

South Asian Bar Association of
Connecticut

2024 Board of Directors Elections

Candidate Statements

Attorney Riju Das



Attorney Riju Das currently serves on the SABAC Board of Directors. He is an attorney and public policy advocate with the state of Connecticut's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), the state's independent civil rights agency. He is particularly passionate about employee protections in the workplace, addressing the national epidemic of gun violence in our country, and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities that elevate more voices to the decision-making table so that a diversity of life experiences is reflected in our policies. His passion is what encouraged Attorney Das to join the Board of SABAC—in order to be able to better connect with and advocate for the South Asian community.

Attorney Das has extensive government and political experience, having served as a policy advisor to Senator Blumenthal, director of external relations and counsel for the Connecticut State Treasurer, and a member of the staff of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

Attorney Benjamin H. Diessel



Attorney Ben Diessel presently serves as SABAC's Communications Director. He is a partner at Wiggin & Dana's New Haven office. At Wiggin & Dana, Attorney Diessel serves as a co-chair of the Antitrust and Consumer Protection Practice Group and a founding member of the firm's Standard Essential Patent Licensing and Litigation Practice Group. He is also a member of the Intellectual Property Litigation Practice Group and the White Collar Defense, Investigations and Corporate Compliance Practice Group. Outside of the office, Attorney Diessel is an avid traveler and has traveled to India over six times starting at the age of 10. Attorney Diessel has also learned to speak Kannada, a South Indian language spoken in Karnataka, India.

Attorney Diessel was a member of SABAC's Board in 2021 and has served as its inaugural Communications Director.

Attorney Choity R. Khan



Attorney Choity Khan is the current Vice President and served as the 2020-2021 SABAC Secretary and has been active in the Membership & Engagement Committee to bring various SABAC programming in the past two years. Attorney Khan is currently a Construction Lawyer in New York city. She received her J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law, and her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Economics from the University of Connecticut.

Attorney Rachna Khanna



Attorney Rachna Khanna currently serves on the SABAC Board of Directors. She is the founder of the law firm Rachna Khanna, LLC, specializing in immigration, small business, real estate, and estate planning law. She has been active in SABAC and has contributed significantly as a member of the Membership and Engagement Committee in planning the 2020 Holi Happy Hour and hosting the 2020 SABAC Outing. She served as a SABAC Director this past year. Attorney Khanna is additionally an active member of the Indian community in CT. She currently serves on several Boards, and was recently awarded the Anchor Award by the University of Hartford.

Attorney Priya Kiran



Attorney Priya Kiran currently serves on the SABAC Board of Directors. She is a divorce litigation attorney at Cordell & Cordell. She is licensed to practice both in Connecticut as well as Delhi, India. Attorney Kiran originally earned her LL.B. at Safia Law College, Barkatullah University in Bhopal, India, then earned her J.D. at UCONN Law and her LL.M. at the University of Texas School of Law.

Attorney Kiran would like to serve on the SABAC Board of Directors to help the organization grow and reach out to a large section of the population that needs/deserve legal services but are not able to take charge of daily life circumstances, so that the organization may provide a necessary resource to those community members. Attorney Kiran has experience working in child protection cases including wide aspects of family laws. She has also practiced criminal law in Connecticut. Attorney Kiran believes her expertise as a family lawyer would be beneficial for the organization.

Attorney Raj Mahale



Raj Mahale is a leading investment management and M&A attorney based in New York City. He offers in-depth knowledge on emerging market matters and brings nearly three decades of experience advising businesses involved in India, South East Asia, China and the Middle East markets. As partner and lead counsel of KPPB LAW's Investment Management practice, he regularly advises various funds and fund managers in all aspects of their business.

Attorney Mahale was an original founding member of SABAC and was a Board Member of the North American South Asian Bar Association (NASABA), where he co-founded the Business Law Section. Attorney Mahale will seek to grow membership in Fairfield County and to work with SABAC Advisory Board to get them more involved.

