

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

I, Rahat Godil, am a partner in the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Group at Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP and highly interested in serving on the Board of Directors of the South Asian Bar Association of Toronto (SABA). I am seeking nomination for a two-year term.

SABA is an integral organization promoting the interests of the South Asian legal community in Toronto, advocating on issues affecting the rights of South Asians and providing a strong forum and network for South Asian legal professionals. I have been involved in SABA's events over the last 10 years. From time to time, I have participated in SABA's mentoring, educational and networking events. I was also involved in organizing and hosting an event with Justice Russell Juriansz of the Court of Appeal and Justice Suhail Akhtar of the Superior Court of Justice, where they shared their experiences and insights on law and advocacy. I have also been participating in SABA's annual dinners for several years. Having benefitted from SABA's programs and initiatives over the years, I now have a desire to take a leadership role in the organization and make a more meaningful contribution to SABA's objectives.

In particular, I am interested in contributing to SABA's advocacy and networking initiatives and continuing SABA's work on advocating for greater South Asian representation in the judiciary. I am also interested in promoting greater collaboration between SABA's Toronto and other chapters both nationally and internationally. The number of South Asian lawyers has been increasing in recent years and I envision that greater collaboration with other chapters will create an overall stronger South Asian bar, facilitate better protection of the rights of our legal and broader community and provide a richer networking forum for our members.

I believe that my experiences both at work and outside of work make me well-suited to effectively serve on SABA's Board.

I was called to the Ontario Bar in 2007. Since then, I have been working at Blakes and have developed a diverse complex commercial litigation and arbitration practice. I have appeared as counsel at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada and the Ontario Court of Appeal as well as before a number of international and domestic arbitral tribunals. Through these experiences I have developed exceptional advocacy skills. Throughout my career, I have also demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity and taken a leadership role in my firm's diversity initiatives as well as promoting diversity and inclusion within the broader legal community. From time to time, I have also spoken on panels and organized workshops on diversity related topics.

Both through work and outside of work, I have also been involved in various organizations over time that have allowed me to cultivate strong leadership skills as well as advocate on significant issues. I'm currently one of the Co-Chair's for The Advocates Society's Arbitration and Mediation Advocacy Practice Group as well as on the Executive Committee for Toronto Commercial Arbitration Society. Previously, I have worked with organizations like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association, Human Rights Watch Canada (HRW), Dignitas International and Equality Effect. Through those involvements, I had the opportunity to advocate on significant issues relating to human rights, equality and *Charter* rights as well as work with marginalized communities. For example, I represented the CCLA in the *R. v. N.S.* case that involved the intersection of constitutional right to freedom of religion and fair trial rights, I worked with NCCM and HRW on the campaign to support and bring back Omar Khadr to Canada, and I

provided legal assistance to Equality Effect in connection with a constitutional challenge launched by several rape victims in the High Court of Kenya.

Through all of these experiences, I have developed effective leadership, advocacy, organizational and teamwork skills that I believe will be an asset to SABA and allow me to be a valuable Board member. I look forward to the opportunity to be considered for this role. Should you have any questions or need additional information, I can be reached at (416) 863 4009 or rahat.godil@blakes.com.