Educating the Public to Improve the Justice System for Minority Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington Coalition of Minority Legal Professionals
Announces 2020 Ratings of Attorney General Candidates

Seattle (October 9, 2020) – The Washington Coalition of Minority Legal Professionals today announced its 2020 ratings of candidates for the office of Washington Attorney General.

The Washington Coalition of Minority Legal Professionals (www.wcmlp.org) is a nonpartisan joint committee of ten participating minority bar associations formed to carry out the evaluation and rating of candidates for law-enforcement positions in Washington State. The Coalition includes:

- Asian Bar Association of Washington
- Korean American Bar Association of Washington
- Latina/o Bar Association of Washington
- Loren Miller Bar Association (serving African-American legal professionals)
- Middle Eastern Legal Association of Washington
- Northwest Indian Bar Association
- QLaw Association of Washington (serving LGBTQ+ legal professionals)
- South Asian Bar Association of Washington
- Vietnamese-American Bar Association of Washington
- Washington Women Lawyers

A primary goal of the Coalition is to ensure that persons seeking election to law-enforcement positions, including Attorney General, are persons of high integrity and professional ability, recognize the concerns of marginalized communities, and are committed to fairness, equal justice, and improving the justice system.

"The Office of the Attorney General represents the state of Washington in cases involving issues of great importance," said Dan Shih, who chairs the Coalition. "The minority associations that make up our Coalition draw from communities that may be highly and disproportionately impacted by the priorities and actions of the Attorney General. They have a substantial interest in

ending mass incarceration and seeing our criminal justice system work better, and in enforcement of consumer-protection, civil rights, environmental, and other laws."

The Coalition's ratings are nonpartisan and take into account whether a candidate is expected to be effective in office, will serve the interests of the community and society, and is committed to the fair administration of justice and improvement of the criminal and civil justice system. Ratings are based on a candidate's questionnaire responses and interview (if the candidate participates), reference checks, and independent research by the Coalition.

The Coalition's rating scale allows for the following ratings, from lowest to highest: Not Qualified, Adequate, Good, Very Good, and Outstanding.

The Coalition's 2020 ratings are listed in the table below.

Attorney General	
Bob Ferguson	VERY GOOD
Matt Larkin	NOT QUALIFIED

A rating of "Very Good" applies to a candidate who has made significant contributions to improving the criminal justice system and brings very substantial skills related to the office. A rating of "Not Qualified" applies to a candidate with a record that casts doubt on their ability to deal with the responsibilities of office, or who has a narrow focus, inflexible attitudes, or is otherwise troubling.

The Coalition determined that candidate Matt Larkin warranted the "Not Qualified" rating for multiple reasons, including misleading characterizations about his work experience, a lack of evidence of substantial experience relating to public legal issues and management, and his unwillingness to engage on issues of importance to marginalized communities.

"The goal of our ratings is to educate the public," said Mary Reiten, the Coalition's vice chair. "Law-enforcement races, even for the statewide office of Attorney General, are often low-information elections. We hope to improve the public's understanding of these races through our ratings—and to encourage people to vote."

Contact:

Dan Shih, Chair
Washington Coalition of Minority Legal Professionals
chair@wcmlp.org
206-373-7390

###