

MEMO

FOR: AILA-DC

FROM: MIRIAM B. RIEDMILLER, LIAISON DC BAR (riedmillerlaw@verizon.net)

DATE: OCTOBER 6, 2023

RE: REPORT, DC BAR VOLUNTARY BAR LEADERSHIP MEETING RECEPTION (9-21-23)

I. PROLOGUE

The first leadership meeting and reception of the DC Voluntary Leadership Group (VBLG) for 2023 -24, convened on September 21, 2023, at the DC Bar headquarters in Washington D.C. , led by new DC Bar officers with about 40 attendees present. Many thanks to AILA-DC leadership and membership for supporting the VBLGL work by this Liaison for the second term (2022-23; 2023-24). The VBLG is a vibrant resource for AILA-DC/AILA's immigration mission because of the breadth of the Bar's network and shared missions between the two groups.

Monthly VBLG meetings run in-person or via zoom until May 2024. Everyone is invited to reach out for questions, comments, and topic suggestions . The next meeting via zoom is on October 25, 2023.

BACKGROUND OF VBLG AND AILADC

By way of background and for the benefit of new members, AILA-DC is a voluntary bar group actively registered in the DC Bar Directory of voluntary Bars (VBLG).

(<https://www.dcbar.org/for-lawyers/external-resources/voluntary>).

The D.C. Bar, as the largest unified Bar, partners with local organizations, the [D.C. Courts](#), [D.C. Bar Foundation](#), legal services providers, voluntary bars, and law schools, to be in touch with the community.

The VBLG serves as a legal community forum on local issues of interest, including developments in the local courts, activities of the voluntary bars, and actions of the D.C. Bar's Board of Governors.

NEW DC BAR LEADERSHIP AT THE RECEPTION

Last June, AILA as well as the DC Bar changed guards . Oversight for the Liaison is provided by AILA DC President-Elect Brian Casson. New DC Bar President Charles Lowerly., Jr., new Chairman of the Board Shaun Snyder, former President, Ellen Jakovic and other Officers led the discussions. The attendees numbering about 40, include liaison of various voluntary bars, including yours truly on behalf of AILA-DC. Charles acknowledged Rachna Harikrishnan, DC Bar Senior Staff Attorney for her work at VBLG.



II. **NEW DC BAR PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS:**

- All are invited to give feedback and submission of topics for future meetings.
- To learn more about Charles' and his priorities, please find the article from the [July/August 2023 Washington Lawyer](#).
- Attached is a flyer with the VBLG meeting dates and information on how to publicize your events.

GUEST SPEAKERS MESSAGE ON DIVERSITY AND LAWYERS' ROLES

The VBLG welcomed guest speakers : [Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby](#) of the D.C. Court of Appeals and [Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring](#) of the D.C. Superior Court.

DIVERSITY IN JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

- Both speakers emphasized the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the court system, in order to meet the demands of a modern client base that is both local and global. They both encourage applications for judicial positions in D.C.

TIPS AND THOUGHTS FOR LAWYERS AND FOR JUDICIAL APPLCATIONS

A.) **Judge Blackburne-Rigsby:**

- Women lawyers and people of color generally feel not ready or not qualified for judicial appointments. She advised applicants to apply multiple times . She said appellate judges don't need to be appellate lawyers. Analytical and writing skills are important.
- Lawyers have the duty to serve clients. We need to serve equal justice and our country.
- voluntary bars should encourage to be encouraging in this regard. She also cited an example. She said that appellate judges don't need to be appellate lawyers.
- It is crucial that lawyers serve not only our clients but also equal justice, and our country.

B.) **Judge Anita Josey-Herring said:**

- There is a need for more flexibility and more participation in the courts. She said that this is vital to peace and justice.
- that civil litigants need more options to be successful in local courts .There is no virtual criminal trial in D.C.

III.CONTACT FOR CHIEF JUDGES

The Chief Judges emphasized the need for partnerships among the voluntary bars and with the courts, the D.C. Bar, and the VBLG . They invited the Voluntary Bars to host programs at the court and to contact them for VBLG. Contact information for their chambers is listed below:

A.Thalia Y. White, Executive Assistant to Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, District of Columbia Court of Appeals – Phone: (202) 879-2731 – Email: TWhite@dcapeals.gov

B.Stefanie Lis, Administrative Assistant to Chief Judge Josey-Herring, Superior Court of the District of Columbia – Phone: (202) 879-1607 – Email: Stefanie.lis@dcsc.gov

III. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

D.C. BAR PRO BONO CENTER ADVICE AND REFERRAL CLINIC DATES

The Clinic targets pro se individuals who advise and services from a volunteer attorney on D.C. civil matters. Volunteers, who must be associated with a participating organization, are supported by mentors, and have access to a variety of materials at the clinic. [Click here](#) for more information and clinic dates. Contact D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Managing Attorney Anitra Ash-Shakoor at aashshakoor@dcbar.org.

PRACTICE 360^o Wednesday, October 4, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the D.C. Bar Headquarters. Registration and additional information is available on the [Bar's website](#), or contact PMAS staff at practice360@dcbar.org or (202) 780-2762.

The D.C. Bar's award-winning Practice Management Advisory Service (PMAS) is an all-day in-person conference that offers programs to grow a thriving and efficient law firm.

It features experienced industry leaders from a variety of practice areas and other solo and small firm attorneys in the D.C. area.

CONSTITUTION IN THE CLASSROOM : Monday, October 23, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Join the DC. Bar and the D.C. Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society (ACS) for civic education to teach D.C. public school students about the Constitution as .

Please volunteer as a teacher. This is a great opportunity for immigration lawyers to inspire and contribute our knowledge and training to the youth, new generation of civic leaders and responsible citizens. contact CITCvolunteer@gmail.com for more information.

IV. CONCLUSION AND CALL FOR AILA-DC'S PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COURTS AND VOLUNTARY BARS

The theme for the September VBLG meeting resonates with AILA-DC's nature of diversity in membership and mission. There is a need for diversity in the bench, and a need for voluntary bars to partner-up with the courts and with each other. In the discussion of judicial diversity, the Hispanic Bar Liaison commented that their organization supports members in the application for judicial positions. This comment inspires reflection on how AILA-DC can help make home-grown judges for immigration and other fields. On November 3, 2023, this Liaison is attending the Hispanic Bar's Equal Justice Awards , at the Kimpton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Your ideas, questions and comments will help AILA-DC in creating meaningful partnerships for the benefit of our organization and our clients. The leadership and memberships' contributions will also help the VBLG fulfill its missions . Feel free to contact this Liaison at 202.293.5620 or via dcbarliaison@ailadc.org and at riedmillerlaw@version.net for questions or suggestions for topics and activities.