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October 13, 2020

The Honorable A. Mitchell McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
290 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



Re: Judge Amy Coney Barrett

Dear Senators:

I write in support of Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination to serve as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. She has been my colleague and my friend for over 22 years. I have known her as a law clerk on the Supreme Court, a lawyer, law professor, legal scholar, judge, neighbor, mother and friend. I can think of no person more qualified to serve—and no one who I would rather see serve—on the United States Supreme Court. She is an exceptional judge and an exceptional person, and she will serve her nation with distinction.

Judge Barrett and I first met in 1998 when we began clerking together on the Supreme Court (me for Justice Clarence Thomas, her for Justice Antonin Scalia). Three years after our clerkship ended, Judge Barrett joined me on the faculty at Notre Dame Law School. She and her husband, Jesse, bought a house around the corner from us in South Bend, Indiana, and we resumed the friendship that began during our clerkship. In the intervening years, she has become one of my closest friends. We have raised kids together, carpoled together, shared countless family meals and holidays, and taken turns organizing the neighborhood Halloween candy exchange and Easter egg hunt. As I [wrote](#) on the day following her nomination, we have, in many ways, grown up together, as lawyers, teachers, scholars, mothers, and friends.

When we first met in 1998, we certainly could not have imagined that, 22 years later, Amy would be nominated to serve on the United States Supreme Court. But, the qualities that I saw in her that year, and have seen in her in all the intervening years, are the very qualities that

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have made her, over the years, an outstanding judge, award-winning teacher, highly respected legal scholar, generous colleague, loyal friend, loving mother – and make her now the obvious pick to serve on the Supreme Court. She is brilliant, principled, humble, kind, generous, and tirelessly committed to excellence. She accepts each new challenge with grace and gives all that she has to give (and sometimes it seems more) to all that she is called to do. She will bring all those qualities to the Supreme Court, and our nation will be blessed by her years of service as Justice Barrett.

Judge Barrett’s brilliance and legal acuity were evident from the moment I met her. Harvard Law School professor Noah Feldman, who disagrees with much of her judicial philosophy, recently observed that she stood out as possibly the finest legal mind among the group of nearly 40 young lawyers who clerked with us during the Supreme Court’s October 1998 term. He [concludes](#), “Amy Barrett deserves to be on the Supreme Court.” When she was nominated to the Seventh Circuit, every single law clerk who served with us signed a [letter](#) supporting the nomination.

As our former dean, Professor Patty O’Hara told you when she introduced her on Monday, since joining the faculty at Notre Dame, Judge Barrett has made her mark as a leading constitutional law scholar and one of our best, and most challenging, teachers. Her respect among her colleagues and students is reflected in the fact that she has been elected “teacher of the year” three times by the law school’s graduating class and in letters of support for her nomination submitted to this committee by dozens of her colleagues at Notre Dame and in the broader legal academy and hundreds of former students. And, in the three years since her appointment to the Seventh Circuit, the rigorous, incisive and careful approach that she brought to her scholarship and teaching has been reflected in over a hundred judicial opinions that demonstrate her steadfast fidelity to the rule of law.

On a personal level, Judge Barrett is one of the most generous people whom I have ever met. Despite her busy schedule and many commitments, she is the first to prepare and deliver a meal when a family has a new baby, to welcome new families into their home when they join our community (and kids are always welcome the Barrett house); and to support and comfort friends in times of trial. Many commentators marvel that Judge Barrett is able to do all that she does, and do it so well, while raising seven amazing kids. So do I. We only have four kids, and I have turned to Amy for advice as a mother more times that I can count. I know that my own daughters (now 21 and 16) look to her as a role model for how to integrate family, faith and professional life, and I am certain that she will inspire generations of young women to come.

At Notre Dame Law School, we like to brag that we “educate a different kind of lawyer.” And, while that undoubtedly means different things to different people, at its core, our claim that we educate a different kind of lawyer is grounded in the hope that we are forming young people to understand that the law is more than just a job. It is a vocation—a calling. A call to do justice, serve the common good, and treat everyone, from the most humble to the most exalted, with dignity and respect. I can think of no person who better embodies what Notre Dame means by a “different kind of lawyer,” than Amy Coney Barrett. Amy is

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unfailingly kind, humble, and generous. And she never confronts life's challenges as burdens, or tasks, or jobs, but rather she asks herself "*Is this what I am called to do?*" And, her joyful "yes" when she is called, including her decision to accept this nomination knowing well the difficult confirmation process that lies ahead of her, helps the rest of us—friends, colleagues, students, even strangers—to understand that we also are called to serve in many ways—sometimes, we are called to give of ourselves more than we think is humanly possible.

I will never forget walking down the Supreme Court's marble steps on the last day of my clerkship in July 1999. I remember sharing then with my friend Amy Coney the bittersweet feeling that we had just undoubtedly finished be the most amazing experience of our lives—the opportunity to serve as *law clerks* on the United States Supreme Court. I am elated that the President chose my friend and colleague as his nominee. Our nation could not do better. I urge the Senate to confirm her expeditiously. While I will miss her, I look forward to the day that she walks back up those steps, as Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

Sincerely,



Nicole Stelle Garnett

John P. Murphy Foundation Professor of Law