

*Statement of Amanda Rauh-Bieri before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on the
Nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court
October 15, 2020*

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Feinstein, and other members of the Committee: I am deeply honored to speak to you about someone who has had an outsized effect on my life as a former boss and cherished mentor, Judge Amy Coney Barrett.

I know Judge Barrett to be a person of the highest character, and I sincerely and enthusiastically support her nomination to be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. I had the privilege to serve as a law clerk during Judge Barrett's first term on the bench, joining her chambers shortly after her confirmation to the Seventh Circuit in 2017.

From the very beginning, I saw Judge Barrett exhibit the rare and unique set of qualities that make an exemplary judge. She is a brilliant thinker; she analyzes and writes about legal issues with striking clarity and precision. She is patient, thoughtful, and compassionate.

She brings each of these qualities to bear on every case she decides. Judge Barrett is dedicated and disciplined; and, as a judge, she is committed above all else to the rule of law. As she has said, and as I have seen, Judge Barrett understands that policy decisions must be left to the political branches—the role of a judge is to enforce the law, as written. I have seen Judge Barrett put that unwavering commitment to the law into action in every case before her. She approaches each case with an open mind. She commits to the idea that either side might, in the end, have the better legal argument.

Judge Barrett's open-mindedness is grounded in her compassion. Judge Barrett has spoken about viewing each decision from the perspective of the losing party. I saw her put that ethic into practice. It would be easier, in many ways, to not take this more demanding approach. But I learned from Judge Barrett that the law is about fairness over efficiency, and that every member of society and every party that comes before the court is entitled to equal justice. Judge Barrett is a judge who applies the law fairly and reaches the result that is required—and she writes with empathy and she appreciates the real-life impact of her decisions.

Alongside Judge Barrett's powerful intellect and enduring commitment to the law is her determination and discipline. In deciding cases, Judge Barrett has never relied simply on her extraordinarily sharp legal mind. She pairs that gift with a dedication to the full process in each case. She never takes a shortcut. She thoroughly examines the facts and the applicable law in each case. Judge Barrett is an intensely hard worker. Even the early-rising clerks often arrived at her chambers to find the light already on in her office.

Even with her towering intellect and unflinching work ethic, Judge Barrett always took seriously the views of her law clerks. She would often pop over to our offices, ready to hear our perspective on a case or to discuss a particular legal question. It is a testament to her respect and charity that she often walked the path from her office to mine, eager to hear my thoughts on the legal questions and to engage me in a discussion over the thornier issues.

It was in those conversations that Judge Barrett created a culture that encouraged us to voice our differing opinions, even if we thought she would ultimately disagree. She sees the value in discourse, and she fosters that value in her clerks, teaching us to be open and curious and humble about the law and life. And, from what I saw as a law clerk, Judge Barrett approached her colleagues on the bench with the same gracious humility and openness that I experienced from her.

Judge Barrett's impact on my life runs far deeper than legal training. As I said, I was in Judge Barrett's first class of clerks, and I joined her chambers in January of 2018: two weeks after my graduation from law school. I loved my time in law school, but I also spent much of it unsure of myself. I often tried to downplay my presence, afraid I was wrong or inadequate. I wasn't certain I had what it took to succeed.

Judge Barrett changed that for me. Her example and mentorship inspired in me confidence I didn't know I had. I can't point to a single event or a point in time when that change occurred. Change like that—formative change—happens gradually, across hundreds of conversations and hours shared. Judge Barrett leads, in law and in life, with conviction, generosity, and courage—and she inspires me to do the same. For example, I can tell you with certainty that I would not have the confidence to be here, speaking to this committee, without Judge Barrett's influence in my life.

Judge Barrett has the rare gift of lifting everyone around her. She knows how to bring out the best in her clerks, spurring each of us to excellence. Judge Barrett has her own large family, but that didn't stop her from treating her clerks like family too. Shortly after I arrived in chambers, my three co-clerks and I piled in the back of Judge Barrett's minivan, and she drove us from South Bend to Chicago for her first set of oral arguments. She cared deeply about each of us, investing time and encouraging us to cultivate rich, fulfilling, well-rounded lives, both in and beyond the law.

Clerking for Judge Barrett and being mentored by her is an honor. Judge Barrett has elevated my thinking, writing, and character, not by prescription, but by simply being herself. As a Supreme Court Justice, she would be a role model for generations to come, as she is for me.

I am proud and honored to support Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination to serve as an Associate Justice on the United States Supreme Court.