

PRESS RELEASE

LIHBA congratulates the Hon. Hector D. LaSalle on his nomination by Gov. Kathy Hochul for the position of Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

December 23,2022

The Long Island Hispanic Bar Association (LIHBA) congratulates one of our founders and past presidents, the Hon. Hector D. LaSalle, on his nomination by Gov. Kathy Hochul to the position of Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. LIHBA urges the NYS Senate to take swift action and confirm Judge LaSalle's nomination.

Judge LaSalle brings to the Court his extensive administrative and trial experience and his long-standing commitment to fairness and equality under the law. As Presiding Judge of the Second Department of the Appellate Division – one of the busiest appellate courts in the country – he oversaw the appellate court; 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. That level of experience makes him eminently qualified to lead the Court of Appeals and the NYS Court System.

It is disheartening that many progressive elected officials and organizations have taken up opposition to Judge LaSalle's historic appointment claiming that Judge LaSalle would push the Court against progressive policies, particularly in the area of abortion rights and labor rights. This opposition is based on a skewed and misinformed review of Judge LaSalle's lengthy record. Only one case is cited as to abortion rights - *Matter of Evergreen*, and as the attached document shows, that case was about the interplay of the Attorney General's right to subpoena organizations for documents and the right of those organizations to free speech. As to labor rights, a full review of Judge LaSalle's cases shows that he has often sided with employees. For example, in the case of *Lefort v. Kingsbrook*, discussed in the attached document, Judge LaSalle wrote a strong opinion upholding an employee's right to bring claims under the NYS and NYC Human Rights Law. We also ask that those opposed to Judge LaSalle's nomination review the attached document and the analysis of cases cited by those opposed to Judge LaSalle and a handful of other cases from Judge LaSalle's extensive record of opinions that we had provided in our original letter in support of his candidacy. That document is also attached.

LIHBA prides itself on being a strong supporter of progressive causes and we have worked closely with many of the organizations signing on to oppose Judge LaSalle's nomination. We ask those organizations to examine Judge LaSalle's commitment to fairness, progressive causes, and equality under the law. He can be counted on to protect those rights we all hold dear and to make NY a strong beacon of support for progressive policies.

Beyond his significant credentials, Judge LaSalle has always given back to his community. As one of the founders of our organization and one of its past Presidents, he has made it his mission to assure that the Latinx community has access to justice and representation on the bench. LIHBA thanks Gov. Hochul for recognizing Judge LaSalle's qualifications and experience and for strengthening Latinx representation at all levels of the NYS court system. LIHBA congratulates Judge Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson on her nomination for Chief Administrative Judge. Judge Richardson-Mendelson has served as Deputy Administrative Judge and has led the Equal Justice in Courts Initiative which seeks to eradicate racial bias in the New York Courts. With these two nominations, Gov. Hochul clearly establishes providing equal access, diverse and experienced jurists, and a fair court system as one of the State's highest priorities. Congratulations once again to Judges LaSalle and Richardson-Mendelson on their historic appointments.

For more information, please contact the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association at lihbacontact@gmail.com