



## **Statement of Qualifications for District Court Judge Seat 6**

**“When a person enters a courtroom, it’s because they need help with the most important thing happening in their life.”** When Gabriel Kussin heard Professor Joseph Kennedy say these words in a classroom at UNC Law nearly fifteen years ago, it crystalized a philosophy that would shape entire Gabriel’s legal career. As an attorney, Gabriel has dedicated his life to serving those who need help in their most desperate moments and treating every person in the courtroom with respect. Now, when the legal foundations that are meant to protect every person in our country are under direct assault, Gabriel believes it is time for bold and compassionate leadership for the District Court Bench. The people of Guilford County deserve a judge that not only listens and makes sure every voice is heard, but that promises to fight for the constitutional protections promised to all.

Gabriel Kussin was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina. From an early age, Gabriel was instilled with a passion for public service from his mother (a lifelong educator who fought for Puerto Rican justice in her Spanish Harlem neighborhood), his father (a critical care pulmonologist who travelled around the world to help treat patients in disaster zones and countries with limited medical resources), and his Jewish faith cultivated by attending Judea Reform Congregation in Durham for over twenty years.

Gabriel attended college at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, graduating in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. While at Brown, Gabriel served as the Chair of the College Democrats of Rhode Island—where he helped coordinate efforts across New England to support President Obama’s 2008 election campaign—and as a legislative intern in the Rhode Island General Assembly. As much as he loved his time in New England, Gabriel knew his place was back home in the South.

After graduation, Gabriel returned to North Carolina to serve as a public-school teacher in Charlotte. Gabriel taught tenth grade English, then worked for two Latino advocacy organizations in both Charlotte and Durham respectively, as well as an afterschool program coordinator. In these roles, trying to find his true calling, Gabriel saw how much our judicial system profoundly impacts the day-to-day lives of North Carolinians. Because of this, Gabriel returned to school, graduating from

the University of North Carolina School of Law in 2015. Gabriel participated in the Carolina Criminal Justice Reform Project, the UNC Civil Legal Assistance Clinic, and served on the Pro Bono Board all three years of law school. Working with clients, victims, and community stakeholders across North Carolina, Gabriel worked hard to give a voice to those that traditionally did not have one in our justice system.

After passing the North Carolina Bar Exam, Gabriel was offered an incredible opportunity that would change his life forever. Former Chief Public Defender Fred Lind hired Gabriel as an Assistant Public Defender at the Guilford County Public Defender's Office in Greensboro in 2015, where he has been for the last ten and a half years.

Gabriel has tried countless cases in both District and Superior court in Greensboro and has represented thousands of clients charged with everything from trespassing to first degree murder and everything in between. In every case Gabriel not only zealously advocates for his clients but also champions an essential mantra: that every person's truth deserves not just to be told but also valued.

Gabriel also serves as the Internship Coordinator for the Public Defender's Office helping recruit and supervise aspiring law students to learn about the law and gain practical experience in the courtroom. Since 2024, Gabriel has also worked with law students as an adjunct professor at the Elon University School of Law. There, Gabriel helps teach The Criminal Law Lab, walking students through the criminal justice system by exploring every part of a case from arrest to trial.

In 2024, Gabriel ran for District Court Judge Seat 13 to attempt to become the first Latino judge in Guilford County's history. During the campaign, he knocked on hundreds of doors, shook thousands of hands, and met people from every corner of Guilford County. In those countless conversations, Gabriel kept hearing the same refrain: the people of Guilford County want a judge who not only will listen and treat them with respect, but that this moment of unprecedented volatility requires a judge that will not sacrifice their principles or the protections guaranteed by law. Gabriel believes he can provide new and bold leadership for the District Court bench and provide a unique voice for the people of Guilford County.

Gabriel is a member of the Greensboro Bar Association, the Guilford County Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, a member of Temple Emmanuel, as well as a member of the Gatekeepers: the Greensboro Gargoyles Hockey Fan Club.

Gabriel enjoys cooking, biking, watching his beloved Carolina Hurricanes, and spending time with his family, his wife Brittany, their two dogs, Goose and Fig, and two cats, Jazz and Lucetta.

