

**Opening Statement of James Graham Lake**  
**Nominee to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia**

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Paul, and members of the Committee: I am humbled and honored to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to join the Superior Court bench. I want to thank your staff for their courtesy and professionalism during this process. I also wish to thank the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission and especially its Chair, the Honorable Marie Johns, for recommending me to the White House. And I thank President Joseph Biden for nominating me.

I want to express special gratitude to my family. The love of my life—my wife, Elizabeth Wilkins—is an extraordinary partner in all things, and not a day goes by that I don't think about how lucky I am to be on this journey with her. My two children are my joy and my inspiration, and, yes, they have been bribed with sweets to be on their best behavior today. To my sisters, Cynthia, Ellen, and Betsy, I am who I am because of the strong women in my life, and I am extraordinarily grateful to be your kid brother. Finally, I owe an enormous debt to my parents, Prudence and David, who moved to Washington, D.C. in 1970, my father to become a tax lawyer and my mother eventually to work for a neighborhood church. They raised my sisters and me with unconditional love, a strong commitment to family, and a whole lot of joy, an approach Elizabeth and I try to emulate each day as parents.

I currently serve as the Chief of the Workers' Rights and Antifraud Section at the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. I have had the privilege of leading the section since its creation in 2021, working alongside an extraordinary group of lawyers and staff to build a high-volume affirmative litigation practice helping thousands of District workers secure essential rights in the workplace. Both in this role, and before that as a trial attorney in the Office doing consumer protection work, I have litigated regularly in Superior Court and value the institution and its importance to the city. If confirmed, I will do my level best to emulate the example set by the fair-minded jurists currently on the court, and to ensure that the institution performs at the level of excellence that the public rightly expects of it.

Throughout this nomination process, I have found myself thinking about the great fortune I had at the start of my legal career in serving as a law clerk for several brilliant, hardworking, and even-handed jurists. I'm extraordinarily grateful to count two of them as mentors to this day—Judge Harry T. Edwards of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and Judge Michael P. Shea of the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut. If confirmed, I will draw not only on the lessons I learned as their law clerk, but also from as much advice as they'll be willing to give me. I will not have the same opportunity with Judge Mark R. Kravitz of the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut, for whom I clerked for four months before he died at the hands of Lou Gehrig's disease. Judge Kravitz was kind and fair minded, equal parts compassionate and brilliant, and, as Chair of the U.S. Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, a civil procedure nerd at heart. It was awful to watch a terrible disease run its course, and I look back on that time with great sadness. But I also look back with a measure of gratitude. I'm thankful to have learned what I did while I could from Judge Kravitz, and his memory will serve as an important lodestar if, with your advice and consent, I am fortunate enough to chart my own course as judge.

As a native Washingtonian, it has been an honor working alongside the dedicated public servants at the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia on behalf of the people of the city. If confirmed, I look forward to serving the District and its residents in a new role as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.