



## **ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Protecting Sovereignty • Preserving Culture  
Educating Youth • Building Capacity  
SINCE 1922

June 2, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
Chairman  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

**Re: In support of the Nomination of Ms. Lauren J. King to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

It is with our deepest consideration that the Association on American Indian Affairs would like to firmly and enthusiastically support the Biden administration's nomination of Ms. Lauren J. King to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington.

As an attorney myself, I understand the importance of a diverse federal bench to truly represent the United States and all of its perspectives. Moreover, a federal bench that includes Native Americans is critical to upholding the rule of law and ensuring the continuation of democracy and strengthen equality in our shared country.

As you are aware, federal courts possess an authority over Indian Country and the assertion of inherent sovereignty of Native Nations as they govern to protect their citizens - and it is an authority that is often wielded without a secure understanding of the immense body of federal Indian law. There are few judges with a significant background and practice in federal Indian law, and an understanding of Native American Nations and communities, like Ms. King. The federal bench desperately needs the expertise and perspective that Ms. King can bring.

Ms. King would be the first ever Native American judge to serve on the Western District of Washington, the sixth ever and fourth current sitting member of the federal judiciary that is

Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian joining Judge Derrick Kahala Watson, nominated by President Obama in 2013 who currently serves in the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii; Judge Diane J. Humetewa nominated by President Obama in 2014 who currently serves in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona; and Judge Ada E. Brown, nominated by President Donald Trump in 2019, who currently serves in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas.

Ms. King exemplifies professionalism and expertise in her legal practice and with teaching and involvement in community organizations. As a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, Ms. King upholds the dreams of her Ancestors, as well as those that will come after her following in her footsteps. The Association supports the Biden Administration's nomination of Ms. King to the federal bench.

Thank you for your attention. The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 99-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Tribes to support the implementation of programs that affect real lives on the ground.

*Yakoke*, my Choctaw thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon O'Loughlin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shannon O'Loughlin  
CEO & Attorney

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