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February 1, 2022

## **By E-Mail**

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## **Re: Nomination of Nina Morrison to be United States District Judge**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I write to enthusiastically support the nomination of Nina Morrison, currently a senior litigation counsel for the Innocence Project in New York, for a position as a United States District Court judge in the Eastern District of New York.

I've known Nina for almost five years, since the Innocence Project enlisted my law firm's participation in a civil lawsuit on behalf of an Innocence Project exoneree, Robert Jones, who spent over 23 years in prison for crimes he did not commit. Nina and her co-counsel secured the reversal of Mr. Jones's convictions and dismissal of all charges on the basis of a series of *Brady* violations by the Orleans Parish (New Orleans) District Attorney's Office, an office with a regrettable history of such violations over decades. Nina and I then teamed up to prosecute the follow-on civil action against that office. The litigation was extremely active and hard-fought - with 27 pre-trial motions, 33 depositions, and 8 experts, among other metrics - and ended with a very successful settlement. The point here is that I got to know Nina extremely well as a result.

To say she's impressed me favorably would be an understatement. She is exceptionally smart. She's a fast thinker. She writes very well. She has strong judgment

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on what strategies to pursue (or not pursue), what arguments to make (or not make), and what best represented our client's interests. She was thoughtful, and thorough, and tenacious when she needed to be. She was able to communicate with people of all backgrounds, not just lawyers. And she cared deeply about the work that she did and the interests she represented. But she did so in a calm and measured way. She was able to see both sides, and navigate her way to outcomes and solutions that worked for our client without unnecessarily ruffling feathers. Of particular note to me was the ease with which she excelled in the civil litigation process; given her background and experience, focused on reviewing and challenging criminal convictions, I didn't know what to expect -- but was been impressed beyond my most optimistic expectations. And on a personal level, she's easy to talk to and get along with; she has a sense of humor; and she is authentic.

I say all of this from the perspective of an attorney who spent 12 years working for the U.S. Department of Justice, doing essentially the opposite of what Nina has spent years doing - namely, prosecuting the guilty. But I'm proud to be associated with Nina, and think she would be a great credit to the federal bench.

I hope my comments are helpful as you consider Nina's nomination to this important position. Please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact me, if you would like to discuss Nina's nomination and qualifications further with me.

Respectfully,

*/s/ Alan Vinegrad*

Alan Vinegrad