme Court, which found that the facts and the law applicable to the case required termination. In particular, our Supreme Court held, for the first time, that although termination of a parent's rights should typically be reserved to cases where the child is in a pre-adoptive home, termination is necessary in some cases where, as here, the child's bond with the biological parent negatively affects the child and has impeded the location of an adoptive placement. *See In re T.S.M.*, 71 A.3d 251, 269 (Pa. 2013).

3. ***In re H.C.*, CP-02-DP-0001359-2007, *aff'd*, 86 WDA 2008**

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge:

The Honorable Robert J. Colville

Opposing counsel at trial:

Janis Domzal (Assistant County Solicitor representing the Office of Children Youth and Families)

Allegheny County Law Department

Fort Pitt Commons

445 Fort Pitt Boulevard, Suite 300

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

(412) 350-1120

Linda A. King (conflict parent advocate representing Mother)

220 S. Homewood Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15208

(412) 491-2889

Robert Scott (Juvenile Court Project parent advocate representing Father)

Deceased

Pennsylvania Superior Court panel:

The Honorable Correale Stevens, President Judge Emeritus

The Honorable Cheryl Lynn Allen

The Honorable Patrick R. Tamalia

Opposing counsel on appeal:

Mark Greenblatt (Assistant County Solicitor representing the Office of Children Youth and Families)

Allegheny County Family Division

440 Ross Street  
Pittsburgh, PA, 15219  
(412) 350-5600

Kiersten Frankowski (Juvenile Court Project parent advocate representing Mother)  
Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project  
Suite 1100, Koppers Building  
436 Seventh Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 391-4467

Summary and significance:

My client in this case was an eight-year-old boy who was left alone with another eight-year-old boy to supervise their three younger siblings (two of whom were my client's siblings) while their mothers went out to a bar. There was a fire in the home and, tragically, the three younger children died in the blaze. The mothers were both charged criminally, and my client was placed in the care of his maternal aunt. I was assigned to this high-profile matter and immediately conducted my own independent investigation concerning the dependency allegations and the child's needs and welfare.

After CYF filed its petition for dependency, the child's father came forward seeking custody. He refused to sign any releases to allow CYF to investigate whether he was an appropriate placement option, and although he had never had custody of the child, he presented himself as a ready, willing and able parent. Absent evidence to the contrary, the trial court was prepared to dismiss the petition and release the child to his father's care. Based on my independent investigation, I knew that the father had serious untreated mental health problems. Further, although my client knew and had visited with his father, he had never resided with him or spent any prolonged periods in his care. More importantly, he expressed to me a desire that he remain in the home of his aunt. Because the father had not signed releases to allow CYF to obtain information about his mental health history, I was unable to secure a witness with firsthand knowledge who could testify to this information; my lay witness could only provide anecdotal evidence. Given the serious trauma the child had already experienced, the wishes of my client, and the fact that the father had never had custody of him, I sought and obtained a continuance to allow CYF to investigate further and for the child to be evaluated with the father to ensure that he could provide proper parental care and control and meet the child's needs.

Once the reports on the evaluations had been completed, the Court reconvened and on December 12, 2007, and it permitted the testimony of an expert concerning his observations of the father and child together as well as his review of the father's mental health records. My questioning of the expert following my independent review of the father's records revealed the severity of the father's battle with paranoid schizophrenia, the symptoms of which included delusions, hallucinations, and at times, threats and acts of violence. This provided the necessary foundation for, and made relevant, the testimony of my fact witness, who testified to her observations of the father's behaviors. Based on the evidence presented, the Court adjudicated the child dependent and ordered for him to remain in the care of his maternal aunt, where he was stable, doing well, receiving therapeutic interventions, and attending his home school of origin. The father was allowed to have visits with the child, as he



had before, with certain safeguards in place.

This case is significant because it was highly publicized in the media based on the actions of the mother. The real work, though, and that which was not originally contemplated by the other parties, was to discern whether there was a legal basis for dependency as to the child's father. Removing the child from his maternal aunt's care and placing him in the potentially dangerous home of his father would have had the effect of retraumatizing a child who had already endured a horrific experience. Although not my petition, I took it upon myself to ensure the legal standards for dependency were met and to discern what was in the child's best interest.

