

**Responses of Jennifer Guerin Zipps
Nominee to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona
to the Written Questions of Senator Amy Klobuchar**

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

Response: A judge should seek to adhere to the rule of law and strive to create a fair and impartial forum for the resolution of disputes. A judge should ensure that each party is provided an opportunity to be heard and is treated respectfully in the presentation of his or her position. In terms of our constitutional system, a judge must always be mindful that his or her role is not to legislate, but to apply the law that has been enacted, and to ensure that legislation and its execution is consistent with law and with constitutional principles.

- 2. As the one undemocratic branch, the courts have a special responsibility to make sure they are available to those Americans most in need of the courts to protect their rights. 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: As a magistrate judge for six years, I believe I have demonstrated my commitment to treat each person who appears before me fairly and with respect, regardless of political beliefs, nationality, socioeconomic status, or status as a plaintiff or defendant. Equal justice under the law is fundamental to the credibility of our legal system. Should I be confirmed, I pledge that each person who appears before me will receive equal access and just treatment.

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

Response: Judges must respect precedential opinions in order to instill confidence that the result in a given case is not merely a function of who happens to be deciding it. If a specific issue has been previously decided by a controlling Circuit Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court, a judge must follow the precedent. A commitment to the doctrine of stare decisis should not vary depending on the court. Proper respect for precedent must be the rule at all levels of our judicial system.