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February 17, 2014

VIA E-MAIL andrew.c.olson@state.mn.us

The Honorable Mark Dayton
c/o Andrew Olson, Appointments Coordinator
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: Support for Peter Reyes

Dear Governor Dayton:

On behalf of the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA), I write to enthusiastically support the appointment of Peter Reyes to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. As President of NNABA, I had the privilege of working closely with Mr. Reyes over the past few years while he was the national president of one of NNABA's sister bars of color, the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA). I and the other members of NNABA's board saw firsthand Mr. Reyes' commitment to improving the legal profession, mentoring young lawyers, and promoting diversity and inclusion. Mr. Reyes is extremely well-qualified to serve on the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

NNABA represents over 2,500 American Indian, Alaska Native and Hawaiian Native attorneys throughout the United States. In Minnesota, there are seven Anishinaabe (Chippewa, Ojibwe) reservations and four Dakota (Sioux) communities. Minneapolis has a vibrant urban Indian community. In the eleven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, there is a large and tribally-diverse urban American Indian population numbering over 35,000 persons. Even though Mr. Reyes was president of a national bar of color, he had his feet firmly rooted in Minnesota. During the time that Mr. Reyes had a national platform, he continually worked to promote the community, people and businesses located in Minnesota.

NNABA and the HNBA, under Mr. Reyes' leadership, along with the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, and the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, worked together to launch the inaugural Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy (CBLA). The CBLA is a coordinated effort to strengthen the pipeline of diverse bar association leaders by providing leadership training and professional development programs which will benefit current and future leaders, the bar association community, and the legal profession overall. The CBLA marks the first substantive program resulting from a collaboration of the five sponsoring bar associations and lays the foundation for further collaborative efforts to foster diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. At Mr. Reyes' urging and eloquent persuasion, the inaugural CBLA was launched in Minneapolis in June 2013. In addition to a number of other participants in the CBLA, I am proud to say that a number of members of the

Minnesota American Indian Bar Association participated in the CBLA – a result that likely would not have happened without Mr. Reyes’ vision.

Mr. Reyes possesses the background and temperament to serve on the appellate court. He has served as both in-house counsel and in private practice. Mr. Reyes began his legal career at Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi, LLP, in Minneapolis. From 2001 to 2013, he worked as in-house counsel at Cargill, Inc., in Minneapolis. Currently, Mr. Reyes is a partner in the national law firm of Barnes & Thornburg, LLP. Mr. Reyes also gives freely of his time to both the legal and local communities, having served as president of both the HNBA and the Minnesota Hispanic Bar Association. He is also actively involved in several boards in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, including the Neighborhood Justice Center, American Bar Foundation, and the Board of Trustees for William Mitchell College of Law.

Mr. Reyes is a true leader of diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. While Mr. Reyes has undoubtedly done much to advance the interest of Hispanic lawyers in the legal profession, I write to note that Mr. Reyes represents the true embodiment of inclusion in the legal profession. He has been unqualified in his support of NNABA and its initiatives as well as the careers of Native Americans generally. At the CBLA last year, I saw Mr. Reyes’ presentation to the up-and-coming bar leaders, and he gave them practical advice to advance their careers and left them energized to move forward after the academy ended.

In conclusion, the National Native American Bar Association strongly supports the judicial appointment of Peter Reyes and urges you to appoint Mr. Reyes to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. We are confident that Mr. Reyes will serve the Minnesota judiciary with distinction. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail at marysmith828@hotmail.com or via cell at 202-236-0339.

Sincerely,



Mary Smith
NNABA President 2013 - 2015