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March 1, 2018

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & FACSIMILE:

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Senator Mark D. Obenshain
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Senate of Virginia
Pocahontas Building, Room E502
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23219
district26@senate.virginia.gov

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL & EMAIL:

Representative Robert B. Bell
Chair, Courts of Justice Committee
Virginia House of Delegates
Pocahontas Building, Room E311
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DeRBell@house.virginia.gov

**Re: Anticipated vacancy in the 17th Judicial Circuit of Virginia
Arlington County Circuit Court**

Dear Governor Northam, Senator Obenshain, and Representative
Bell:

On behalf of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association
("VWAA"), a regional committee ("the Committee"), was impaneled
to evaluate candidates for the anticipated vacancy in the 17th Judicial
Circuit of Virginia, Arlington County Circuit Court.

The VWAA requested that interested candidates complete the
VWAA Judicial Candidates Questionnaire (the "Application"),
submit a short biography, and participate in an interview with the
Committee. On February 28, 2018, the Committee interviewed seven
(7) candidates.

It is worth noting that the VWAA ratings are based upon a review of each candidate's merits against published standards and guidelines, including the following: fairness, integrity, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and *pro bono* service. Ratings are not a function of a general vote by the VWAA membership nor are they a comparison of candidates within the "pool" presented.

The following rating categories are used by the VWAA:

- (1) NOT QUALIFIED: Applied to any applicant who fails to meet the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines.
- (2) QUALIFIED: Applied to any applicant who meets the minimum requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, integrity and/or other basic criteria set forth in the ABA Guidelines.
- (3) RECOMMENDED: Applied to applicants whose qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements to warrant the Committee's affirmative recommendation.
- (4) HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: Reserved for any candidate who is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation.

The VWAA's procedures provide that ratings of "Qualified" and "Recommended" require a vote in support by at least a simple majority of the Committee. A rating of "Highly Recommended" requires a vote in support by at least a two-thirds majority of those voting. In order for the Committee to find that a candidate fails to meet the minimum qualifications and is "Not Qualified," at least two-thirds of those voting must so find.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the VWAA has approved, in accordance with its procedures, the following endorsements of the Committee for this judicial vacancy:

Dontae L. Bugg is found *highly recommended*
W. Michael Chick, Jr. is found *highly recommended*
Andrew R. Parker is found *highly recommended*

Daniel T. Crowe Lopez is found *recommended*
Judith L. Wheat is found *recommended*

Brent E. Baxter is found *qualified*
Jason S. Rucker is found *qualified*

Executive summaries of the qualifications of each of the above candidates are attached to this letter.

For your further information, the Committee members participating in the interview process were as follows:

Diana H. D'Alessandro: Ms. D'Alessandro is an associate with the law firm of Pesner Kawamoto PLC. She focuses her practice on general civil litigation as well as real estate transactions. Prior to joining Pesner Kawamoto PLC, Ms. D'Alessandro served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable David S. Schell of the Fairfax County Circuit Court for two years. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2010.

Michelle Kaminsky: Ms. Kaminsky is a partner at the law firm of Hite Kaminsky Family Law & Mediation, PLLC. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, grandparent/third party visitation and custody, spousal support, equitable distribution, and adoption. Prior to joining Hite Kaminsky Family Law & Mediation, PLLC, Ms. Kaminsky served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable David S. Schell. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2009.

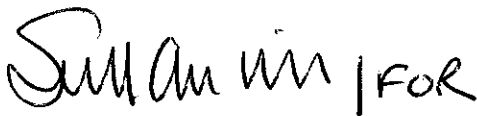
Carolé C. Krogmann: Ms. Krogmann is a partner at the law firm of Masterman Krogmann, P.C. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 1997.

Margaret M. Marks: Ms. Marks is a shareholder with the law firm of Odin Feldman & Pittleman, P.C. She focuses her practice on civil, commercial, and estate litigation. Prior to joining Odin Feldman & Pittleman, P.C., Ms. Marks served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Jan L. Brodie of the Fairfax Circuit Court for two years. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2008.

Dana M. Wolfson: Ms. Wolfson is an associate at The Susan Hicks Group, PC. She focuses her practice in the area of domestic relations, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, and equitable distribution. She has been a member of the Virginia State Bar since 2013.

