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May 7, 2010

President Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to highly recommend Magistrate Judge Esther Salas for appointment as United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey. Based on my knowledge of her service to the community and after carefully reviewing her qualifications and background, I am fully confident that she is exceptionally qualified for the position of U.S. District Judge.

Magistrate Judge Salas made history in 2006 when she became the first Hispanic to serve as a United States Magistrate Judge for the District of New Jersey. Since her appointment, she has demonstrated a high level of professionalism in handling a diverse and demanding caseload. She has skillfully managed a docket of well over four hundred cases. Several community members have commented to me that she is the finest judge that they have worked with in many years of practice.

Recently, Judge Salas was able to mediate an environmental dispute involving 350 attorneys that had been unresolved for over 10 years. It involved federal and state claims for more than \$300 million for past and future clean-up costs and damages. Several of the lawyers in the case have recommended Judge Salas and given her their unqualified support for the position of U.S. District Judge. The lawyers in the case credited her with being the principal moving force in bringing the federal and state governments and private parties to agreement and she was able to move this case to resolution without sacrificing her attention to other cases.

Prior to serving as a U.S. Magistrate Judge, she worked for almost a decade in the Federal Public Defenders Office where she zealously represented her clients. In this position, Judge Salas earned the respect of her colleagues inside and outside the courtroom for her respectful and professional demeanor. She handled difficult cases with skill, determination and resilience.

Judge Salas also spent two years in private practice where she focused on criminal matters. Judge Salas clerked with distinction for Superior Court Judge Eugene Codey. She attended both Rutgers University and Rutgers University School of Law.

Magistrate Judge Salas is an upstanding member of the legal community in New Jersey. She is a respected member of the state bar. She is a past president of the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey and has remained active with the association. She has served on the Governor's Hispanic Advisory Council for Policy Development, and the Supreme Court Committees on Minority Concerns and Women in the Court.

In sum, the depth and breadth of Judge Salas' experience and background make her well qualified for the position of U.S. District Judge and I wholeheartedly recommend her.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Menendez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and "M".

ROBERT MENENDEZ

cc: Mr. Bob Bauer, Counsel to the President, The White House