

Joseph Aloysius Hennessey

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

June 27, 2024

The Montgomery County
Democratic Central Committee
12320 Parklawn Drive, Suite 210
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Committee Members:

I am informed that now-Maryland State Senator Sara Love notified the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee (“MCDCC”) that she resigned her position as Maryland District 16 State Delegate, effective June 13, 2024. Pursuant to Article III, Section 13 of the Constitution of Maryland, I write to the MDCC to seek its nomination to fill the District 16 vacancy in the Maryland House of Delegates. I attach my (redacted) voter registration information to demonstrate residency within District 16 at my current address of 5500 Friendship Blvd. Apartment 1509, Chevy Chase Maryland since June 15, 2022. Tab 1. I have lived within District 16 for eleven years.

I also attach my resume for your review. Tab 2. It highlights the various ways I have dedicated myself to the public and common welfare. You will see from my resume that my senior thesis at Tufts University was an examination of the relationship between Robert F. Kennedy and leaders of the civil rights movement. I undertook that study because I wanted to better understand why his death was so personally devastating to so many activists. I heard the same explanation repeatedly: “We loved Bobby because we had pledged our lives to educating the People about the injustices, the inequities, and the gaps that existed between the promise of America and what America actually was. In Bobby, we could see, in a single person, actual progress from our efforts through the evolution of his thinking. His policies changed because he was willing to learn from us.” So, as a precursor to my request that I be given the honor of representing the people of the District 16, I recite below how I have learned from the multitude of people I have encountered on my life’s journey as an indicator of my willingness to listen to, learn from, and adequately represent the citizens of District 16.

From my father, who represented people of color in their effort to obtain radio and television licenses in proceedings before the Federal Communications Commission (Tab 3, “Joseph Hennessey Dies; Activist Lawyer,” *The Washington Post*, January 6, 2005), I learned that practicing law is not about accumulating wealth; it is about exercising the law to create a better society.

From my mother I learned that the most humble way to worship a loving God is to honor and venerate every human being that one encounters in life, regardless of faith, stature, sex, income, ethnicity, or background.

From my community of friends and neighbors in Chevy Chase DC who, after my mother was stricken with metastatic breast cancer at the age of 48, arranged for hot, home-cooked meals to be laid upon our doorstep every evening from the day after her diagnosis until weeks after her

death two years later, I learned that love is most powerfully expressed during times of crisis and despair. I would like to think that the impact of all that love is imprinted on my DNA.

From my teachers at Gonzaga College High School, I learned that the full application of one's power to understand is a civic obligation for those fortunate enough to have access to formal education. From Fr. Horace McKenna, who ministered to the homeless from St. Aloysius Church at Gonzaga, I learned that it is unconscionable to prey on the vulnerable. See Tab 4, "What Would Father McKenna Say?" *The Washington Post*, October 26, 2008.

From my colleagues at the John Glenn and Dukakis/Bentsen presidential campaigns, I learned that engaging the *polis* in a frank and honest discussion about our society's pathway into the future is one of the highest callings of citizenship and that, even in defeat, one can carry the torch of hope into the future as an example for others.

From my professors in the philosophy and history departments at Tufts University, I learned that (to quote John Haldane), "The universe is not only stranger than we imagine; it is stranger than we can imagine." I also learned that those who possess the requisite wealth and leisure time needed to write histories cannot always be trusted to write them accurately or inclusively.

The yearlong effort I poured into the aforementioned honors thesis at Tufts University, "ROBERT F. KENNEDY AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT," was one of the most formative influences in my political outlook. The hours, days, weeks, and months I invested in interviewing civil rights activists, former DOJ attorneys, and elected officials was illuminating in countless ways. I learned from former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members John Lewis, Frank Smith, and John Wilson that direct action must be a critical component of a nonviolent civic education movement. I learned from James Farmer, formerly of the Congress of Racial Equality and organizer of the Freedom Rides, that there is a moral imperative to "now" that cannot be assuaged by promises of incremental change. I learned from former Southern Christian Leadership Conference organizer Walter Fauntroy how important detailed knowledge of the legislative process is as a complement to civic action. I learned from my multiple interviews of former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Burke Marshall how important it is for DOJ to truly be the "Department of JUSTICE" and not merely a department of prosecution. I learned from former New York Mayor John Lindsay that a commitment to racial and social justice does not have to conform to partisan differentiation. I confirmed, in discussions with *Village Voice* reporter Jack Newfield, that grief can play a powerful role in pointing a public figure toward "True North." I learned from all of the people who took the time and dedicated the energy to teach me some of what they had learned during their tour of duty on the frontline of change that the United States of America has been, is, and will always be a work in progress – a process of constantly mapping our actions and behaviors against the template of the ideals and aspirations articulated through our Constitution and its Bill of Rights.

My personal education has been enriched through travel. My post-high school "gap year" solo backpacking exploration of Europe allowed me to celebrate my Irish roots in that hospitable country, connect with extended family in Holland, and visit with family members living in Austria and France; but, it also made me realize that the shockwave of violence and war still reverberates throughout the continent in a way that most Americans do not appreciate. Living in a Kathmandu, Nepal-based refugee community of Tibetans exposed me to the unlimited generosity of

impoverished families and the uncertainty of living under a monarch who provides few rights and fewer protections. From the Buddhist monks who guided my study of Mahayana Buddhism, I gained an appreciation for the pure joy of life and daily struggle of recognizing the divinity of every soul irrespective of the entropy that complicates our day-to-day living. From the various places where I applied my democratic organizing skills – from election observing in Pakistan and Zambia to political party building in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – I was awed and humbled by the willingness of everyday citizens to risk their lives in the hope of creating a better society for their children. From my travels to Yemen and the United Arab Emirates, I have learned that a common bond of humanity unites all citizens of planet earth and that, despite the myopia of particular governments that have represented us, the United States and its People are still the object of admiration and aspiration for those who seek a better life for their families and themselves.

At the seminar tables of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, where I earned my master's degree, I learned that, despite being authored predominantly by white males, the "Great Books" are great because they are ultimately a blueprint for inclusion, a celebration of the human spirit, and a framework for a more just, equitable, and peaceful world.

My law school professors measured my progress as a function of my ability to match action with the expectation of the law. As an honors *Juris Doctor* recipient, I trust that I learned such reflexes to their satisfaction.

From my work as a judicial clerk to the Hon. John A. Terry of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, I learned that the authority of any court is dependent upon the public perception of its objectivity and fairness, and that its power resides in the faith of the People that the judicial branch is dedicated to justice for all, not merely for the powerful few.

From my work in the White House, I learned that the clock ticks just as fast behind marble columns as it does for every other person on this planet and that weighty, impactful decisions have to be made quickly and with the best (*albeit* imperfect) information available. I also learned that, in such environments, it is critically important to have a solid moral reference point that will guide decision-making when information is scarce or unreliable.

As a practicing litigator, I have committed nearly two decades of my life to assisting those who have been victimized by U.S. defense contractors. Such malevolent bullies act with impunity on the false assumption that no one is paying attention or will call them to account for their misdeeds. See Tab 5, "Afghan Subcontractor Accuses DynCorp of Fraud," October 17, 2008, *The Washington Post* and Tab 6, "Kabul Raid Sparks Local Lawsuit; Kuwait Firm Seeking \$3M from Ft. Edward Man" *The Daily Gazette*, October 8, 2012; Tab 7, "Jury Rules Against EODT in Lawsuit," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, December 4, 2012. Through these experiences, I have learned that character is defined as how one behaves when one assumes that no one is watching rather than how one behaves in the limelight.

I currently represent two large groups of American citizens who were brought, illegally, into Kuwait, had their passports confiscated by their U.S. employers, and were denied the protection of any country's laws. The harm inflicted upon them was, shamefully, viewed as mere collateral damage in their employers' frenzied pursuit of profit. See Tab 8, "No Exit. The Kafkaesque Story of the U.S. Translators Being Held Against Their Will in Kuwait," FOREIGN POLICY,

October 3, 2013 and Tab 9, “American Linguists in Kuwait Seek Help From US Courts to Return Home,” *Stars and Stripes*, October 8, 2013 and Tab 10, “Lawsuit: Pentagon Contractor Treated Workers Like Slaves,” *The Daily Beast*, April 16, 2018. My advocacy for these clients has created new tools for safeguarding human rights. See Tab 11, “Using the False Claims Act as a Human Rights Tool,” Corporate Accountability Lab, June 24, 2020. I have also been a constant advocate for individual privacy even where such privacy interests collide with our government’s insatiable appetite for intelligence. See Tab 12, “They’re Listening: Because of a Fourth Amendment Loophole, Government Can Spy on International Calls by U.S. Citizens,” *Legal Times*, September 26, 2005. See also Tab 13, “Bank of America Sued for Outsourcing Customer Calls Overseas,” *The National Law Journal*, August 4, 2011.

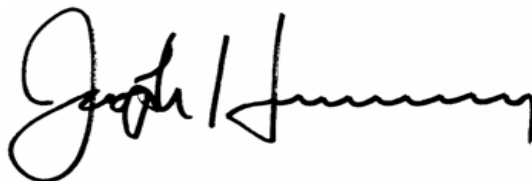
As a father, I have learned that traditional notions of masculinity and manhood must change. I have learned that questioning traditional notions of sexual orientation and identification are a welcome and necessary part of shattering the oppressive stereotypes that are forced upon us by “normative” society.

From every woman I have ever met, I have gained appreciation for the fact that our neighborhoods, our communities, our local, state, and national governments and every institution of decision-making that exists throughout the world is best served when we spread access to power as pervasively as we can, irrespective of gender. See Tab 14, “36 States Down, 2 to Go. If Simonds Wins in VA, Democrats There Should Demand ERA Ratification,” *The Baltimore Sun*, January 4, 2018.

And from every human I have ever met, I have learned that life is a daily struggle between fear and hope, and that a public official’s highest calling is to demonstrate that, with sufficient dedication of purpose, our country can be made better for those who, with hope infused within them, will follow in our footsteps.

It would be my privilege and honor to apply all that I have learned, and all that I will learn to the task of representing the people of District 16 by serving out the term of now-State Senator Sara Love. With kind regards and appreciation for this opportunity, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Hennessey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "H".