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Governor Baker Nominates Judge Sabita Singh and Assistant Clerk-Magistrate Michelle Kelley to Courts

BOSTON – Today, Governor Charlie Baker nominated District Court Judge Sabita Singh to the Appeals Court and Attorney Michelle Kelley as Clerk Magistrate of the Wrentham District Court. Singh was appointed to the District Court in 2006 by Governor Mitt Romney and Kelley has served as an Assistant Clerk-Magistrate in various District Courts for over twenty-years.

“Judge Singh and Attorney Kelley are well respected within the District Courts and come with decades of experience serving the Commonwealth,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “I am pleased to nominate them for the Governor’s Council’s advice and consent. If confirmed both the Appeals and District Courts will benefit greatly from their knowledge, commitment and skill.”

“These accomplished women have valuable experience and are bound to excel in these important leadership positions, if confirmed by the Governor’s Council,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** “Their broad experience and dedication make them great candidates to continue to serve the Commonwealth in their respective courts.”

Judicial nominations are subject to the advice and consent of the Governor’s Council. Applicants for judicial openings are reviewed by the Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) and recommended to the governor. Governor Baker established the JNC in February, 2015 pursuant to Executive Order 558, a non-partisan, non-political Commission composed of volunteers from a cross-section of the Commonwealth’s

diverse population to screen judicial applications. Twenty-one members were later appointed to the JNC in April, 2015.

The Appeals Court is the intermediate appellate court to which most appeals from the Massachusetts Trial Courts and a number of administrative bodies are made. The Court has one Chief and 24 Associate Justices.

For more information about the Massachusetts Appeals Court, visit <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/appealscourt/>

The District Court hears a wide range of criminal, civil, housing, juvenile, mental health, and other types of cases. District Court criminal jurisdiction extends to all felonies punishable by a sentence up to five years, and many other specific felonies with greater potential penalties; all misdemeanors; and all violations of city and town ordinances and by-laws. In civil matters, District Court judges conduct both jury and jury-waived trials, and determine with finality any matter in which the likelihood of recovery does not exceed \$25,000. The District Court also tries small claims involving up to \$7,000 (initially tried to a magistrate, with a defense right of appeal either to a judge or to a jury). The District Court's civil jurisdiction also includes many specialized proceedings, including abuse prevention restraining orders and civil motor vehicle infractions (tried initially to a magistrate, with right of appeal to a judge).

For more information about the District Court, visit <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/trial-court/dc/>

About Sabita Singh

Sabita Singh is First Justice of Concord District Court. She is also a member of the District Court's Appellate Division where she hears appeals from District Court civil matters. She began her career as a law clerk to the justices in the Superior Court Department of the Trial Court. She then went on to serve as an Assistant District Attorney in the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, writing appellate briefs and arguing before the Appeals Court and the Supreme Judicial Court. Thereafter, Judge Singh spent seven years in the private sector with Bingham McCutchen LLP before returning to the public sector as Special Counsel for Criminal Civil Rights Enforcement at the United States Attorney Office in Boston. She received her Juris Doctor from Boston University School of Law in 1990 and her Bachelor of Arts in the Administration of Justice from Pennsylvania State University in 1987. She has served as an Adjunct Professor at Northeastern University School of Law and Instructor at Harvard University. She has also served as President of the South Asian Bar Association of North America and the South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston. Justice Singh was born in India and now resides with her family in Lincoln.

About Michelle L. Kelley

Michelle L. Kelley currently serves as Clerk-Magistrate, Pro Tempore at Wrentham District Court where she is responsible for the management and administration of court business, hiring staff, establishing administrative procedures and delegating duties to employees of the court. She previously served as Assistant Clerk-Magistrate in Wrentham from 2006 – 2016, Pro-Tempore in the Uxbridge District Court from October 2013 – May 2014, Assistant Clerk Magistrate to the Taunton District Court from 2009 – 2012 and Assistant Clerk-Magistrate in the Somerville District Court 1995 - 2006. She received her Juris Doctor from New England School of Law in 1997, her Master of Business Administration from Suffolk University in 1993 and her Bachelor of Science from Emerson College, Cum Laude in 1990. She resides with her husband and two children in Norfolk.

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