

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chair
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 26, 2021

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We write in support of the nomination of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi to serve as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. We urge the Committee and full Senate to promptly review and confirm her nomination.

We are a cross-section of former prosecutors, private practitioners, corporate in-house counsel, and legal advocates who are representative of the broad diversity of the bar that practices in the Northern District of Illinois. Many of us have spent our entire careers practicing in the Northern District, have served in leadership roles in the public and private sectors, and we are all deeply committed to our judicial system and the fair administration of justice, which is the bedrock of our democracy.

The district, which includes Chicago and the surrounding 18 counties in Illinois, is a microcosm of our country, including rural areas and the third largest city in the nation; a racially and ethnically diverse populace; large corporate headquarters as well as some of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in the United States. The Northern District of Illinois bar is a community itself, with a strong tradition of collegiality and mutual respect amongst adversaries. The cases litigated in the federal courts in the Seventh Circuit, which, of course, includes Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, address a wide range of civil and criminal matters, and raise some of the most consequential legal issues of the day. As a result, the court has long been seen as a leader in American jurisprudence, and we are all proud of what small role those of us on this letter have been able to play in the work of the court.

A great strength of our nation and of our governmental institutions is that we are a representative government, representing the entirety of our nation. A circuit court that reflects the full diversity of the Seventh Circuit will only strengthen the court, its decisions and the administration of justice. It is with these crucial considerations in mind that we join together in support of the nomination of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi to the Circuit Court.

If confirmed, Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi would be the first federal defender ever seated on the court. Many of us on this letter are former prosecutors, as well as criminal defense lawyers, and we all agree that having a judge with this experience on the court would be an important addition. If confirmed, she will be the only judge of color on the court, and first to join since Judge Ann Claire Williams retired from the court in 2017. Again, this diversity of experience is critically important to reflect on the bench. And although we do not know Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi personally, her record and career reflect the commitment to the law and range of legal experience that will serve her well on the court.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. We hope that the Committee and the Senate will consider the nomination of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi promptly, and confirm her to the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Sincerely,

*References to law firms, corporations, or other institutions are for identification purposes only and do not constitute endorsements by those entities.

Sergio E. Acosta
Akerman LLP

Bonnie Allen
Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights

Kimball R. Anderson
Winston & Strawn LLP

Steve Art
Loevy & Loevy

Bernadette Atuahene
IIT, Chicago Kent College of Law

Aurora Austriaco
Valentine Austriaco and Bueschel, P.C.

Ian M. Barney
Barney & Hourihane, LLP

Joel D. Bertocchi

Kenyatta S. Beverly
Black Women Lawyers' Assoc.
of Greater Chicago, Inc.

Jennifer Blagg
Blagg Law

Thomas M. Breen
Breen & Pugh

Emily Brown
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym

Ruth Brown
Loevy & Loevy

Alexa Van Brunt
Roderick and Solange MacArthur
Justice Center

Amy P. Campanelli
Former Cook County Public Defender

Jeffrey D. Colman
Jenner & Block LLP

Kareem A. Dale

Sylvia Decker
Sidley Austin

John P. DeRose
John P. De Rose & Associates

Shirley Emehelu
Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi PC

Susan G. Feibus
Law Offices of Susan G. Feibus

Patrick J. Fitzgerald
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher
& Flom LLP

Joel Flaxman
Kenneth N. Flaxman P.C.

Leonard A. Gail
Massey & Gail

Vadim A. Glozman
Law Offices of Vadim A. Glozman

Patricia Brown Holmes
Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP

Charles Burns
Jacobs, Burns, Orlove & Hernandez, LLP

Carly Chocron
Gair Eberhard Nelson Dedinas, Ltd.

Matthew Crawl
Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP

Shamoyita Das Gupta

Hon. Morton Denlow (Ret.)

Patrice Dziire

William T. "Toby" Eveland
Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP

Jim Fieweger
Michael Best & Friedrich LLP

Kenneth N. Flaxman
Kenneth N. Flaxman PC

Imani Franklin
Loevy & Loevy

Mariah Garcia
Loevy & Loevy

Leonard C. Goodman

Jessica L. Gonzalez

J. Cunyon Gordon
Chicago Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights

Josie Gough
Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Nicholas Gowen
Burke Warren MacKay & Serritella P.C.