Father's attorney appealed this decision to the Pennsylvania Superior Court. Following submission of the case on briefs to that Court, it affirmed the decision on August 19, 2008, finding no error in the trial court's determination.

4. ***In re J.H., CP-002097-01***

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge:  
The Honorable Edward Borkowski

Opposing counsel:

Wendy Kobe (Assistant County Solicitor representing the Office of Children Youth and Families)  
City of Pittsburgh Law Department  
313 City-County Building  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 255-2015

Summary and significance:

I took over the representation of J.H. in 2006, when he was a high school senior. J.H. was a talented artist interested in continuing his education in a specialized field of graphic arts. He found a program at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh that provided a course of study in the precise field he was looking to pursue.

J.H. had for several years been living happily in a foster home where, like nearly all foster homes, the family received payment for his care, room and board. At that time, the statutory definition of a "child" in the Juvenile Act included, in pertinent part, a person who "was adjudicated dependent before reaching the age of 18 years and who, while engaged in a course of instruction or treatment, requests the court to retain jurisdiction until the course has been completed, but in no event shall a child remain in a course of instruction or treatment past the age of 21 years." 42 Pa.C.S. § 6302 (amended July 5, 2012). In June of 2006, the Pennsylvania Superior Court held, for the first time, that "course of instruction" included postsecondary education programs. *See In re S.J.*, 906 A2d 547, 551 (Pa. Super. 2006). *S.J.*, however, involved a child who would be attending a traditional four-year university in pursuit of a bachelor's degree.

In early 2007, I brought a petition to allow J.H.'s dependency case to remain open and to require CYF to continue to provide limited financial assistance to J.H. while he attended the postsecondary

education program at the Art Institute. CYF vehemently and aggressively fought this petition, arguing that “course of instruction” should not be extended to for-profit education programs and that the Court had an obligation to steer J.H. away from what CYF considered to be a bad investment.

In the spring of 2007, following a hearing and oral argument on my petition, Judge Borkowski granted my request. He subsequently wrote a scathing Opinion in support of his decision, prompting CYF to withdraw the appeal it had filed.

This case is of particular significance because it constituted the beginning of a turning point in the approach that CYF took regarding dependent children who wished to further their education after high school graduation or its equivalent. It was one of a long list of cases, brought by my colleagues and I, to allow our clients to continue to receive assistance and support from CYF after graduating high school. J.H.’s case was one that prompted CYF to begin negotiations with KidsVoice for other similarly situated clients to allow them to receive continued services while in the postsecondary course of instruction of their choice. Notably, this line of cases also led to a change in the law. In 2012, the Pennsylvania General Assembly amended the Juvenile Act’s definition of a “child” to include a person who “is under the age of 21 years and was adjudicated dependent before reaching the age of 18 years, who has requested the court to retain jurisdiction and who remains under the jurisdiction of the court as a dependent child because the court has determined that the child is ... enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or vocational education[.]” 42 Pa.C.S. § 6302(3)(ii) (effective July 5, 2012). *See also* 2012, July 5, P.L. 880, No. 91, § 2.1.

#### 5. *In re F.L., CP-000694-09*

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge:

The Honorable David N. Wecht

Opposing counsel:

Margo Epstein (Assistant County Solicitor representing the Office of Children Youth and Families)

310 Grant Street, Suite 1125

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

(412) 281-1988

Second chair / co-counsel for F.L.:

Laura Maines

Every Child, Inc.

1425 Forbes Ave #300

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

(412) 665-0600

Summary and significance

KidsVoice received a phone call regarding F.L. in early 2009 from another legal aid provider. The caller stated that the child, 17 years old, had been trafficked from Guatemala and was now living in Pittsburgh with a local good Samaritan who took him in. His parents remained in Guatemala and

he needed help and support to, among other things, enroll in school. Because he was trafficked across the border, he had no documentation, but he wanted to be in the United States legally. I was assigned the case, and after conducting research in this area, I learned about the potential for children in F.L.'s circumstances to attain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status ("SIJS"), which would help facilitate his ability to obtain documentation to remain in the United States.

