

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

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

September 19, 2022

Re: Massachusetts Attorney Letter in Support of the Nomination of Judge Julie Rikelman to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We, the undersigned Massachusetts lawyers, write to offer our enthusiastic support for Julie Rikelman's nomination to serve as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. As Massachusetts lawyers, we come from varying professional backgrounds and positions. We all agree that Ms. Rikelman is a highly distinguished attorney with impeccable qualifications, deep respect for the rule of law, unquestioned integrity, and an inspiring life story. We are immensely proud to call her a fellow member of our Commonwealth's legal community, and are confident she will serve as an honorable and impartial arbiter of the law if confirmed. We urge the Senate to confirm Ms. Rikelman's nomination.

Ms. Rikelman grew up in Brookline and Needham, Massachusetts, arriving as a child after her family left their home country of Ukraine seeking refuge from anti-Semitic persecution in the Soviet Union. Ms. Rikelman saw her parents face and overcome multiple challenges because they had to learn English later in life, and throughout her childhood she supported them whenever she could, including by reviewing their work presentations and legal documents. She attended public schools in Massachusetts, where she was a Commonwealth Scholar (a scholarship awarded to graduating Massachusetts seniors based on their academic records and dedication to public

service). After working to put herself through college, Ms. Rikelman graduated from Harvard College, Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude. She then graduated from Harvard Law School cum laude in 1997.

Ms. Rikelman has had a varied and accomplished legal career. She clerked for two highly respected appellate judges: Judge Morton Greenberg of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit – who was nominated by President Reagan – and Justice Dana Fabe of the Alaska Supreme Court, the first woman to serve on that court. She brings with her the legal perspective of someone who has practiced in both the corporate sector and in the public interest. She spent five years working in law firms and five years as in-house litigation counsel for a large media company. She has litigated on issues ranging from corporate contract disputes to securities fraud to environmental and constitutional law.

Ms. Rikelman dedicated the bulk of her career to public interest lawyering and defending reproductive rights. She twice argued major constitutional cases at the Supreme Court to widespread acclaim, each time grounding her advocacy in principles at the very core of our American legal system: adherence to the rule of law, stare decisis, and respect for the Constitution.

Ms. Rikelman's career is uncommon in the degree that it has exposed her to a wide variety of legal issues, a broad scope of practice settings, and a multitude of different types of clients. Yet throughout her entire career, she has carried with her the values of rigorous legal analysis, meticulous preparation, and faithful advocacy. She has also been a kind and steady leader and mentor, especially to young women lawyers. All of this makes her as ably prepared to become an exceptional judge as any practitioner could be.

Ms. Rikelman currently lives in Brookline, Massachusetts, not far from where she grew up. She has spent most of her career as a working mother, balancing her legal practice with raising her two daughters. Like so many others, she also spent much of the COVID-19 pandemic caring for her aging parents. She is an unfailingly decent person who is well-liked and respected by colleagues, adversaries, and fellow members of the bar, where she is an active member of the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association. She has not angled to cultivate political connections for personal advancement; she has spent her career largely keeping her head down, doing excellent work, and caring for her family.

If confirmed, Ms. Rikelman would be the first immigrant woman and the first Jewish woman to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Her appointment as a Ukrainian-American would be especially meaningful in this moment when Americans have rallied to support the Ukrainian people, and as Massachusetts is welcoming a new generation of Ukrainian refugees seeking peace and liberty in our community. Her story, and her potential ascension to the federal bench, represent the best that America can be.

For all these reasons, we believe that Ms. Rikelman is uniquely positioned to be a highly capable judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. She has a deep commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law, and its centrality to a legal system that provides fairness and equal justice for all. The sweep of her career gives us the utmost confidence that as a judge, she will consistently and neutrally apply the law to the facts in all cases that come before her. With great pride, we strongly urge her confirmation.

Employers of signatories listed for identification purposes only.

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