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GCs for Law Firm Diversity
c/o Ms. Michelle R. Fang
Turo, Inc.
116 N. Montgomery Street – 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

**An Open Letter to GCs for Law Firm Diversity
(and all Corporate General Counsel Eager to Create a More Diverse and
Inclusive Legal Profession):**

For many years, general counsel have asked their law firms to become more diverse. In that tradition, your *Open Letter to Law Firms* is a terrific reminder that diversity is top of mind for companies that send work to outside counsel. Your request that firms improve diversity -- or risk losing your business -- should add much needed enthusiasm and energy in making the profession more diverse and inclusive.

Your letter sounds an alarm that is getting attention. A notable response is Don Prophete's essay, "A Black Partner Responds to GCs on Law Firm Diversity." Thoughtfully and courageously, Mr. Prophete describes phenomena that persist decades after law firms and their corporate clients started to focus on diversity.

It is difficult to imagine lawyers in corporate law departments or in law firms taking the position that the profession should be *less* diverse or that the *status quo* is acceptable. Yet representation among women and minorities, especially at the level of equity partner or higher, hasn't changed much in the last 20 years and lags what society expects of a profession that is fundamentally about fairness and opportunity. Against that background, allow me to describe the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession ("IILP"), on whose behalf I am sending this letter, and to offer a suggestion on how IILP can support your goals.

IILP is a 501(c)(3) that started in 2009 to help make our profession more diverse and inclusive. Of course, there are many such organizations. We therefore focus on filling gaps in the field through research into factual questions that otherwise go unexplored and events that enable open, thought-provoking discussion.

In 2017, IILP published its three-part “Competing Interests” series of papers that delved into the need for greater attention among in-house counsel on the lack of diversity among their outside counsel; the ways in which a corporate focus on efficiency and economy can inadvertently undermine law firms’ diversity and inclusion efforts; and concrete measures to improve the situation. This year, IILP plans a series of programs on a core topic, “Is ROI the Appropriate Measure of D&I?”

In light of your letter, we have developed a short survey to collect basic data on corporate clients’ actual use of diverse attorneys as outside counsel. Much like law firms filling out the ABA 113 disclosure forms, the survey asks corporations to report on the diversity of its outside legal spend. At a minimum, the survey will provide corporations with important information about their legal spend from a diversity and inclusion perspective.

We invite all the signatories to your letter and any other corporate leaders to respond to this survey. A link to the survey is available upon request by contacting IILP at Info@TheIILP.com. More generally, we are happy to provide more information about IILP’s many innovative programs and initiatives across all sectors of practice and hope you will join us in our work.

Thank you so much.

Very truly yours,

INSTITUTE FOR INCLUSION IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Firestone". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Marc S. Firestone, Chair
President, External Affairs and General Counsel,
Philip Morris International