I contacted F.L. and, along with a KidsVoice colleague who was fluent in Spanish, went to visit him at his home. According to F.L., he had worked in a Chinese restaurant in Guatemala, the owner of which was moving to the United States (in Michigan) to open another restaurant. The owner offered to pay for F.L. to come to the United States and work there. F.L. and his parents jumped at the opportunity. He subsequently learned that the payment the restaurant owner promised would be to coyotes (people paid to smuggle individuals across the border). F.L.'s parents nonetheless agreed that he should go.

The journey was long and difficult, during which F.L. was robbed and witnessed appalling things. Following his arrival in the United States, he was held as if a prisoner by the owner of the restaurant. He was forced to work every day in the restaurant and was otherwise locked inside a small apartment when he was not working.

After several months of captivity, F.L. was able to secretly contact a family member who lived in the United States and was able to come up with a plan for F.L. to escape. On the agreed upon date at the arranged time, F.L. fled the restaurant into his family member's waiting van, which drove him to Pittsburgh where the family member had made arrangements through a series of contacts for F.L. to have a safe place to stay.

F.L. gave me permission to contact his parents, which I did, again with the assistance of my Spanish speaking coworker. His parents were aware of what had occurred but did not express any concern about the safety and wellbeing of their son.

I spoke with CYF about the ordeal that F.L. had been through in the hopes that they would assist him and provide services to help him. Instead, members of the agency called Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), reporting F.L. as being in the country without documentation. This was an unwelcome surprise, as my research revealed that ICE could detain him and take jurisdiction away from the Pennsylvania courts until the time the Court adjudicated him dependent. Upon learning of CYF's course of action, I immediately contacted Laura Maines, an attorney who had done immigration work, and she agreed to second chair the dependency proceeding that I was prepared to initiate in case ICE intervened.

I filed a dependency petition that same day and arranged for an interpreter to be present for the hearing, which was scheduled for the following week. At the May 1, 2009 bench trial, upon hearing the evidence presented by both sides, then-Judge (now-Justice) Wecht found F.L. to be a dependent child, thus securing his status under the supervision of Pennsylvania's juvenile court and precluding his detention by ICE.

Attorney Maines then assisted F.L. with his Green Card application, which he successfully obtained several months later. In the meantime, he attended high school and graduated. He also

obtained a job working as an apprentice for a mechanic.

Although far more common now, this case is significant because it was among the first (if not the first) SIJS case heard in Allegheny County. There was no playbook to follow for this matter; I had to research and learn everything about this legal proceeding on my own.

3. If a substantial period of your practice has been before administrative boards, commissions or agencies during the past five years, identify the boards, commissions or agencies before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto:

N/A

4. If a substantial portion of your practice has been before Appellate courts during the past five years, identify the Appellate Courts before which you have practiced and estimate percentages of practice time devoted thereto:

In the past three years, I have represented clients in several appellate matters, devoting approximately 20% of my practice to appellate work during that period.

I represented two businesses and a financial institution as appellees in their appeals before the Pennsylvania Superior Court. I also represented the estates and surviving family members of two victims of gun violence as appellants in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals against the online gun retailer from which their killers obtained their murder weapons.

I further served as amici counsel in two appeals. In the first, before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Galveston, Texas, I was co-counsel for 44 state and county prosecutors, arguing in support of the appointment of counsel for indigent defendants at initial bail hearings. In the second, before the New Jersey Supreme Court, I represented the Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys of New Jersey, arguing issues concerning the propriety of the warrantless entry into a rooming house by police.

In the two preceding years, 100% of my work was in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, where I served as a law clerk.

5. a) Have you ever held judicial office? If so, give dates and details, including the courts involved, whether elected or appointed, periods of services, and a description of the jurisdiction of each of such courts with any limitations upon the jurisdiction of each court:

No.

b) Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, give details, including the office involved, whether elected or appointed, and the length of your service, giving details:

No.

6. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates:

No.

7. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business or profession other than the practice of law or the holding of judicial or other public office? If so, give details, including dates:

Yes. Following my graduation from college I was an AmeriCorps Fellow, working as a caseworker for The Choice Programs. In this role, I worked with minors living in Montgomery County, Maryland who had been adjudicated delinquent and were on probation. The Choice Programs was a very intensive program designed for either placement diversion or post-placement reentry to reduce recidivism by youthful offenders. I worked with clients to help them fulfill their probation requirements while teaching them accountability and responsibility. Working with a team of two other caseworkers, we saw our clients seven days a week, between two and five times each day; authored reports for our clients' probation officers and judges; attended meetings related to their mental health, physical health, education, and probation; met with judges, probation officers, school officials, and medical and mental health professionals; and testified in court at probation review and revocation hearings. In addition to my casework, I arranged trainings for both staff and client development. I also organized and coached a basketball team for my male clients aged 15 to 18, ensuring that every child could participate regardless of his ability to pay.

While in college, I worked for all four years as a notetaker for The George Washington University's Office of Disability Support Services. In this role, I took detailed notes in several courses each semester to assist students with learning disabilities.

I additionally spent two summers in professional settings in college. The first was at Allegheny Academy in its residential placement for girls who had been adjudicated delinquent. I worked as a counselor, conducting group and individual sessions with residents. I also started a reading class to help the residents improve their literacy and comprehension skills. The second was at the Child Advocacy Center of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. While working there I observed forensic interviews of children who had allegedly been victims of abuse, assisted in the interviews of non-offending parents of the child victims, and drafted reports for the team to submit to law enforcement involved in the abuse investigations.

8. Are you now an officer or director or otherwise engaged in the management of any business enterprise?

No.

- a. If so, give details, including the name of your enterprise, the nature of the business, the title or other description of your position, the nature of your duties and the term of your service.

N/A

- b. Is it your intention to resign such positions and withdraw from any participation in the management of any such enterprises if you are elected and confirmed? If not, give reasons:

N/A

9. Have you ever been convicted of violating any federal law or regulation, state law or regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation or ordinance? If so, give details. Do not include summary traffic offenses:

Yes. In February of 2000, while visiting a friend at the University of North Carolina, Alcohol Law Enforcement pulled me over in my car as I was driving to the Duke vs. UNC basketball game. I had three passengers in my car, and we were all 20 years old at the time. One of the passengers had purchased beer and brought it into my vehicle. The ALE confiscated the beer and gave each of us a citation for underage possession of alcohol, which required the payment of a small fine but no court appearance.

In November 2000, as a 21-year-old college junior, I was purchasing groceries and beer for my personal use at a local convenience store. A friend who was coincidentally in the store at the time and who lived in an apartment building located a block beyond mine offered to help me carry my purchases out of the store. She was 3 months shy of her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday at the time. Immediately upon exiting the store, we were stopped and arrested by Washington Metropolitan Police. Rather than endure the expense, stress and unpredictable timing of a trial, I pled guilty to providing alcohol to a minor, a misdemeanor, that led to a fine of \$50.00 and a brief period of unsupervised probation. The conviction was subsequently set aside pursuant to the District of Columbia Youth Act.

10. Are you under any ongoing federal, state or local investigation or indictment for possible violation of a criminal statute? If so, give particulars:

No.

11. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? If so, give particulars:

No.

12. Have you ever been sued by a client? If so, give particulars:

No.

13. Have you ever been a party or otherwise involved in any other legal proceedings? If so, give the particulars. Do not list proceedings in which you were merely a guardian ad litem or stakeholder. Include all legal proceedings in which you were a party in interest, a material witness, were named as co-conspirator or a co-respondent and any grand jury investigation in which you figured as a subject or in which you appeared as a witness:

No.

14. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If so, give the particulars:

No.

15. Currently or within the past five (5) years have you suffered from any medical or other condition which could affect or impair your judgment, reliability, or ability to perform the essential functions of the judicial position you are seeking? If so, describe.

No.

16. Do any circumstances exist that would affect your ability to perform the function of the position you seek or fulfill the term of office? If so, please explain.

No.

