



June 6, 2017

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write to urge you appoint the first openly-LGBT person to the New York State Court of Appeals to fill the vacancy of the late Judge Sheila Abdus-Salaam.

The legitimacy of our judicial system depends upon the public being confident that we have a bench that is representative of our diverse population and applies the law without bias. This is of particular importance when the civil liberties of minority groups are threatened, as they are now by the repressive actions being taken by the Trump administration against LGBT people, women, religious and ethnic minorities, and immigrants.

As you know, no member of the Court of Appeals has been an open member of the LGBT community. With the rights of LGBT people and their families at stake, it is urgent that the next member of the Court of Appeals have an intimate familiarity with the unique perspectives of the LGBT community. Now more than ever, we need judges who will stand up to the Trump administration in order to preserve the freedoms you have helped win for LGBT New Yorkers.

Fortunately, you have two excellent judges from whom to choose. For the first time, the Commission on Judicial Nomination has nominated two openly-LGBT judges: the Honorable Paul Feinman, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department; and the Honorable Rosalyn Richter, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department. Both Justice Feinman and Justice Richter are seasoned jurists who are highly regarded by practitioners, their peers and the LGBT community. Either would be a superlative addition to the Court of Appeals.

New York is past due for inclusion of our LGBT citizens on the state's highest court. It is fitting that you have the opportunity to reshape the bench in this historic manner, given your outstanding support for LGBT rights through Marriage Equality and other legislation, executive actions and your appointment of LGBT judges at the intermediate appellate level. By your naming an openly-LGBT judge to the Court of Appeals, New York would build on this legacy and join other states and territories that have LGBT judges on their highest court, including Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon and Puerto Rico.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Happy Pride.

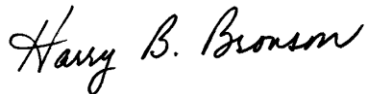
Sincerely,



Brad Hoylman  
State Senator

Deborah Glick  
Assemblymember

Daniel O'Donnell  
Assemblymember



Harry Bronson  
Assemblymember



Matthew Titone  
Assemblymember