



PRESIDENT
NAN ARON

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

April 26, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing over 120 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to strongly support the confirmation of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi is eminently qualified. She has extensive experience in federal court where she has represented hundreds of criminal and civil clients in both jury trials and appeals. Moreover, if confirmed, Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi will also be only the second Black woman to ever serve on the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and the only person of color on that Court today.

During her ten years as a public defender in Chicago, Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi represented over 400 indigent clients. In this role she was a fixture in Chicago's federal courthouse, representing clients in all facets of litigation, including many jury trials. Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi also briefed and argued multiple cases on behalf of clients before the Seventh Circuit, including cases related to immigration, sentencing, and the Fourth Amendment. In an article for Yale Law School's alumni directory, she noted that "...my job has meaning to me. I provide quality representation to people who would not be able to afford it, and I am there for clients at a most dreary and frightening juncture: when they are being judged for the worst day or days in their life."

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi also has significant civil litigation experience. After finishing up her clerkships with Judge Roger Gregory of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Judge David H. Coar of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, she joined the Chicago office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. At the firm, she litigated complex civil cases involving contracts, patents, securities, and tax disputes in federal court. More recently, Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi joined the litigation firm of Zuckerman Spaeder LLP as a partner, where her practice is focused on complex civil litigation, investigations, and white-collar criminal defense.

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi has excelled at every step of her career. She received her B.A. with Honors from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs. In 2005, Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi graduated from Yale Law School, where she served as a Senior Editor on the Yale Law Journal and was a

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NAACP LDF Earl Warren Legal Scholar. During law school she was part of a legal team led by future Solicitor General Don Verrilli Jr. that challenged a death row inmate's sentence all the way to the Supreme Court, ultimately prevailing on an ineffective assistance of counsel claim. *Wiggins v. Smith*, 539 U.S. 510 (2003).

Given her exemplary qualifications, the Senate should expeditiously confirm Candace Jackson-Akiwumi to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Sincerely,



Nan Aron
President