17. Furnish one (1) example of a legal article, law review article, brief, or other legal writing which reflects your personal work. If a brief is submitted, indicate the degree to which it represents your personal work:

The writing included with this application is a brief in support of summary judgment that I filed in a recent pro bono matter and handled as lead counsel. A junior associate assisted me with some research and initial drafting for the brief, but much of the research and the final written product is my own work.

18. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. List chairmanships of any committees in bar associations and professional societies and memberships on any committees which you believe to be of particular significance (e.g., judicial selection committee, disciplinary committee, grievance committee).

### **Allegheny County Bar Association**

- Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2019-Present
- Public Service Committee, 2010-Present; Backpack Project *co-chair*, 2011-2014
- Women in the Law Division, 2010-Present
- Audit Committee Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee *chair*, 2019
- Bar Leadership Initiative Curriculum Ad Hoc Committee *chair*, 2015
- Young Lawyers Division *treasurer*, 2013-2015
- Young Lawyers Division Council member, 2011-2013
- Young Lawyers Division Education Committee member and CLE Subcommittee *chair*, 2010-2012
- Young Lawyers Division Public Service Committee, 2010-2016; *chair*, 2013-2015; Children's Holiday Party *co-chair*, 2011 and 2012
- Juvenile Law Committee, 2010-2012; Public Service Subcommittee *chair*, 2011-2012 (the Committee then merged into the Family Law Committee)

### **Allegheny County Bar Foundation**

- Lawyers Fund, 2018-2021
- Carol Los Mansmann Scholarship Committee *co-chair*, 2014-Present
- Loans and Scholarships Committee *co-chair*, 2014-Present
- Grants Committee, 2013-Present
- Secretary to the Board of Trustees, 2018-2020
- Member of the Board of Trustees, 2017-2018
- Fellow, 2017
- Young Lawyer Trustee, 2012-2015
- Young Lawyer Fellow, 2012

### **American Bar Association**

- Equal Justice Conference Host Committee *co-chair*, 2015-2017

### **Pennsylvania Bar Association**

- Appellate Advocacy Committee, 2014-Present; *treasurer*, 2019-2022; *vice chair*, 2022-Present; Diversity and Inclusion Representative, 2020-Present
- Children's Rights Committee, 2014-Present; Legislative Subcommittee, 2015-Present; Liaison to the PBA Young Lawyers Division, 2018-2019
- Quality of Life/Balance Committee, 2015-Present
- Women in the Profession, 2013-Present; mentor, 2013-Present
- Judicial Administration Committee, 2015-2019

19. List your experiences in teaching and lecturing, including law school, continuing legal education and to non-legal audiences.

- 100 Years After the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (panel discussion), panelist, ACBA Headquarters, Pittsburgh, 2022



- Petitions for Allowance of Appeal – Best Practices (CLE), presenter, ACBA Bench Bar Conference, Seven Springs, 2022
- Challenging Precedent (PBA Appellate Advocacy Committee “hot tip” video series), presenter, YouTube, 2022
- Most Impactful Pennsylvania Supreme Court Decisions of 2021 (Standard of Review Podcast), guest commentator, online via Zoom, 2022
- Now What? PA Appellate Courts in the New Normal (PBI CLE), moderator of jurists from Pennsylvania’s three appellate courts, online via Zoom, 2021
- Juneteenth Commemoration (Unity In the Community event), speaker, Greensburg, 2021
- Virtual Advocacy in Pennsylvania’s Appellate Courts (PBI CLE), moderator of jurists from Pennsylvania’s three appellate courts, online via Zoom, 2020
- How to Bring Balance and Quality of Life into Your Practice (PBI CLE), presenter
  - PBA Real Property Retreat, State College, 2019
  - Blair County Bar Association, Hollidaysburg, 2019
- Bridge the Gap (CLE), presenter, ACBA Headquarters, Pittsburgh, 2019
- Stepping Out (2-hour lectures for high school students about their rights and responsibilities through the ACBA), presenter, various locations, annually from 2011-2019
- Western Pennsylvania Appellate Practice (CLE), panelist, Pittsburgh, 2019
- What it Means to Lead (presentation to student leaders), panelist, Shady Side Academy Senior School, Pittsburgh, 2019
- Appellate Practice in Pennsylvania (lecture to attorneys), presenter, KidsVoice, 2012
- DUI Law (presentation to attorneys), moderator of a panel consisting of a police sergeant, defense attorney, and prosecutor, Allegheny County Bar Association, 2010
- Independent Living Services for Children Involved with CYF in Allegheny County (lecture to individuals from various professions), presenter, 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Hope and Healing by Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, 2009
- Practical Tips and Tools to Provide to Youth and Those Working with Youth as They Age Out of Foster Care (lecture to child welfare professionals from across the country), presenter, 6th Annual It’s My Life Conference by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Los Angeles, 2008

