

April 26, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck E. Grassley  
Ranking Member, Committee on the  
Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Letter in support of Nancy Abudu, nominee for United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are members of the victims' rights advocacy community and professionals with expertise on preventing and addressing sexual abuse. We write to you and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee in support of President Joe Biden's nomination of Nancy Abudu to serve as a Circuit Court Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

We are aware that in her capacity as Legal Director of the ACLU of Florida, Ms. Abudu oversaw litigation related to housing restrictions on sex offenders, *Doe v. Miami-Dade County*. The case challenged a Florida ordinance that essentially legislated people into homelessness by prohibiting sex offenders from living within half a mile of a school.

Because it may seem counter-intuitive, we write specifically to inform the committee that national victim's rights groups agree that residence restrictions on registered sex offenders—like the one at issue in the *Doe* case—are not effective or evidence-based. For example, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's position is that "residence restrictions are not recommended as sex offender management policy" because research shows they do not reduce recidivism, "tend to push offenders into riskier situations and may increase risk to the community by interfering with protective factors like housing and employment." See <https://www.nsvrc.org/sarts/toolkit/7-4>.

In fact, the SMART Office, which is the United States Department of Justice agency responsible for implementing the Sex Offender Registration & Notification Act (SORNA) in all 50 states, has stated: "[T]he evidence is fairly clear that residence restrictions are not effective. In fact, the research suggests that residence restrictions may actually increase offender risk by undermining offender stability and the ability of the offender to obtain housing, work, and family support. There is nothing to suggest this policy should be used at this time." <https://smart.ojp.gov/SOMAPI-brief-management-strategies>

Ms. Abudu has pursued evidence-based sex-offender management policy as supported by victims' advocates and the US DOJ. We urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to advance her nomination to the full Senate.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jill Levenson, PhD, LCSW; Professor of Social Work, Barry University, Miami

John W. Morin, Ph.D.; Director, Oakbrook Counseling Center PA

Michael O'Connell; Owner, O'Connell & Associates

Donya L. Adkerson; Director, SOTP, Alternatives Counseling, Inc.

Andrea Barragan; Psychologist, Alliance for Psychological Services

Ali Tabb, LCSW; Social Worker, Breyta Counseling LLC

Shannon E. Smith; Licensed Professional Counselor, ATSA Member (former Victim Advocate in seven different states from 1999 to 2013)

Deborah Gurney; Care Coordinator for Sexual Behavior Services, Signature Health

Katherine Gotch; Director, Integrated Clinical & Correctional Services, LLC

Jerry L. Jennings; Vice President of Clinical Services, Liberty Healthcare Corporation

Marcela Howell; President, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Shireen Shakouri; Deputy Director, Reproaction

Jan Erickson; Director of Government Relations, National Organization for Women