

Responses of Rudolph Contreras
Nominee to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia
to the Written Questions of Senator Amy Klobuchar

- 1. If you had to describe it, how would you characterize your judicial philosophy? How do you see the role of the judge in our constitutional system?**

Response: I would not characterize myself as having a particular judicial philosophy. I simply view the role of a judge as treating all parties fairly and with respect, regardless of their identity or claims, approaching each case impartially and with an open mind, and faithfully applying the laws enacted by Congress and interpreted by the United States Supreme Court and the United States Courts of Appeals.

- 2. What assurances can you give that litigants coming into your courtroom will be treated fairly regardless of their political beliefs or whether they are rich or poor, defendant or plaintiff?**

Response: If I am confirmed, all litigants that appear before me can be confident that I will treat them fairly regardless of wealth or station in life. I grew up in very modest surroundings and was exposed to a great number of people of limited means. In contrast, in law school (at the University of Pennsylvania) and at my former law firm (Jones Day), I was exposed to many people of great privilege. I harbor no unfair biases in favor of or against either group. And, of course, in representing the United States for the last seventeen years, I have worked diligently on behalf of all its citizens -- rich and poor. Similarly, although the greater part of my career has been spent representing defendants, I have also represented plaintiffs, both on behalf of the United States, as well as individuals in *pro bono* matters. Thus, litigants should be assured that I hold no bias for a particular side of a case.

- 3. In your opinion, how strongly should judges bind themselves to the doctrine of stare decisis? How does the commitment to stare decisis vary depending on the court?**

Response: I believe that District Court judges are strongly bound by the doctrine of *stare decisis*. To ensure predictability and stability in the law, so that citizens can consistently order their lives and affairs, it is paramount that cases with similar facts are decided in a similar fashion and criminal convicts who commit similar offenses are sentenced in a similar fashion. Although I believe that the United States Supreme Court has greater latitude to depart from the doctrine of *stare decisis*, for these same reasons, it should not depart from the doctrine absent unusual circumstances.