20. List all organizations other than bar associations, professional associations or societies of

which you are or have been a member, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations:

- Member of the Board of the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition, Events Subcommittee chair, 2019-Present
- Duquesne University School of Law Association, 2019-Present; alumni mentor, 2011-Present
- Temple Sinai of Pittsburgh congregant, 2017-Present; member of the Parent Advisory Group, 2019-2020
- Jewish Community Center of Pittsburgh member, 2017-Present
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation, Light the Night Team Captain for Blank Rome Pittsburgh, 2020
- Gilda Radner Leadership Board of Gilda's Club of Western Pennsylvania (now Our Clubhouse), 2009-2011; Face of Cancer, 2011
- Duquesne University School of Law Public Interest Law Association, 2003-2006; co-chair 2005-2006

21. List any honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received (including any indication of academic distinction in college or law school) other than those mentioned in answers to the foregoing questions.

- Philadelphia Power Women, Metro Philadelphia, 2022
- Above & Beyond, City & State Pennsylvania, 2022
- Pro Bono Award, Blank Rome, 2020 & 2021
- Outstanding Young Lawyer Award, Allegheny County Bar Association, 2015
- Presidential Merit Award, Allegheny County Bar Foundation, 2014
- Outstanding Public Service Award, Allegheny County Bar Association, 2014
- Children's Voice Award, CASA of Allegheny County, 2009
- Employee Recognition Award, KidsVoice, 2008
- Caseworker of the Year, The Choice Programs, 2003

22. State any other information which may reflect positively or adversely on you or which you believe should be disclosed in connection with consideration of you for an election to a Court of Pennsylvania.

I pride myself on the positive working relationships I have had with my colleagues and opposing counsel throughout my career. Even when matters in the courtroom have been adversarial, I have always maintained a professional and collegial relationship with the attorneys involved on all sides. Based on my experience working on the courts, I know how important collegiality is among the judges. I also know that certain decisions can evoke an impassioned response from the jurists involved. I am confident that even in such circumstances, I will be able to maintain a positive working relationship with my colleagues.

I have also always valued the opportunity to work with, mentor, and teach law students and young lawyers. As a law student, I learned the most about the practice of law (and, in particular, the Rules of Evidence) through my internship experiences. I was fortunate to have attorneys who were willing to take the time to work with me. I, in turn, have done the same at every stage of my career, and will continue to do so if elected to the Superior Court.

23. Why do you wish to become a Justice or Judge? What special strengths do you feel you possess that would particularly well qualify you for the position of Justice or Judge?

In my career, I have had the opportunity to litigate before, work with, and/or review the decisions of jurists at every level of every court in Pennsylvania. I have seen judges and justices who treat litigants fairly and with dignity; diligently consider the facts and evidence before them; and craft carefully researched decisions, applying the facts of record to the precedential law. I have also had the unfortunate experience with jurists who shame and demean litigants (and lower courts); prejudge cases without any consideration of the testimony or awareness of what is in the record; and allow the opinions and decisions of their staff to substitute as their own, serving more in a role of proofreader than decisionmaker. I know that there is a right way and a wrong way to do this job. Making sure the job is done right is what motivates me to run for the Superior Court.

To do the job right a Superior Court Judge must be knowledgeable in the areas of the law that come before the Court so that she can proficiently apply the law to the particular facts of each case. The role requires a careful balancing of error correction through the appropriate lens and deference to the court below, without serving as a rubberstamp for any interest or usurping a role that is designated elsewhere.