Hon. Yamini Menon



The Hon. Yamini Menon is a judge of the Connecticut Superior Court. Prior to being appointed to the bench, she was a state prosecutor with the Connecticut Division of Criminal Justice and represented the State of Connecticut in trial court, habeas court, and the Connecticut Appellate Court. She also represented indigent clients as a housing attorney at Connecticut Legal Services. She is active in her community as a volunteer with the Junior League of Eastern Fairfield County, the Westport Young Women's League., and the Connecticut Bar Foundation. A graduate of the Johns Hopkins University and American University Washington College of Law, Judge Menon also earned an LLM in Intellectual Property Law and Policy from the University of Washington School of Law.

Attorney Yamuna Menon



- *Attorney Yamuna Menon is General Counsel/Assistant State Comptroller at the Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller, serving as chief legal advisor to the State Comptroller and senior staff. She is an Adjunct Professor of Legal Practice at the University of Connecticut School of Law, currently serves on the SABAC board, is Vice Chair of the CBA's LGBTQ+ Section, and is a board member of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, for which she is also a James W. Cooper Fellow. She received her B.A. from Johns Hopkins University and earned her J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law.*

Attorney John Mutchler



Attorney John Mutchler is a partner at Robinson + Cole's Hartford office specializing in Intellectual Property. In addition to his legal practice, Attorney Mutchler is a member of the R+C Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee. He has also been a member of the Hartford County Bar Association (HBCA), the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA), and the Middlesex County Bar Association (member of the Board of Directors for the MCBA for three years). He has also participated in GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) events. Attorney Mutchler has also served as a mentor in the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity (LCD) and has been awarded the Connecticut Law Tribune Mentor of the Year award.

2024 would be his third year as Treasurer of SABAC and he has become very familiar with the SABAC finances, including intake and tracking of sponsorships and membership fees and interacting with our accountant to get our tax returns submitted to the IRS.

In 2023, he has attended every SABAC event. In addition, he attended the SABA North America Gala in Boston, the SABA DC Gala in Washington DC and the SABA North America leadership retreat in Washington DC.

He is a strong believer in allyship and would be honored to serve another term as the Treasurer of SABAC and to continue working with his SABAC colleagues in 2024.

Attorney Prerna Rao



Attorney Prerna Rao currently serves on the SABAC Board of Directors. She is a Principal Member at Omnia Law. She assists individuals and small and medium-sized businesses and nonprofits with litigation, business and real estate transactions, and also practices personal injury and family law. Prerna has been recognized by various institutions for her work as a litigator, including by Senator Blumenthal for her work in family law litigation, by Connecticut Law Tribune as a New Leader in the Law in 2019, and by Super Lawyer Rising Star for the last 5 years in a row.

Prerna is passionate about giving back and has served as a past president of the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CAPABA), and has done volunteer work in India, China, and Nicaragua. She is also active in her local community and reegularly volunteers with area high school and law school mock trial and moot court events, and serves as an elected official on her town's zoning board of appeals.

Attorney Sanjiv Reejhsinghani



Attorney Sanjiv Reejhsinghani currently serves on the SABAC Board of Directors. He is a 2011 graduate of Western New England University School of Law in Springfield, MA, and has been an active member of SABAC since 2009, having volunteered and/or attended almost every SABAC Awards Dinner since that year, and serving as a Board of Director for the 2021 year. While in law school, Sanjiv co-founded, and was the first President, of the South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA) chapter. He was also the 2010 recipient of the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA) Student Health Law Award.

Attorney Reejhsinghani is also a graduate of the 2018-2019 Massachusetts Bar Association (MBA) Leadership Academy, and he currently serves as a member of the MBA Business Law Section Council, along with 15 other attorneys across the state. Furthermore, he is the Justice of the Central Connecticut Alumni Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta (P.A.D.) Law Fraternity, International, which is the largest law fraternity in the United States. Attorney Reejhsinghani is also very active with the Hampden County (Mass.) Bar Association, and specifically within the Real Estate Section and the New Lawyers Section. His solo practice focuses mainly on transactional, real estate, and landlord-tenant-based law.

Board Candidate Summary for 2024^a

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- Riju Das
- Ben Diessel
- Choity Khan
- Rachna Khanna
- Priya Kiran
- Raj Mahale
- Yamini Menon
- Yamuna Menon
- John Mutchler
- Prerna Rao
- Sanjiv Reejhsinghani
- Write in Candidate

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Nandita Ruchandani is not running for a Board position because a past president Board position has already been established by the SABAC Board.

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