



December 12, 2016

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
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On behalf of the South Asian Bar Association of Northern California, I am writing to support John Hamasaki's application for the San Francisco Police Commission. He is an experienced criminal defense attorney who worked with and on behalf of the community. He is not only a member of the National Lawyers Guild, but has also served as a mock trial coach for the past five years for high school students who would be the first in their family to attend college. I coached alongside with him for one year and saw his commitment to the program. Mr. Hamasaki has dedicated his career to civil rights and liberties, while speaking on behalf of those who lack power in our criminal justice system.

Our organization was the first South Asian Bar Association in the country, and staffs law clinics and is a voice for our community. In our post-9-11 world, our concerns have been heightened by instances when law enforcement has targeted members of our community because of their religion, appearance or background. It is important to us that we continue to strive to have a police department that reflects our diversity as a city and strives to be just in its encounters with the public.

Mr. Hamasaki has been an active member of Asian American Bar Association, Bar Association of San Francisco, and California Attorneys for Criminal Justice. On the legislative committee for California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, he advocated for a fairer criminal justice system and against mass incarceration. This is a crucial time in the evolution of our police department, and we hope that you consider Mr. Hamasaki for commissioner on the police commission.

Yours,

Asit Panwala
SABA-NC, Endorsement Chair