

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
*Chairman*

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
*Ranking Member*

Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We write to express our enthusiastic support for Candace Jackson-Akiwumi's nomination to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. We are lawyers who benefitted from Candace's mentorship early in our careers. We believe that the qualities of character evident in her mentorship are among those that will make her a superb addition to the court.

Having encountered Candace at points throughout her career, from her early days as an associate in private practice through her successful tenure as a Federal Public Defender, we collectively represent Candace's steadfast commitment to proactive mentorship. She takes a hands-on, interactive approach: she included us in strategy conversations and encouraged us to offer our opinions even though we were junior attorneys; she gave us opportunities to draft important motions and then offered rigorous feedback even though it would have been faster not to; she encouraged us to jump into the deep-end of trial practice to make sure we got real experience, secure in the knowledge that we were conducting our first cross-examination of a witness or first client meeting under her attentive eye. And she has made a point of staying in touch, serving as a sounding board for our subsequent career decisions, thinking of us as opportunities crossed her desk, and connecting us to further resources and networks. If confirmed as a judge, Candace's dedication to "lifting as she climbs" will richly benefit the generations of judicial clerks to pass through her chambers, and in turn, the legal profession.

Much as Candace chose to make time for mentorship, we sought her out as a mentor because she exemplified the kind of lawyer we wanted to be. Candace's passion for public service, excellence in legal advocacy, and justice has inspired each of us in our own careers. Her incredible work ethic set a high bar for us to aspire to. We admire Candace's unflinching integrity and have seen first-hand how foundational ethics guide her decisions. Her sense of fairness, honesty, and grace infuse her professional conduct, whether dealing with clients, opposing counsel, or colleagues. We have seen her exercise exquisite discernment. Her capacity to listen to different perspectives is one of her most special talents, whether addressing a client's family's questions, or an opposing counsel's demands. She is a highly effective communicator, sensitive to the needs of

a wide range of people, from clients with little familiarity with the legal system, to students with minimal legal exposure, to judges before whom she appears. She moves through the world with kindness and wit. The unique gifts that made us choose Candace as a mentor would make her an exceptional judge, and a great credit to the federal bench.

Each of us has seen Candace's character and talent shine when the spotlight is on and, perhaps as importantly, we have seen the character and talent she displays in quiet moments, when the spotlight is off. As a result, we are confident that she would serve the profession, the judiciary, and the country with distinction and integrity. We urge the Senate to confirm her nomination to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit without delay.\*

Sincerely,

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