

**LIHBA STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF JUDGE HECTOR D. LASALLE FOR APPOINTMENT TO
THE POSITION OF CHIEF JUDGE OF THE NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS**

TO: Governor Kathy Hochul
FROM: The Executive Board of the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association
RE: Appointment of Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals
Date: November 26, 2022

Dear Governor Hochul:

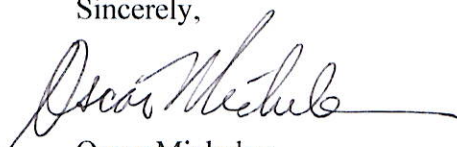
The Executive Board of the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association (LIHBA) strongly urge you to appoint the Hon. Hector D. LaSalle to the position of Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. The LIHBA board recognizes the strength of the other six candidates recommended to you by the New York State Commission on Judicial Nominations and while each candidate possesses strengths and experience that would assist the Court of Appeals into entering its next phase, Judge LaSalle alone has the administrative experience necessary to help the Court move forward.

As Presiding Justice of the Second Department of the Appellate Division, Judge LaSalle administers the operations of the appellate court at 45 Monroe Place; two appellate terms; mental health/mental hygiene legal services; three grievance committees; several character and fitness committees; and the 18B committees which appoint counsel to serve the legal needs of the indigent. In that capacity, Judge LaSalle has shown an incredible ability to skillfully manage the many facets of the Second Department, the busiest appeals court in the State. His experience and temperament were essential to get the court through the covid-19 pandemic by switching quickly to virtual appearances and providing continued access to the court to litigants and counsel. For the years that he served as a trial judge in Suffolk County, those who appeared before him knew that they would get due process and a fair and balanced hearing. While his administrative skills are important, the LIHBA board also believes it is important for judges at all levels, but especially the Court of Appeals, to have had hands-on trial experience, which Judge LaSalle has from his years on the bench and from his time in practice with the NYS Attorney General's Office and the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office.

But of course, LIHBA also takes personal pride in recommending Judge LaSalle because he is a Past President of LIHBA and one of our founding members. Judge LaSalle has never forgotten his Puerto Rican roots and has been a dedicated supporter of the Hispanic community. It is important for that community to see Hispanics being provided opportunities to take leadership positions in the vital institutions in our State. While New York's Hispanic community makes up approximately 19% of the total population of New York, only 7% of judges statewide are of Hispanic descent. Judge LaSalle's appointment to Chief Judge would send a clear message that the State acknowledges the growing importance of the Hispanic population and would allow Hispanic New Yorkers to have someone that represents them at the top of the legal profession.

In conclusion, the LIHBA Board and its many members fully support Judge LaSalle's appointment to the position of Chief Judge. We know that he will serve the State and the Court with dignity; professionalism; and skill. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Oscar Michelen
LIHBA President-Elect