

March 23, 2022

Senator Richard Durbin
Chair
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: *Nomination of Hon. Ketanji Brown Jackson as Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court*

Dear Chair Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

The signatories of this letter are lawyers and legal academics who work and teach at the four law schools in the State of Missouri: University of Missouri School of Law, University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law, St. Louis University School of Law, and Washington University School of Law. We write to endorse – enthusiastically – the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Judge Jackson’s record of intellectual accomplishment, practical experience, and public service is among the most distinguished of any Supreme Court nominee in recent memory.

She graduated with honors from both Harvard College and Harvard Law School, and went on to clerk for three federal judges, including Justice Stephen Breyer, whose seat she is slated to assume. She has practiced law in multiple distinguished private firms and as a Federal Defender. Since 2013, she has been a federal judge, serving eight years as a United States District Judge before being elevated in 2021 to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

We are particularly pleased by Judge Jackson’s extensive experience as a practicing lawyer and as a trial judge on the District Court bench. Intellectual acuity is, of course, a prerequisite for service on the nation’s highest court, but exposure to the real world of law practice and trial court litigation provides an essential pragmatic leavening to judicial decision-making. In recent decades, far too few Supreme Court justices have had substantial practice and trial court experience. On the current court, only Justice Sotomayor boasts a similar record. Among recent Justices, those with significant prior practice and trial level judicial experience – such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sandra Day O’Connor, David Souter, and Anthony Kennedy – consistently demonstrated the value of personal familiarity with the realities of the legal system at work.

We also note Judge Jackson’s years of work in the field of criminal sentencing. Before becoming a judge, she served as assistant special counsel to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and later as its Vice-Chair. In these positions, she gained deep familiarity with the sentencing policy process and helped the Commission navigate some of the most difficult issues faced by that body, including the aftermath of the *Booker* decision rendering the Sentencing Guidelines

advisory, drug sentencing, and more. This experience will be particularly valuable to the Supreme Court where criminal justice issues are a regular staple.

Judge Jackson's work as a district judge has been widely praised, particularly for her thoughtful and "even-handed" approach to difficult and contentious issues. Likewise, her nomination has been widely endorsed, including by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, former Attorneys General of both parties from over 40 states and territories, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement, and the President of the Fraternal Order of Police.

Finally, the fact that Judge Jackson would be the first African American woman to serve on the Court represents both a milestone in America's progress toward racial justice and an immense boon to the Court itself in the addition of a perspective that only someone of Judge Jackson's background can provide.

Accordingly, the undersigned wholeheartedly and unreservedly endorse the nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Respectfully submitted,

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