I am well equipped for this aspect of being a Superior Court Judge. I have drafted approximately 500 decisions addressing the very subject matter that will come before me if elected. I have years of experience closely reviewing the Pennsylvania Rules of Court that apply to the matters that come before the Superior Court. I have litigated over 1200 cases that are within the Superior Court's jurisdiction. And I have briefed and argued cases before the Superior Court. These experiences have given me an intimate familiarity with the relevant areas of the law and the standards by which the cases must be reviewed. They have provided me with a strong working knowledge of the governing law and a firm understanding not only of what the law says, but how it applies in context.

To do the job right a Superior Court Judge must also be decisive and efficient. Litigants should not be required to wait years for a decision on whether, for example, they have the right to be free from incarceration, the ability to continue in their livelihood, or will be able to obtain custody of their children.

I know firsthand what it is like to await decision on appeal of a case that has taken months, or in some cases years, to prepare and try. I have made it my habit, both as a litigator and in my service on the courts, to have my work completed well in advance of prescribed deadlines. I have taken to heart the adage, “If you’re on time, you’re late,” often stated to law students (including several of my classmates) by the illustrious John Murray.

But getting a decision out quickly should never result in sacrificing the quality or correctness of the decision, nor does it permit a jurist to allow her clerks to substitute their judgment for that of her own. As an extremely high-volume Court—one of the busiest in the country—it is far easier for a judge to abdicate her responsibilities in the name of “efficiency.” This is a dangerous proposition, however, as the Superior Court is the court of last resort for approximately 96 percent of cases that are within its jurisdiction. It is also the sole means for litigants to obtain error review of questions concerning the right to liberty, parenthood, a person’s health, wealth and safety, and all manner of constitutional rights—decisions that come with life-altering consequences for the parties involved and for Pennsylvanians at large. Each case must be treated as important, as it is undoubtedly the most important case to the litigants involved, deserving thoughtful consideration by the person elected to do the job.

The matters that come before the Superior Court are the clients I have represented for my entire career as a litigator. I can put a face to nearly every kind of case that the Superior Court reviews. I can say with assurance that I will never cast a case aside as unimportant. Further, my litigation work has mostly been in fast-paced, high-volume courts, and my clerking experience has been spent drafting decisions on these matters. I know how to work quickly, and yet thoroughly, to get to the correct and legally supported result, with a working knowledge of the Superior Court from both sides of the bench.

Most importantly, to do the job right a Superior Court Judge must treat all litigants fairly and equally, regardless of the parties’ race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, disability, or wealth. All persons are entitled to a fair consideration of their case, no matter who they are or what they are alleged to have done, and the writing deciding the appeal should reflect this. A judge should not be impatient or impertinent in her written decision, as this is indicative of a failure to treat those involved and the issues raised with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Ensuring a fair and unbiased decision on appeal is an extremely high priority for me. I have spent the great majority of my career as a litigator helping people and fighting for the rights of the underserved and most vulnerable members of our population. I have been actively involved in efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in our profession, our bar associations, our community, and through board service. I have done this with kindness, respect and collegiality, and have always completed my work with assiduous and comprehensive research, regardless of whether I was paid for my services or the demographic background of my client.

My broad professional experiences make me uniquely suited to be a Judge of the Superior Court. I have the work ethic and the experience to do the job with a high level of competence, integrity, ethics, and productivity without sacrificing the quality of the decisions. For every case I have litigated, I am prepared, thoroughly researched, and knowledgeable about the facts. For every case I have drafted, I have done so without prejudice or bias, after a careful review of the record and based on the precedential law. I have proven myself time and again to be an extremely hard worker; I do not stop until I find the right answer, even (and especially) when it is not the easy answer. I have the temperament, the skill, the drive, and the ability to do the job of a Superior Court Judge and to do it right.

24. Did you sign the ACBA Judicial Campaign Advertising Guidelines Pledge? (Please return signed pledge with completed questionnaire.)

Yes.

#### **CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

The undersigned certifies that all of the statements made in this questionnaire are true, complete and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.

Jill Beck

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type or print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



11/14/2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date