Sarah Grady
Loevy & Loevy

Robert Graham
Jenner & Block LLP

Susan Gzesch
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym

Lindsay Hagy
Exoneration Project

Thomas Hallock
Hallock Law, Inc.

Danielle Hamilton
Loevy & Loevy

Jason Han
The Law Offices of Jason Han

Kelli Harsch
Applegate & Thorne-Thompson, P.C.

Cara Hen Hendrickson
Business and Professional People
for the Public Interest

Kathleen Hennessy
Hamilton Law Office, LLC

Sam Heppell
Loevy & Loevy

David H. Hoffman
Sidley Austin LLP

Janine L. Hoft

Wynter C.N. Jackson

Jacqueline S. Jacobson
Monico & Spevack

Shannon Jones

Walter Jones

Brian C. Johnson
Equality Illinois

Julian Johnson
The Law Office of Julian Johnson

Susan Kaplan

Joshua Karsh
Mehri & Skalet PLLC

Theresa Kleinhaus
Loevy & Loevy

Jared Kosoglad
Jared S. Kosoglad PC

Jonathan Ksiazek
DiMonte & Lizak, LLC

Scott Lassar
Sidley Austin LLP

Heather Lewis Donnell
Loevy & Loevy

Ronald L. Marmer

Hon. Michael T. Mason (Ret.)

Daniel I. Morales
University of Houston Law Center

Bruce Mosbacher
Mosbacher Law Group

Catharine D. O'Daniel
Law Offices of Catharine D. O'Daniel

Mark Parts
Parts & Spencer

Deanna Pihos
Miner Barnhill & Galland PC

Roshna Bala Keen
Loevy & Loevy

Richard S. Kling
Chicago Kent College of Law

Nicholas Krietman
Krietman Law LLC

Mark Kusatzky

Caryn C. Lederer
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym

Andrea Lyon

Terri L. Mascherin
Jenner & Block LLP

Elizabeth Mazur
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym, Ltd

Gail H. Morse
Jenner & Block LLP

Adele D. Nicholas
Law Office of Adele D. Nicholas

Matthew J. Owens
Miner Barnhill & Galland PC

Matthew J. Piers
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick Dym, Ltd.

Raymond D. Pijon

Dolores Pino
Law Office of Dolores Pino

Gabriel Plotkin

Todd S. Pugh
Breen & Pugh

Scott Rauscher
Loevy & Loevy

Jay Readey
Ginsberg Jacobs LLC

Larry Redmond

Lauren Robinson
American Medical Association

Renai Rodney
City of Chicago Law Department

Michael I. Rothstein
Tabet DiVito & Rothstein LLC

Ronald S. Safer
Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila

Gabrielle Sansonetti

Alexandra Schaller
Loeb & Loeb LLP

Hon. Sidney Schenkier (Ret.)

Kate Schwartz
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym Ltd.

David M. Shapiro
Roderick and Solange MacArthur
Justice Center

Hille R. Sheppard
Sidley Austin LLP

Charles B. Slarsky
Jenner & Block LLP

Jennifer Soble
Illinois Prison Project

Gil M. Soffer

Natalie J. Spears

Barry A. Spector
Spector Baker

Renee Spence
Loevy & Loevy

Faith Spencer
Parts & Spencer, Ltd.

Keith A. Spielfogel

Robert W. Stanley
Breen & Pugh

William S. Stanton

Max Suchan

Jan Susler
People's Law Office

Anand Swaminathan
Loevy & Loevy

Joshua Tepfer
Loevy & Loevy

Tony Thedford
Thedford Garber Law

John T. Theis
Law Office of John T. Theis

Justin Tresnowski
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick
& Dym, Ltd.

Anton R. Valukas
Jenner & Block LLP

Paul K. Vickrey
Vitale, Vickrey, Niro, Solon
& Gasey LLP

Donna Vobornik
Dentons US LLP

Nilofer I. Umar
Sidley Austin LLP

Robin V. Waters
Loeb & Loeb LLP

Dan K. Webb

Stephen H. Weil
Loevy & Loevy

Mark Weinberg

Steven J. Weinberg
Weinberg Law

Robert Weinstock
University of Chicago Law School

Marni Willenson
Willenson Law, LLC

Christopher Wilmes
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym

Lisa Wood