



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

April 21, 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 strongly support the confirmation of Judge J. Michelle Childs to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Judge Childs' credentials, including more than a decade of experience as a federal trial judge for the District of South Carolina, make her an exceptional candidate to serve on the D.C. Circuit. From the outset of her career as a law firm associate to her high-level leadership in state government and time on the bench, she has consistently demonstrated a commitment to equal justice.

After graduating from the University of South Carolina School of Law, she began her career as an associate at Nexsen Pruet, LLC, practicing in the areas of labor and employment law and general litigation. Judge Childs eventually became the first Black woman partner in a major law firm in the state of South Carolina. After leaving private practice, she received two gubernatorial appointments, serving first as Deputy Director for the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's Division of Labor, and later as Commissioner on the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission. Judge Childs' experience working for two state government agencies will suit her well on the D.C. Circuit, which features a heavy administrative law docket.

Judge Childs has excelled as both a state and federal judge, demonstrating a commitment to the rule of law and the safeguarding of our constitutional rights. On the state bench, she served as a South Carolina Circuit Court Judge for four years and was Chief Administrative Judge for General Sessions, the state's Criminal Court, and Chief Administrative Judge for the state's Business Court. When President Obama nominated Judge Childs to the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina in 2009, she garnered support from people across the ideological spectrum, including the support of both of South Carolina's Republican Senators, Lindsey Graham and Jim DeMint. Upon her confirmation, Judge Childs made history as only the third woman and third Black American to become a federal judge in South Carolina.

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As a federal judge, she has presided over 60 trials and authored more than 2,500 opinions on a wide range of issues, including civil rights, constitutional law, and criminal law. For example, in *Bradacs v. Haley*, Judge Childs ruled the state's failure to recognize the marriage of two women was unconstitutional. This was a landmark decision for marriage equality in South Carolina, even before the Supreme Court's *Obergefell* decision legalized same-sex marriage throughout the country. This opinion, and many others, demonstrates that Judge Childs is a fair and impartial jurist who will protect equal rights.

The D.C. Circuit is considered the second highest court in the country and decides cases of national importance relating to civil rights, labor, health care, and the environment. Judge Childs will not only add demographic diversity to this court, but also geographic diversity as a Southerner. Moreover, Judge Childs' background as a private litigator and public servant, and her decade of experience as a federal trial judge, make her eminently qualified for this position. The Senate should expeditiously confirm Judge Childs to the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

Sincerely,

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

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice