

## MIDWEST ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN TRIBES

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June 4, 2021,

Senator Richard Durbin, Chairman  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for Lauren J. King as a United States District Court Judge

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

It is with great pleasure that the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes writes in support of Lauren J. King's nomination to serve as U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Washington. As a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, Ms. King would become the first Native American federal judge in Washington State, and the third active Native American Article III judge in the United States.

Ms. King is a first-rate attorney with impeccable qualifications for a federal judgeship. She is an experienced litigator who has handled complex federal litigation ranging from complex commercial transactions and intellectual property, to treaty rights, cultural resources protections, and tribal jurisdiction. In addition, she has served as a pro tem appellate judge for the Northwest Intertribal Court System since 2013, where she heard appeals on a broad range of issues, including commercial disputes, employment matters, and sovereign immunity.

We are committed to seeing the federal judiciary include individuals who understand the unique legal status of Indian tribes and can approach Indian issues from an informed, unbiased perspective. The United States Constitution vests the federal government with exclusive authority over Indian affairs, and the federal judiciary is regularly makes decisions that have a lasting impact on daily life in tribal communities. Due to the painfully complex jurisdictional scheme in Indian country and the unique federal role, Native Americans and tribal governments are party to federal proceedings at very high rates. Yet, few federal judges have ever visited an Indian community or a tribal court, let alone lived or worked in them. Therefore, we believe that Ms. King's knowledge and experience are the type that is vitally important for a federal judge to possess.

We hope that the United States Senate will move swiftly to confirm Ms. King. Should you have any questions, please contact President Aaron Payment at [aaron.payment@saultribe.net](mailto:aaron.payment@saultribe.net).

Sincerely,



Scott R. Vele Executive Director