

October 8, 2020

The Honorable A. Mitchell McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators:

I am a former clerk to Judge Amy Coney Barrett and write to convey my uniformly positive experiences with the Judge in both professional and personal capacities, and my strong and enthusiastic support of her nomination. I count myself fortunate to have had the tremendous privilege of working for and being mentored by a woman and jurist of unparalleled intellect, kindness, and strength of character.

My first year out of law school was Judge Barrett's first year on the bench. When I walked into her chambers as a law clerk for the first time, Judge Barrett was standing there with a roll of paper towels and cleaner in her hands, happily cleaning the new space and chatting as if it were a normal part of any federal judge's job. We talked about her kids and her career. She asked about my family, where I was from, and what kind of lawyer I wanted to be.

What we discussed most over the course of the year I spent clerking for Judge Barrett was, naturally, the law. She came into my office one afternoon to discuss a particularly difficult case and we spent an hour going back and forth, trying to persuade one another about the merits of our respective sides. The next day, Judge Barrett was back at my door. "I think you were on to something yesterday," she said. "I'm coming around." While that conversation was not dispositive to the case, Judge Barrett showed me early on that my opinion was valued even when it was different from hers.

That open environment encouraged all of her clerks to be candid about their analyses and opinions, but not without caution. Judge Barrett was often so far ahead of us on her grasp of the record and the law, even in an entirely new area, that we had to be ready to give a full defense of whatever position we took. Before one set of arguments, I rode to Chicago with Judge in her minivan so we could discuss an upcoming case. I had prepared heavily, hoping that I could help make the technical background and key issues in the case clear to her. But Judge started off the conversation by summarizing everything I was planning to tell her. That experience was common; after years

of law school, clerking, and now in private practice in D.C., I have not come across a more brilliant lawyer or jurist.

The approach Judge Barrett takes to her work is unflinching. Every case, large or small, newsworthy or not, is given careful attention. Judge Barrett masters the record, studies the precedent, and engages with her colleagues and clerks. Her opinions are strikingly clear and well-reasoned as the result of careful drafting. In short, her work ethic reveals both a deep humility and a fundamental respect for the law.

Judge Barrett serves as a personal mentor as well. One day, towards the end of my clerkship, Judge Barrett walked into chambers with questions about a case ready to go, eager to get to work. I stopped her and held out my hand to show her my new engagement ring. Judge stopped in her tracks, let out a little scream of excitement, and pulled me into a hug. Sharing that moment with her was particularly meaningful to me because Judge Barrett was the first female lawyer I'd gotten to know who balanced a resoundingly successful legal career with a full and fulfilling family life and marriage. Her life and work have given me the confidence to pursue the same, and her sincere celebration of my happiness is a perfect microcosm of who she is.

Law clerks will often tell you that the job follows you for life. It is an intellectually demanding year spent together with a judge in close quarters. That has proven true of my year with Judge Barrett: The year after I left my job with her, I got married to the love of my life. And the first text I woke up to on my wedding day was from Judge Barrett.

Based on my year with Judge Barrett, and the years since, there is no person more qualified to sit on our nation's highest court. If confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice, Judge Barrett will continue to serve our country with excellence. I strongly support her nomination and urge her confirmation by the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mariel Brookins".

Mariel Brookins