

## JOINT LETTER IN STRONG SUPPORT OF ROB BONTA FOR CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL

December 7, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814



**Re: Joint Letter in Strong Support to Appoint California  
Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-18) as California Attorney  
General**

Dear Governor Newsom:



On behalf of the National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) and all six of its California Filipino-American affiliate organizations, Filipino American Lawyers of San Diego (FALS), Philippine American Bar Association (PABA), Filipino-American Lawyers of Orange County (FLOC), Filipino Bar Association of Northern California (FBANC), Filipino American Lawyers Association of Silicon Valley-Monterey (FALA-SVM), and Sacramento Filipino American Lawyers Association (SacFALA), we write because of President-Elect Joe Biden's recent announcement of Attorney General Xavier Becerra for Secretary of Health and Human Services. We commend Attorney General Becerra for his incredible work as California's principal legal counsel and chief law officer.



Our organizations jointly and strongly endorse and support Assemblymember Rob Bonta (18th District) to serve Californians and the State in the Office of California Attorney General.

NFALA is the national bar association representing the interests of Filipino American attorneys, judges, legal academics and law students. NFALA represents the interests of its several thousands of attorneys nationally and sixteen local affiliate bar associations, including its six California affiliates, FALS (San Diego), PABA (Los Angeles), FLOC (Orange County), FBANC (Northern California), FALA-SVM (Silicon Valley-Monterey), and SacFALA (Sacramento).



Through our national and local networks, we provide a strong voice for increased diversity of federal and state judiciaries, advocate for equal opportunity in the workplace, seek to eliminate anti-Asian crime and anti-immigrant sentiment, and promote professional development of minorities in the legal profession.

The California Attorney General is an Office of great significance in the enforcement of state laws, the provision of state legal services, the legal representation of the state, and the oversight and support of law enforcement agencies. The Office's significance has even more significance today given the many legal and law issues faced by Californians and the State arising from the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, a devastating recession, a historic civil rights movement against systemic racism, and a disturbing rise in hate crimes and incidents, among many others. Assemblymember Bonta is exceptionally well-qualified to confront these challenges:

- Assemblymember Bonta practiced as a litigation attorney, including as a governmental attorney, for thirteen years and is knowledgeable in all stages of pre-trial, trial, and appellate practice.
- Assemblymember Bonta has legal experience in key areas, including civil rights, crime, governmental affairs, consumer protection, contract, and fraud.
- Assemblymember Bonta was undefeated at trial, never losing a jury verdict for his clients.
- Assemblymember Bonta further has significant experience as a governmental legal adviser, serving as a Deputy City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco.
- Assemblymember Bonta's accomplishments as a state and local legislator also give him a deep understanding of the state laws and the functioning of government, which is critical to effectively enforcing the state laws and overseeing the Department of Justice and law enforcement agencies.

### **Assemblymember Bonta's Professional Accomplishments and Strong Support from Communities of Color**

For nine years, Assemblymember Bonta served as Deputy City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco. In that capacity, he advised and represented the City and the County and its employees. He further prosecuted civil actions to protect California consumers and tried a variety of civil rights, tort and consumer protection cases. He has argued before the Ninth Circuit sitting en banc. He was undefeated as a trial attorney, never having lost a jury verdict for his clients and earned a reputation as an experienced and skilled trial advocate.

Prior to serving as Deputy City Attorney, he practiced litigation for four years at Kecker & Van Nest, a premier trial firm based in San Francisco. He engaged in all levels of litigation practice for a variety of contract, fraud, legal malpractice, patent infringement, insurance, civil rights, and criminal cases. He also previously served as a clerk for Judge Alvin W. Thompson of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

Assemblymember Bonta also has significant experience in governmental affairs. He has served in the California State Assembly, representing the cities of Oakland, Alameda, and San Leandro, since 2012. He has won reelection by a landslide in four elections, including this past November 2020. Prior to being elected to the State Assembly, Assemblymember Bonta served as a publicly-elected official at the local level, first as the Director of the Alameda Health Care District and later as Vice Mayor of the City of Alameda.

Assemblymember Bonta's long list of accolades over his many years of public service demonstrate the strong support that he receives from Californians generally and from communities of color in particular.

**Assemblymember Bonta's Deep Understanding of the Present Challenges Faced by Californians and the State**

In the State Assembly, Assemblymember Bonta serves as the Assistant Majority Leader and on the Appropriations, Communications and Conveyance, Governmental Organization, and Health Committees. Assemblymember Bonta has authored many pieces of legislation on subjects that reflect a comprehensive understanding of the many complex and difficult issues faced by our State during these trying times, including the housing crisis, criminal justice, immigration, consumer protection, climate change.

Assemblymember Bonta's personal history also reflects his connection to the struggles faced by disadvantaged communities in California. He is the son of a proud native Filipino mother and a father who was involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and stood with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Deep South. They both worked with the United Farm Workers and were active in the ongoing fight for social, economic, and racial justice. His parents' work and influence inspired his commitment to helping people.

Assemblymember Bonta worked his way through college cleaning laundry rooms. He ultimately achieved his dream of going to college and law school, obtaining a Juris Doctorate from Yale Law School after attending Yale College and Oxford University in England. All the while, he also explored his love of soccer, playing on two Ivy League Championships for Yale College and then playing for the San Francisco Bay Seals, a professional minor league team.

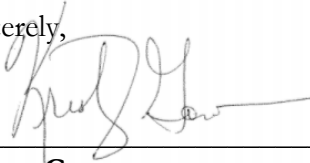
**Additional Considerations**

We note that the appointment of an AAPI candidate for the Office of California Attorney General is particularly appropriate under the circumstances. While the AAPI community celebrates Harris' election as the first American of Asian and Black descent to serve as Vice President of the United States, California will be losing one of its highest-ranking AAPI statewide officials when Harris vacates her U.S. Senate seat. We submit that it is, therefore, critical for Governor Newsom to consider an AAPI candidate for a similarly high-ranking statewide office.

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If NFALA, FALSD, PABA, FLOC, FBANC, FALA-SVM, and SacFALA, can be of any further assistance with regards to the consideration of Assemblymember Bonta for California Attorney General, please do not hesitate to contact any of the undersigned directly.

Sincerely,



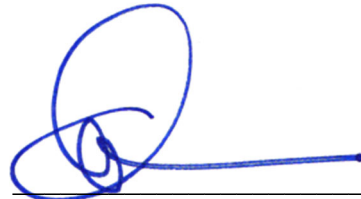
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**Kristy Gonowon**  
National Filipino American Lawyers Association  
*President*



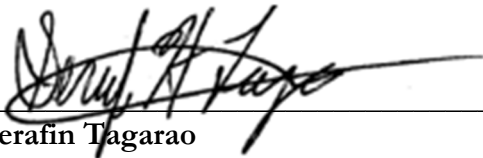
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**Mari Bandoma Callado**  
Filipino Bar Association of Northern California  
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**Cherisse Cleofe**  
Philippine American Bar Association  
*President*



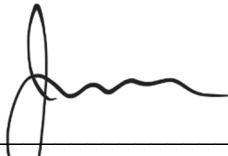
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**Serafin Tagarao**  
Filipino-American Lawyers of Orange County  
*President*



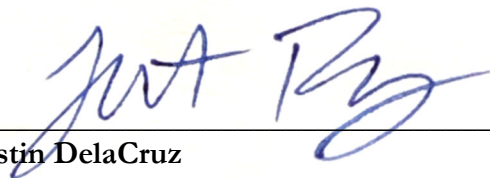
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