We hope that this information will prove helpful to you during your selection process for this very important judicial position.

Respectfully yours,



Michelle Parker
President
Virginia Women Attorneys Association



Diana H. D'Alessandro
Judicial Chair, Northern Virginia Chapter
Virginia Women Attorneys Association

Enclosures:

Executive Summary of Dontae L. Bugg, Esquire
Executive Summary of W. Michael Chick, Jr. Esquire
Executive Summary of Andrew R. Parker, Esquire
Executive Summary of Daniel T. Crowe Lopez, Esquire
Executive Summary of Judith L. Wheat, Esquire
Executive Summary of Brent E. Baxter, Esquire
Executive Summary of Jason S. Rucker, Esquire

CC (by email only): Dontae L. Bugg, Esquire
 W. Michael Chick, Jr., Esquire
 Andrew R. Parker, Esquire
 Daniel T. Crowe Lopez, Esquire
 Judith L. Wheat, Esquire
 Brent E. Baxter, Esquire
 Jason S. Rucker, Esquire

CC (by email only): Senator Adam Ebbin
 Senator Barbara Favola
 Senator David Marsden
 Senator George L. Barker
 Senator J. Chapman Petersen
 Senator Janet D. Howell
 Senator Jennifer T. Wexton
 Senator Richard L. Saslaw
 Senator Scott Surovell
 Delegate Alfonso Lopez
 Delegate David Albo
 Delegate Jennifer B. Boysko
 Delegate David Bulova
 Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn
 Delegate James LeMunyon
 Delegate Mark H. Levine
 Delegate Charniele L. Herring
 Delegate Kathleen J. Murphy
 Delegate Kenneth R. Plum
 Delegate Patrick A. Hope
 Delegate Kaye Kory
 Delegate Mark D. Sickles
 Delegate Mark. L. Keam
 Delegate Marcus B. Simon
 Delegate Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.
 Delegate Timothy D. Hugo
 Delegate Vivian E. Watts

CC (by email only): Michelle Kaminsky, Esquire
 Carolé C. Krogmann, Esquire
 Margaret M. Marks, Esquire
 Dana M. Wolfson, Esquire

Sarah Piper, Esquire, VWAA, Northern Virginia Chapter, President

DONTAE L. BUGG

Experience and Legal Ability: Dontae L. Bugg earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Richmond, T.C. Williams School of Law in 2006. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2007.

Mr. Bugg is the founder of the Bugg Law Firm, PLLC. Prior to founding his own firm, Mr. Bugg gained substantial trial and litigation experience as an associate attorney for two Virginia law firms. He has consistently concentrated his practice in the areas of criminal defense, domestic relations, and serious traffic matters in Virginia and the District of Columbia. He practices regularly in federal and state courts. He presently serves as a Virginia Indigent Defense Commission Certified Counsel, a Qualified Guardian *ad litem* for children, and a Federal Criminal Justice Act Panel Attorney.

Mr. Bugg has served as a Substitute Judge in the District Courts of Fairfax County since November 1, 2016. Additionally, Mr. Bugg is active in the legal community and is a member of the George Mason American Inn of Court, Northern Virginia Black Attorney's Association, Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce, the Fairfax Bar Association, the Arlington Bar Association, the National College of DUI Defense, and the Virginia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He generously donates his time providing *pro bono* services for the Legal Services of Northern Virginia Attorney of the Day program and the DC Superior Attorney Negotiator program. He also remains active in the local community, where he is a frequent guest speaker at schools and for community groups throughout the Commonwealth. He has organized clothing, food, and toy drives to benefit the underprivileged. He has also served as a mock trial participant for the Color of Justice and Kamp Kappa programs.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Mr. Bugg demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Arlington County Circuit Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Bugg possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Arlington County Circuit Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Bugg is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

WILLIAM MICHAEL CHICK, JR.

Experience and Legal Ability: William Michael Chick, Jr. earned his Juris Doctor from George Washington University Law School in 2005. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2005.

