



November 19, 2024

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Los Angeles County Unity Bar Letter of Support for Confirmation of Judge Serena Murillo to the United States District Court for the Central District of California

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham,

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Unity Bar, Orange County Unity Bar, Sacramento County Unity Bar, Central Valley Unity Bar, Unity Bar Association of Kern County, Santa Barbara County Unity Bar, Stanislaus County Unity Bar, Tulare County Unity Bar, Yolo County Unity Bar, Ventura County Unity Bar, and Inland Empire Unity Bar, we offer this letter to express our ardent support of President Joseph Biden's nomination of Judge Serena Murillo and to recommend her confirmation to the United States District Court for the Central District of California. The Unity Bars in Southern California are an alliance of bar associations dedicated to promoting diversity in the judiciary, supporting highly qualified diverse judicial candidates, advancing equity and inclusion in the legal community, and building collaboration among members of the legal community both in the Los Angeles area and throughout California.

Judge Murillo has held many assignments since her election to the state court bench in 2015, including a criminal court, a civil independent calendar court, a civil master calendar court, a personal injury court, a small claims court and most recently a return to a criminal trial court. She has previously served as justice *pro tem* for the California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Three and served on the Los Angeles Superior Court Appellate Division. She has covered various areas of law while managing a diverse and full workload off the bench. She also spent five of her seventeen years with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office as an Appellate Attorney, handling felony writs of prohibition and mandate in the California Supreme Court, federal writs of habeas corpus in the U.S. District Court and the Ninth Circuit, as well as misdemeanor appeals in the Los Angeles Superior Court Appellate Division. The

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other ten were spent as a trial attorney handling matters in misdemeanor, felony and juvenile courts.

This well-rounded diversity of substantive criminal and civil experience as a judicial officer and attorney, coupled with her impressive voluntary contributions to the law, equal justice and the broader legal community make Judge Murillo an excellent candidate to serve on the District Court.

Judge Murillo is also recognized as a statewide expert on California's new Racial Justice Act. In October 2023, she delivered an overview of the statute and the latest interpretations to appellate justices and members of the California Supreme Court at the *Appellate Justice Institute*. She has taught classes on this statute for the Judicial Council, LASC, the San Diego Superior Court, and for judges statewide through CJER, the *Center for Judicial Education and Research*. Judge Murillo's contributions to equal justice throughout the State of California cannot be underestimated.

In addition, Judge Murillo has the faith and confidence of her Los Angeles Superior Court colleagues, who elected her to serve on the LASC Executive Committee, which represents the Central District of California—the largest district in the State. She has also sat as the chair of the LASC Judicial Education Seminars overseeing education programs, developing curriculum for the court's orientation program and leading discipline-specific subcommittees aimed at judges and subordinate judicial officers.

Despite a demanding workload, rich family life and her professional activities, Judge Murillo always finds time to be active in her community and to give back to others. Along with 14 other women judges, she started California Women Judges, the first-ever statewide affinity association of women bench officers. She was recently selected to serve as CWJ's first President-Elect. She has also served as the Co-Chair of the Latino Judicial Officers Association, which provides vital judicial mentoring to diverse judicial applicants in Los Angeles County, among many other services. In that role, she was generous and instrumental in providing guidance and advice to LACUB Member—the Mexican American Bar Association of Los Angeles—in connection with the formation of its Judicial Pipeline Program in 2023. Shortly thereafter, she was honored by MABA with its Hon. Carlos R. Moreno Judicial Excellence Award, an acknowledgment of her dedication as a judicial officer and leader, and recognition for the difference she has made through her contributions not only to MABA, but to diversity, equal justice and the legal community at large.

Judge Murillo has also held important teaching positions outside of court, both at University of Southern California, Gould School of Law and at U.C. Irvine School of Law. Thus, her contributions and influence extend to the next generation of lawyers for whom she serves as an important role model.

Judge Murillo's stellar background and her tireless commitment to her community are a testament to her humble beginnings. As the daughter of a farmworker, she brings an understanding of the cultural and traditional heritage of the Latino community that would enrich and further advance the Court's mission of serving all diverse communities. She has carried that humility, perspective and work ethic to her role as a judicial officer. As a district court judge, she will treat all individuals with dignity and respect, while striving to ensure that courts and the judiciary remain free from bias. Now more than ever, it is vitally important that the judiciary reflect the diversity of this great state and country at the highest levels and thus achieve equality. Judge Murillo would be an important voice and a valuable addition to the growing diversity of the judges of the Central District of the United States District Court.

There is no doubt that Judge Murillo possesses the judicial temperament and intellect necessary to assume the important responsibilities of this position. The Unity Bars across California are proud to endorse and strongly recommend Judge Murillo for appointment as Judge of the United States District Court for

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the Central District of California. She is an exceptionally well qualified candidate, and we are confident she would serve as an exemplary jurist.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Los Angeles County Unity Bar	
Founding Co-Chairs Magdalena Casas & Angela Zanin	South Asian Bar Association Southern California President-Elect Elia Naqvi
Italian American Lawyers Association President Stephanie Story	Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Inc. President Shardé Skahan
Japanese American Bar Association President Colin Kawaguchi	Langston Endorsement Org. President Felton T. Newell
Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association President Nadine Tan	Mexican American Bar Association President Elizabeth Hernandez
Asian Pacific American Bar Association Past President Seaton Tsai	Philippine American Bar Association President Alexander Manglinong

Orange County Unity Bar	
Founding Chair Amber Poston	South Asian Bar Association Southern California President-Elect Elia Naqvi
Filipino Lawyers of Orange County President Nathaniel Epstein	Muslim Bar Association of Southern California Judicial Endorsements Committee Chair Elia Naqvi
Hispanic Bar Association President Shelly Aronson	

Sacramento County Unity Bar	
Disability Inclusivity Bar Association of Sacramento President Alexa R. Greenbaum	Wiley Manuel Bar Association President Rick Owen
Cruz Reynoso Bar Association President Victoria Fernandez	South Asian Bar Association-Sacramento President Aparna Agnihotri

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Central Valley Unity Bar	
Central California Asian-Pacific American Bar Association President Midori Howo	Central Valley Black Lawyers Bar Association President Alexia Kirkland
Central Valley South Asian Bar Association President Ramnik Samrao	Fresno County Women Lawyers Association President Regina K. Chessari
Central Valley PrideLaw Association President Richard E. Burchett Jr.	

Unity Bar Association of Kern County

Co-Founders Judge Sharon Mettler (Ret.), David Torres, & H.A. Sala

Santa Barbara County Unity Bar

Co-Founders Teresa Martinez & Beatriz Pimental Flores

Stanislaus County Unity Bar

Co-Founder Kendra Hall

Tulare County Unity Bar

Co-Founder and Cochair Casey Martin

Yolo County Unity Bar

President & Co-Founder Monica Cavazos Brushia

Ventura County Unity Bar

Founder Monique Fierro

Inland Empire Unity Bar

Founder Michael Fermin

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