



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FLORIDA

THE RIGHT REVEREND SAMUEL JOHNSON HOWARD, D.D.

BISHOP OF FLORIDA

July 8, 2021

The Honorable Charles E.  
Schumer Majority Leader  
United States  
Senate  
Washington, DC  
20510

The Honorable Mitch  
McConnell Minority  
Leader  
United States  
Senate  
Washington, DC  
20510

The Honorable Richard J.  
Durbin Chairman  
Committee on the  
Judiciary United  
States Senate  
Washington, DC  
20510

The Honorable Charles E.  
Grassley Ranking Member  
Committee on the  
Judiciary United  
States Senate  
Washington, DC  
20510

**Re: Letter in Support of Myrna Pérez, nominee for U.S. Court of Appeals for the  
Second Circuit**

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Durbin, and Ranking Member Grassley:

This letter is written in strong support for the confirmation of Myrna Pérez to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. In doing so, there is no regard given to the politics of the matter; my concerns and experience to share are solely regarding her integrity and ability.

My experience comes from working with Myrna for over a decade in the justice system. I first met Myrna while chairing the Project on Accountable Justice at Florida State University. Long involved in Florida's voting rights restoration effort, Myrna sought my advice and counsel on how to frame the issues of justice reform and effectively engage the religious community in this consideration.

We share Jesus' view that current and former prisoners should still be seen as beloved children of God, see Lk. 4 and Matt.25. For Myrna, restoring the right to vote to the formerly incarcerated models Christian forgiveness, and exercise of the right to vote is itself an act of repentance and investment in one's community. The Diocese of Florida has labored in the justice area for decades; a dozen churches in prisons, birth of the Kairos in prisons, and even employment efforts such as Operation New Hope.

In 2018, Myrna and the Brennan Center for Justice played a critical role in the successful effort to amend the Florida constitution to restore the right to vote to Floridians with past criminal convictions. She and her team helped bring together stakeholders from across the state with impacted individuals. Amendment 4, which passed by overwhelming bipartisan margins, marked a new beginning for democracy in our state and in the country. It was the biggest expansion of the franchise since ratification of the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which lowered the voting age to 18. She advanced this cause in Florida without regard to the statistical reality that, in Florida, formerly incarcerated citizens are more likely to register to vote as Republicans than Democrats.

Myrna is, as a lawyer and individual of the highest integrity. She is thoughtful and sound in her judgement and committed to principles of justice that transcend politics. She embodies the true meaning of public service and would be an exceptional federal judge. This is an informed opinion.

Though currently serving in a religious capacity, that has not always been the case. Formerly I served as a county and circuit judge, prosecutor, Sheriff of Monroe County, assistant public defender, and was Republican nominee for Lt. Governor of Florida as running mate of Governor Martinez in 1990. In 1999, Governor Jeb Bush appointed me to serve as Florida's Everglades Czar.

I know firsthand that Myrna works well with all kinds of people. She is fair and open minded, and she is an active listener. She always strives to understand other perspectives and seeks to find common ground, even with people who hold significantly different views. Above all, I know Myrna to be a deeply moral and spiritual person, informed deeply by her faith.

Grounded in her faith, Myrna is an active community servant, committed to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly. She has worked for the federal government and in the nonprofit sector for most of her career. She is president of her church council, sits on the boards of Crossroads Prison Ministries and Sojourners, and has served on the Board of Grace Community Services in Jersey City. She is a coordinator of a crew of volunteers to provide meals to food insecure persons in Jersey City, and spearheads other anti-hunger initiatives in her community. She is active in her son's Title I public school, and until the pandemic closed it, coordinated the school's beloved and popular after-school program.

I have no doubt that Myrna would serve with great distinction, if confirmed.

Truly and Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allison + DeFoor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a plus sign between the first and last names.

Rev. Canon Dr. Allison DeFoor  
Canon to the Ordinary