# GABRIEL ALEXANDER KUSSIN

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Bar Admissions: North Carolina, 2015

## EDUCATION

### University of North Carolina School of Law

*Juris Doctor*

#### Honors and Activities

- *NC Journal of Law and Technology*, Articles Editor
- Pro Bono Board, Class and New Project Coordinator
- Teaching Assistant, Criminal Procedure
- Dean's List: 4 Semesters

### Brown University

*Bachelor of Arts, Political Science*

#### Activities

- Undergraduate Council of Students, Communications Chair/Class of 2009 Representative
- Rhode Island General Assembly, Education Intern
- Teaching Assistant, Education Department
- College Democrats of Rhode Island, Chair; Brown University Democrats, President

## EXPERIENCE

### Guilford County Public Defender's Office

*Assistant Public Defender; Internship Coordinator*

**Greensboro, North Carolina**

*September 2015-Present*

- Represents indigent clients in Criminal Superior and District Court charged with felonies, misdemeanors, and probation violations. Tried over a dozen Superior Court jury trials and hundreds of District Court bench trials and hearings.
- Manages internship program by reviewing applications, interviewing prospective undergraduate and law school students, and supervises practice of interns within the office.

### Elon University School of Law

*Adjunct Professor*

**Greensboro, North Carolina**

*January 2024-Present*

- Criminal Law Laboratory Professor for first year law students helping to introduce them to the basics of actual criminal defense and prosecution in the state of North Carolina through observation, practice exercise, and instruction.

### Triangle Day School

*Trustee*

**Durham, North Carolina**

*August 2014-June 2020*

- Guided the strategic vision and mission of the school and worked with the Head of School on managing finances, establishing guidelines for curriculum, administration, and information technology.

### University of North Carolina Civil Legal Assistance Clinic

*Certified Student Practitioner*

**Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

*August 2014-May 2015*

- Counseled, advised, and advocated for indigent clients and non-profits in civil courts.
- Interviewed clients, researched legal issues, and investigated facts in preparation for trials.

### Hedrick Gardner Kincheloe & Garofalo, LLP

*Summer Associate*

**Raleigh, North Carolina**

*May 2014-July 2014*

- Prepared insurance liability and workers' compensation defense litigation memoranda and briefs.

- Attended trials, mediations, depositions, hearings, and client counseling sessions across the state.

**Carolina Criminal Justice Reform Project**

*Summer Fellow*

**Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

*May 2013-August 2013*

- Provided research support to organizations aiming to reduce the death penalty nationwide.
- Created an online database of cases, motions, briefs, and research regarding DNA litigation.

**Triangle Day School**

*After School Program Coordinator*

**Durham, North Carolina**

*July 2011-June 2012*

- Coordinated daily, educational, artistic, and athletic activities for 50 K-8 students.

**El Centro Hispano**

*Membership Coordinator*

**Durham, North Carolina**

*January 2011-May 2011*

- Promoted benefits of membership for the community and increased awareness of center services.
- Coordinated with the Fundraising Board to contact local businesses to support and sponsor events.

**Latin American Coalition**

*Volunteer Coordinator*

**Charlotte, North Carolina**

*July 2010-December 2010*

- Recruited community members to serve as volunteers in the law and educational departments.
- Organized 100 volunteers for the 2015 Latin American Festival featuring more than 20,000 attendees.

**Garinger New Technology High School**

*Tenth Grade English Teacher*

**Charlotte, North Carolina**

*June 2009-February 2010*

- Planned lessons, graded weekly papers, and taught three, 90-minute, 30 student classes of 10<sup>th</sup> grade writing.

**POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS**

**Candidate for District Court Judge, Seat 13 (2024)**

**Guilford County, North Carolina**

- Led a grassroots, county-wide campaign with a focus on neighborhood engagement and new voter turnout in the Democratic Primary.
- Developed a positive, progressive strategy to lead volunteers and encourage turnout.
- Successfully raised over \$20,000 in campaign contributions, the vast majority coming from small donors and received nearly 15,000 votes in the election.

**AFFILIATIONS/INTERESTS**

- Greensboro Bar Association, Member; Guilford Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Member; NC Public Defender Committee on Racial Equity, Secretary (2015-2020); Temple Emmanuel, Member; Proficient in Spanish. Enjoys cooking, biking, paddleboarding, hiking, hockey, and travel (17 Countries and 23 States).