



101 Western Ave.
P.O. Box 5188
Augusta, ME 04332-5188
207.430.8334

May 28, 2024

Chairman Richard Joseph Durbin
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

BY EMAIL

Ranking Member Lindsey Graham
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
211 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Confirmation of Julia M. Lipez to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

On behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV), I write in support of the confirmation of Julia Lipez to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. MCEDV serves and supports ten member programs that includes Maine's eight regional domestic violence resource centers and two culturally specific services providers. Last year, our network supported more than 12,000 survivors and their children across the state.

What we know from working with so many survivors in Maine each year is how important it is that jurists who sit on our state and federal courts understand domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence and stalking; that they understand the public safety risks it poses; and that they are qualified and prepared to carry-out state and federal laws connected to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence and stalking that were designed to protect not only individual victims but also our broader communities. We are confident that Julia Lipez is such a jurist.

MCEDV and our member programs are grateful for Julia's work on both firearms and stalking cases in her time as an Assistant U.S. Attorney. She was pivotal in the prosecution of Willie Minor for his unlawful possession of a firearm after having been previously convicted of a domestic violence assault. The case took many years to ultimately resolve. Julia's collaborative work with

the team at the Maine U.S. Attorney's Office to persistently pursue a conviction has ultimately resulted in clear standards and instructions to allow for future violations to be successfully prosecuted and for those convictions to be sustained. Each year, on average, 50% of all Maine's homicides are a result of domestic abuse and violence, and the vast majority of those victims are killed with a firearm. Ensuring that there's a clear, effective, and transparent pathway for holding convicted domestic violence offenders accountable when they continue to illegally possess firearms is a legacy from AUSA Lipez's work here in Maine that will save lives.

Julia's time in the U.S. Attorney's Office also had her notably taking the lead in response to one of the most difficult types of gender-based violence cases for prosecutors – intimate partner stalking. Stalking is one of the best predictors that a victim of domestic violence will be killed by their partner. Yet, it is notoriously under-prosecuted, both federally and in state courts; many prosecutors do not have either the skills to successfully piece together and pursue a stalking case or the understanding as to why it is so important that they prioritize the necessary time and resources to do so. Julia Lipez has demonstrated both. She successfully pursued a conviction for a stalking perpetrator who had invaded the daily life of their victim through persistent, invasive acts, each of which standing alone may have been discounted as innocuous. AUSA Lipez pulled them together and successfully presented the case as what it was: a systematic pattern of behavior that all too often ultimately results in serious injury to or death of the victim. The perpetrator was held accountable, a vulnerable victim got justice, and the broader community is safer for it.

In her time on the Superior Court Bench in Maine, Justice Lopez has continued hold high-risk perpetrators of domestic abuse and violence accountable. Maine is fortunate to have a statutory scheme that allows for enhanced charging and sentencing in domestic abuse and violence cases where a person has previously been convicted of similar crimes. In such cases, a judge is able to sentence a repeat offender to a maximum of five years in prison. In a recent case, involving Domestic Violence Criminal Threatening, Justice Lipez utilized the sentencing tools available to her to sentence the defendant to the maximum term, giving his victim the time and space she needs to feel safe and heal after years of his abuse.

The federal appellate courts need more judges who understand gender-based violence and are well prepared to determine whether relevant federal laws were properly applied in such cases. MCEDV has experienced Justice Lipez as a federal prosecutor and as a state court judge. She will be an excellent addition to the First Circuit Court of Appeals, and we encourage her swift confirmation. Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support.

Sincerely,



Andrea Mancuso
Public Policy Director

cc: Senator Susan M. Collins
Senator Angus S. King, Jr.
Philip Brest, White House Senior Counsel