



PRESIDENT  
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR  
PAULETTE MEYER

March 11, 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 express my strong support for the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court. Judge Jackson is a formidable nominee whose education and training, near-decade on the federal bench, and public service career reflect an outstanding jurist with an unwavering commitment to protecting the constitutional rights of all.

For far too long, our federal courts, including the Supreme Court, have failed to reflect the diversity of our nation. In the Supreme Court's 232-year history, 108 of its justices have been white men. The first Black woman was not appointed to *any* federal bench until 1966, when civil rights attorney Constance Baker Motley, the first Black woman to argue before the Supreme Court, was appointed. More than 50 years later, if confirmed, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson would make history again as the first Black woman justice on our highest court.

Judge Jackson's impeccable training, and experience at the very height of the legal profession, make her eminently qualified to serve on the Supreme Court. Judge Jackson's brilliance and drive were evident from the start, as she earned admission to Harvard University and Harvard Law School, graduating as a top student from both institutions. Committed to working in public service, she went on to clerk for three federal judges appointed by Democratic and Republican presidents alike, including Associate Justice Stephen Breyer of the Supreme Court.

Judge Jackson gained extensive trial and appellate legal experience, with a particular interest and expertise in criminal law. She served as assistant special counsel of the bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission, argued appeals before the D.C. Circuit as an assistant federal public defender, and worked on complex civil appellate matters at private firms including Goodwin Procter LLP. In 2010, she was elevated to the role of vice chair on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, an independent agency created by Congress to address disparities in sentencing. Judge Jackson then began her near-decade of distinguished service on the bench, confirmed

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with bipartisan support first to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and second to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

Judge Jackson would be the first public defender on the Supreme Court and the first justice with criminal defense experience since NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund founder Thurgood Marshall retired in 1991. Judge Jackson's unique criminal legal experience, as a public defender and on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, would bring a critical perspective to the Court. As an assistant federal public defender, Judge Jackson represented people accused of federal crimes who could not afford a lawyer, zealously representing these individuals in appeals before the D.C. Circuit. Her time on the Commission built on this criminal law experience. There, she worked with both Democratic and Republican commissioners and gained a reputation for consensus-building, enacting urgent changes including: addressing the unjust discrepancy between sentences for crack and powder cocaine; adopting new guidelines for health care and securities fraud; and clarifying the sentencing for hate crimes and human trafficking crimes. The federal bench, including the Supreme Court, is largely comprised of former prosecutors and corporate attorneys. Judge Jackson's unique experiences, including her time as a defender safeguarding our most precious constitutional rights, would provide an essential perspective.

In her time on the federal bench, writing nearly 600 decisions, Judge Jackson has demonstrated that she is a fair, impartial jurist who will uphold our constitutional values of liberty, equality, and justice for all. She has protected the rights of all Americans, not just the wealthy and powerful, safeguarding the rights of [working people](#). She has demonstrated mastery of complex administrative law issues relating to the [environment](#) and healthcare, including [Medicare](#) and [reproductive health](#). She has applied civil rights laws to protect individuals from discrimination based on [disability](#), [race](#), and [religion](#). She has adjudicated complex legal disputes about the power of the federal government, including [separation of powers](#) and [access](#) to government records. She has applied her criminal law expertise, ruling for both the prosecution and criminal defendants in [Fourth Amendment](#) matters, carefully considering police officers' [defense](#) of qualified immunity, and remaining evenhanded and methodical in [sentencing](#).

Given her outstanding record on and off the bench, it is no wonder that Judge Jackson has won support from people of all walks of life. Along with receiving bipartisan support in every Senate confirmation, Judge Jackson's nominations to the federal bench, including the Supreme Court, have been met with praise from across the ideological spectrum. When she was nominated to the U.S. District Court, former Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) spoke at her Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, saying of Judge Jackson that while their "politics may differ . . . [his] praise for Ketanji's intellect, for her character, for her integrity, it is unequivocal." Judge Jackson's support at her Circuit Court nomination was similarly broad. She received support from [former](#) federal prosecutors, [labor](#) unions, civil rights [groups](#), and federal [judges](#) and clerks of a range of politics and perspectives. And her Supreme Court nomination is no different. Once again, statements of support from [public defenders](#), [civil rights groups](#), [law enforcement](#), and federal [judges](#) appointed by Republicans and Democrats alike demonstrate the respect she has earned in her decades of legal practice and judicial service.

Our courts and their jurists should reflect both the cultural richness and excellence of our nation. Judge Jackson is a testament to both. As a public defender, member of the bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission, and distinguished federal jurist, Judge Jackson’s commitment to equal justice has never faltered. This nomination is part of a broader sea change toward that more perfect union where our practices better align with our stated values and constitutional promises. Finally, Judge Jackson’s nomination represents a brighter future for decades to come, where our highest court is better positioned to provide “equal justice for all.”

For all of these reasons, we strongly believe she is eminently qualified to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. We urge the Senate to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rakim Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rakim Brooks  
President, Alliance for Justice