Mr. Chick began his career at the Office of the Public Defender for the City and County of Fairfax, Virginia, where he handled hundreds of criminal matters. During this time, Mr. Chick gained substantial experience handling jury trials and other proceedings in Circuit Court. Following a successful career as an Assistant Public Defender, Mr. Chick joined the law firm of Greenspun Shapiro in December of 2008. His practice continued to focus on criminal defense in Virginia state and federal courts, and he handled many high-profile and complex criminal litigation matters throughout all stages of the proceedings. In October of 2010, Mr. Chick joined the Capital Defender's Office for Northern Virginia as an Assistant Capital Defender, where he exclusively represented capital murder defendants.

In March of 2012, Mr. Chick founded the Law Offices of W. Michael Chick, Jr., PLLC in Fairfax, Virginia where he presently serves as a solo practitioner. His practice focuses on capital murder defense and other serious crimes. Overall, Mr. Chick has handled approximately 25-30 jury trials and countless bench trials and preliminary hearings. Mr. Chick devotes much of his practice to the representation of indigent defendants, and he regularly provides *pro bono* representation of individuals facing serious criminal charges.

Mr. Chick is active in the legal community and is a member of the Arlington Bar Association, Fairfax Bar Association, George Mason Inn of Court, and the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association. He also serves as volunteer Law Day speaker for the Arlington Bar Association and as court tour guide for high school students through the Fairfax Bar Association.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Ms. Chick demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Chick possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Circuit Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Chick is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

ANDREW R. PARKER

Experience and Legal Ability: Andrew R. Parker earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1990. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1990.

Mr. Parker's legal career began at Hogan & Hartson (now Hogan Lovells) where he practiced civil litigation primarily in the state and federal courts of Northern Virginia. In 1992, he joined the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for Arlington County, Virginia as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney. In 1998, he was promoted to Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney and, in 2002, he became the Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney. In 2016, he was promoted to Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney, which is the position he continues to hold today. His practice at the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney is dedicated almost entirely to criminal prosecution in the Circuit Court of Arlington and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts of Arlington and Falls Church. He has tried a full range of criminal cases from capital murder to traffic court, including more than a thousand felony cases and more than 130 jury trials. During this time, he has also served as a liaison from the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court and as the specially designated violent juvenile crimes prosecutor. He has served as a special prosecutor in Loudoun, Prince William, Botetourt and Henrico counties and the City of Fredericksburg.

Mr. Parker is a member of the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys and the Arlington Bar Association (Courts Committee Member and Co-Chair, 2001-2006; Judicial Selection Committee, 2011-14; Board of Directors, 2014-present; and General District Court CLE Presenter, 2015). Mr. Parker has also been actively involved in the community. He has served on the Board of the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Commission, including as Chair, as well as on the Board of the Arlington Historical Society, and also serves on the Board of the Friends of Argus and Aurora House. He is a 20 year member of the Arlington Committee of 100, is a member of the Donaldson Run Civic Association and the Donaldson Run Recreational Association, and has served as a Babe Ruth and Little League baseball coach.

Although Mr. Parker's practice has focused solely on criminal law since joining the Commonwealth Attorney's office in 1992, he gained invaluable civil litigation experience during his time at Hogan & Hartson. In addition, he has taken steps to refamiliarize himself with civil litigation practice by updating himself on the Virginia Code and studying case law impacting all areas of Virginia law. He has also demonstrated a strong willingness to take whatever steps necessary to prepare himself to preside over the wide variety of cases that come before the Circuit Court.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Mr. Parker demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Parker possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Circuit Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Parker is especially well-qualified for the position and merits special recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Highly Recommended**.

DANIEL T. CROWE LOPEZ

Experience and Legal Ability: Daniel Tomas Crowe Lopez earned his Juris Doctor from the George Washington University School of Law in 1996. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1996.

Mr. Lopez is a former Public Defender for Fairfax County, Virginia where he represented indigent defendants for five years. In 2002, he co-founded the law firm of Lopez, Meleen & Sprano, PLC, and in 2009, he joined the law firm of Briglia Hundley, PC, in Vienna, Virginia as a partner. His practice consists primarily of criminal defense in which he represents a significant number of Latino immigrants and second generation Latinos. He has been on the Fairfax County court appointed list for twelve years and is certified by the Indigent Defense Commission to handle felony defense cases. He is also qualified by the Indigent Defense Commission to represent defendants in capital murder cases. The remainder of his practice includes representing clients in deportation hearings before the Immigration Court. Mr. Lopez also has an active *pro bono* practice including criminal defense, immigration and divorce cases. He is fluent in Spanish.

In 2007, Mr. Lopez was appointed to serve as a substitute judge, and he continues to serve in that capacity at least four times per month. He has served as a substitute judge in the General District Courts and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts in Fairfax, Prince William, Arlington, and Loudoun, presiding over matters involving personal injury, landlord tenant issues, contractual disputes, custody, support, visitation, abuse and neglect, Children in Need of Services/Supervision (CHINS) cases, and criminal and traffic matters.

Mr. Lopez is a member of the Virginia Bar Association, Fairfax County Bar Association, Arlington County Bar Association and the Hispanic Bar Association. In the non-legal community, Mr. Lopez has volunteered his time coaching youth soccer for the past ten years. He is Vice President and a member of the Board of Directors of the Arlington Soccer Association and serves as a South Arlington Soccer Manager.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Mr. Lopez has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Lopez possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Circuit Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Lopez's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a Circuit Court judge and merit the Committee's affirmative recommendation. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

JUDITH L. WHEAT

Experience and Legal Ability: Judith L. Wheat earned her Juris Doctor from Georgetown University Law Center in 1989. She was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1989.

Upon graduating law school, Ms. Wheat clerked for the Honorable Barbara M. Keenan on the Court of Appeals from 1989-1991 and on the Supreme Court of Virginia in 1991. After these prestigious clerkships, Ms. Wheat went to Venable LLP for two years before moving to Cacheris & Treanor where she focused on criminal law. In 1997, Ms. Wheat returned to Venable, as a partner, where she focused on large national and international litigation and internal investigations. She handled violations of criminal and civil racketeering laws, health care fraud, government contract fraud, conflict of interest, perjury and obstruction of justice, environmental law, federal and state false advertising issues, government contracts, civil false claims and appellate advocacy. While at Venable, she was also the Co-Chair of the Legal Personnel Committee and assisted the firm on numerous employment related matters.

In 2003, Ms. Wheat moved to Shaw, Bransford, Veilleux & Roth and the following year, established Wheat Wu, PLLC in 2005. She has been a member of Griffith & Wheat, PLLC since 2010. Ms. Wheat has also been Chief Deputy Clerk and Legal Counsel to the Clerk of Arlington County Circuit Court since 2009. In this role, Ms. Wheat provides legal advice on a broad range of issues, including personnel matters and substantive issues arising under the Code of Virginia. She also coordinates closely with the Circuit Court judges and staff relating to Court processes, technology, jury management, docketing, and other administrative matters.

While working at the Clerk's office, Ms. Wheat's practice at Griffith & Wheat, PLLC has included both criminal and civil litigation in state and federal courts. Representative criminal matters include financial crimes, computer crimes, foreign corrupt practices act and false claims violations, conflicts of interest, physical and sexual assault, DWI and drug crimes. She also represents individuals and corporations in grand jury investigations, Office of Inspector General investigations, and before professional licensing and accountability boards. Her civil practice focuses on employment counseling for individuals and small businesses and she represents individuals in a variety of employment related matters including discrimination and wrongful termination actions, civil false claims, and fraud. She also represents federal and state government employees in administrative and disciplinary proceedings, suitability and security clearance reviews, and suspension and debarment proceedings.

Ms. Wheat is a member of the Arlington County Bar Association, the District of Columbia Bar Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, the Barristers, The Lawyers Club of Washington, D.C., and the Walter T. McCarthy Library Board. In the non-legal community, Ms. Wheat is the Vice President of the Rock Springs Civil Association and is involved with Aurora House Citizens Advisory Committee and Highlands Swim and Tennis Club.

Fairness and Temperament: Through her submissions and interview, Ms. Wheat has demonstrated to the Committee that she possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Ms. Wheat possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Circuit Court bench and has an unparalleled work ethic.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Ms. Wheat's qualifications are sufficiently above the minimum requirements for the position of a Circuit Court judge and merit the Committee's affirmative recommendation. She warrants the Committee's rating of **Recommended**.

BRENT E. BAXTER

Experience and Legal Ability: Brent E. Baxter earned his Juris Doctor from the George Mason University School of Law (now Antonin Scalia Law School) in 2001. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2001.

