



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

March 1, 2022

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin,

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing more than 130 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to support the confirmation of Judge Stephanie Dawkins Davis to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

With extensive experience as a federal criminal litigator, and over five years on the federal bench, Judge Davis is extremely qualified to join the Circuit Court. In 2016, Judge Davis was appointed to serve as a U.S. Magistrate Judge on the Eastern District of Michigan after being selected by the judges on that court. In 2019, Judge Davis was nominated to serve as a U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, ultimately being confirmed in December 2019 by unanimous voice vote of the U.S. Senate.

Judge Davis's rulings on complex civil matters, particularly civil rights cases, reflect an impartial jurist with a strong commitment to equal justice. She ruled to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in a workplace discrimination claim by a police officer, ultimately allowing the case to move forward with the county,¹ and in an Americans with Disabilities Act claim by an incarcerated man.² Judge Davis's recommendations as a U.S. Magistrate Judge to uphold First Amendment right to free exercise claims in both [Conway v. Purves](#) and [Maye v. Klee](#) were adopted by the U.S. District Court. She has addressed voting rights claims, including in *Priorities USA v. Nessel*, where plaintiffs claimed that state laws governing absentee ballots and voter transportation were unconstitutional. Judge Davis issued a preliminary injunction for the voter transportation law, which prohibited organizations from spending money to transport voters to the polls, but not the absentee ballot law; she was reversed by the Sixth Circuit despite a vigorous [dissent](#) pointing out that 49 other states allow such voter transportation to take place.

Judge Davis has also shown a fair and evenhanded approach to adjudicating criminal cases with extensive factual records. She has made key decisions on Fourth Amendment cases, such as [United States v. Stone](#), where she denied a motion to suppress claiming that the search of a car, conducted after officers ran plates

¹ *Schuette v. Rand*, Case No. 18-10497 (E.D. Mich. Dec. 23, 2020).

² *Cummings v. Klee*, Case No.: 14-10957 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 19, 2018).

through an insurance database, was unconstitutional. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she has both [denied](#) and [granted](#) compassionate release cases for incarcerated individuals with pre-existing conditions.

Prior to joining the bench, Judge Davis acquired both civil and criminal federal litigation experience. After earning her J.D. from Washington University in St. Louis, which she attended on a full scholarship, Judge Davis gained civil litigation experience as an Associate at Dickinson Wright PLLC. She then began her career in public service, joining the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. Judge Davis served in the Criminal Division for ten years, regularly practicing before the Sixth Circuit, and was eventually appointed to the role of Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney. In that position, Judge Davis led a variety of community initiatives, including the Detroit Youth Violence Prevention Initiative and the Office's re-entry efforts. While at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Judge Davis received numerous distinctions from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Champion of Justice Award from the State Bar of Michigan.

Finally, if confirmed, Judge Davis would be the first Black woman from Michigan to sit on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Her confirmation would bring critical demographic diversity to an appellate bench that currently does not reflect the diversity of our nation. Given her exemplary qualifications, the Senate should expeditiously confirm Judge Stephanie Dawkins Davis to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Sincerely,



Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice