



March 18, 2022

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the Confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court of the United States

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned members of the Board of Directors of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law ("Lawyers' Committee"), urge you to support the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States. The Lawyers' Committee is one of the nation's leading nonprofit civil rights legal organizations, founded in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to enlist the private bar's leadership and resources in combating racial discrimination and securing equal justice under law. For nearly sixty years, the Lawyers' Committee has been at the forefront of many of the most significant cases to advance racial equality and secure equal justice. Our mission and history make our organization uniquely qualified to comment on this nomination.

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson possesses extraordinary qualifications and a breadth of experience in her legal career, and she is exceptionally well-qualified to serve as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court. As a judge on both the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, where she has spent the last nine years of her career combined, she has authored nearly six-hundred opinions and has received only fourteen reversals from higher Courts.¹ Before taking the federal bench, Judge Jackson served for six years, including one term as Vice Chair, on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, an independent judicial government agency responsible for issuing and amending sentencing guidelines. Judge Jackson also has experience in both private practice and as an Assistant Federal Public Defender, which enables her to bring depth and experience in both criminal and civil law to a role as an Associate Justice. Earlier in her career, Judge Jackson clerked for judges on the District Court for the District of Massachusetts, the First Circuit Court of Appeals, and, eventually, for Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. A graduate of a public high school, Judge Jackson obtained her undergraduate degree in Government, *magna cum laude*, from Harvard-Radcliffe College. She then graduated from Harvard Law School, where she was a supervising editor on *The Harvard Law Review*.

Based on our review of her nearly 600 opinions, her significant legal career, and her writings and speeches, it is evident that Judge Jackson possesses both the exceptional

¹ *Ketanji Brown Jackson Fact Sheet*, ALL. FOR JUST. (last updated Feb. 25, 2022), <https://www.afj.org/document/judge-ketanji-brown-jackson-fact-sheet/>.

competence necessary to serve on the Court and a profound respect for the importance of protecting the civil rights afforded by the Constitution and the nation’s civil rights laws. Judge Jackson’s remarkable career demonstrates a measured judicial temperament, keen intellect, and dedication to the rule of law. She is known to promote consensus among her colleagues, and to ensure that her opinions are accessible to the public, promoting a greater understanding of the law. In her adjudication of cases, she demonstrates a profound respect for precedent and the Constitution, meticulously weighing the facts, circumstances, and legal arguments presented in each individual case, and ensuring that the law is applied equally to all. Her record reflects that she does indeed have, in the words of President Biden, a “pragmatic understanding that the law must work for the American people” and that she would “bring extraordinary qualifications, deep experience and intellect, and a rigorous judicial record to the Court.”²

In reviewing Judge Jackson’s record, we are particularly struck by her rulings across various contexts that support access to courts and justice and holding the government to a high standard when one’s liberty is at stake—a key indicator of her fair-mindedness when faced with civil rights cases on the bench. In particular, Judge Jackson’s time as a federal public defender and service as Vice Chair of the Sentencing Commission clearly inform her approach to cases touching on the criminal justice system, which she views as working best when the parties have every reasonable opportunity to present their cases at every stage of the proceedings.

In addition to her careful application of civil rights laws and the Constitution, Judge Jackson would also bring significant diversity to the Supreme Court. To ensure that federal courts remain impartial, committed to the rule of law and trusted by the American public, the Senate must confirm highly qualified justices from across the legal profession that represent the vast diversity present in the United States. If confirmed, Judge Jackson would be the first Black woman Justice, third Black Justice, and sixth woman Justice to have served on the Court in its 232-year history. Upon her confirmation, the Supreme Court would have four women Justices, two Black Justices, and three Justices of color serving together for the first time in our history, bringing us ever closer to our nation’s highest Court reflecting the diversity of America.

Diversity on the Supreme Court—be it race, ethnicity, gender, or professional background—is valuable in and of itself. A mix of backgrounds, perspectives, and professional expertise lends credibility to the Court’s deliberations on important legal questions and inspires confidence in the American people. Further, a diversity of experiences among the justices enriches their deliberation and discussion in cases that come before the Court. Judge Jackson would bring much-needed professional diversity to the Supreme Court. She would join Justice Sonia Sotomayor as the second sitting Justice to have served as a trial court judge. Judge Jackson would be the first Justice to have served as a federal public defender and the first since Justice Thurgood Marshall to

² President Joseph R. Biden, *Remarks by President Biden on his Nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to Serve as Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court*, WHITEHOUSE.GOV (Feb. 25, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/25/remarks-by-president-biden-on-his-nomination-of-judge-ketanji-brown-jackson-to-serve-as-associate-justice-of-the-u-s-supreme-court/>.

bring significant criminal defense experience to the Court. She also shares a distinction with Justice Breyer as having served as a member of the United States Sentencing Commission. Upon her confirmation, the Supreme Court would better reflect the diversity of the legal profession, as Judge Jackson has experience representing and protecting the rights of people who are marginalized in our society and grappling with how to ensure that our criminal justice system treats individuals justly and equitably.

Thank you for your consideration of our support of the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States. We urge the Senate to swiftly confirm Judge Jackson, as it has during her three prior Presidential nominations and Senate confirmations. We welcome the opportunity to discuss her nomination with your office further; if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Demelza Baer, Director of Public Policy, at dbaer@lawyerscommittee.org.

Sincerely,

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