Mr. Baxter's legal career began prior to entering law school, when he spent 11 years serving as a Courtroom Clerk in the Arlington County Circuit Court. In that capacity, Mr. Baxter worked hand-in-hand with the Circuit Court judges, preparing thousands of criminal court orders, processing evidence, and empaneling juries. Upon graduating from law school, Mr. Baxter worked as an Associate in the Litigation Division of Reed Smith LLP from 2001-2004 and then was a Partner at LaPlante & Barnett, PLC from 2005-2006, transitioning to Estate, Trust and Elder Law. In 2006, Mr. Baxter returned to public service in the capacity of the Chief Counsel and Deputy Clerk of Court for the Clerk of the Arlington County Circuit Court. Since 2008, Mr. Baxter has worked at Manning & Murray, PC, where he became a Partner in 2013. Mr. Baxter's current practice encompasses a full range of estate planning, estate and trust administration services, appearing before Courts and Commissioners of Accounts in judicial proceedings relating to estates, representing beneficiaries of estates and trusts, fiduciary litigation, and Elder Law services.

Mr. Baxter is a member of the Arlington County Bar Foundation (Member, 2011-Present; Vice Chairman 2016-2017; Chairman, July 2017 – Present; Treasurer, 2013-2016; Finance Committee Chair, 2012-2016; Director, 2011-2013). In addition, Mr. Baxter is a member of the Arlington County Bar Association (Member, 2008 – Present; President, 2010-2011; Secretary, 2009-2010; Director, 2008-2009; Judicial Selection Committee, 2009-2010; Wills for Heroes Program, 2009) and the Fairfax Bar Association (Member 2011- Present). Mr. Parker has also been involved in volunteering for his community, serving on the Nominations and Lay Development Committee of his Church. In 2017, Mr. Baxter received the Arlington County Bar Foundation Honor for *Pro Bono* Advocacy on behalf of incapacitated and disadvantaged Arlingtonians.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Mr. Baxter demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Baxter possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity to serve on the Circuit Court.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Baxter meets the requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and integrity. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.

JASON S. RUCKER

Experience and Legal Ability: Jason S. Rucker earned his Juris Doctor from Mississippi College School of Law in 1998. He was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1999.

Mr. Rucker's legal career began in Arlington County, representing clients in the areas of family law, personal injury, and criminal defense. In 2001, Mr. Rucker became the President and Managing Attorney of Rucker & Rucker, P.C., where he primarily handles the representation of clients charged with criminal offenses, ranging from traffic infractions to capital murder charges. Mr. Rucker's civil practice consists of many family law issues, including protective orders, abuse and neglect hearings, and termination of parental rights. Mr. Rucker takes on *pro bono* work mostly involving representation of indigent clients in probation violation hearings based upon failure to pay court costs/restitution. This *pro bono* work is completed approximately two times a month.

Mr. Rucker is very involved with the local community. He is the Vice President for the Arlington Travel Baseball Organization and coaches Arlington Little League. Additionally, Mr. Rucker generously volunteers with the Virginia State Bar and is currently one of members on the Disciplinary Committee Fourth District Subcommittee overseeing public concern of alleged misconduct of lawyers. He currently serves as the Chair of the Arlington County Bar Foundation, and he was the President of the Arlington County Bar Association from 2014-2015. Mr. Rucker has taught a number of Continuing Legal Education courses in the past five years, including teaching a course in *Appellate Updates*, and presenting on *the Insanity Defense*.

Mr. Rucker was awarded the Trial Advocacy Award in 2004 by the Judges of Arlington Circuit Court. Additionally in 2004, Mr. Rucker received the Community Service Award from the ACBA. Mr. Rucker has also appeared in Washingtonian Magazine's "Washington's Best Lawyers" in both 2011 and 2013.

Fairness and Temperament: Through his submissions and interview, Mr. Rucker has demonstrated to the Committee that he possesses the requisite fairness and temperament for the Circuit Court bench.

Professionalism and Integrity: The Committee finds that Mr. Rucker possesses the requisite professionalism and integrity for the Circuit Court bench.

Overall Evaluation: The Committee finds that Mr. Rucker meets the requirements for fairness, experience, intellect, temperament, professionalism, and integrity. He warrants the Committee's rating of **Qualified**.