



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing 148 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to strongly support the confirmation of Jamal N. Whitehead to the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington.

As a highly skilled trial attorney with extensive experience in both public service and private practice, Mr. Whitehead would be a vital addition to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. After graduating from the University of Washington and Seattle University School of Law, Mr. Whitehead began his career as an associate at Garvey Schubert Barer, where he represented companies in employment law matters and business disputes. He then transitioned to the public sector, serving as a trial attorney in the Seattle Field Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Western District of Washington. In government service, Mr. Whitehead enforced federal discrimination laws and represented the federal government in a wide range of civil lawsuits.

Since 2016, Mr. Whitehead has been with the firm Schroeter Goldmark & Bender, becoming a shareholder in 2018. At Schroeter, he has obtained substantial victories for victims of workplace discrimination, retaliation, and other unfair labor practices in individual and class action cases. For example, he won \$17.3 million in backpay for a class of immigrant detainees in [*Nwauzor v. The GEO Group, Inc.*](#) and a \$4.9 million jury verdict for an employee who was fired after losing his vocal cords to cancer in [*Coachman v. Seattle Auto Management, Inc.*](#) Mr. Whitehead has represented a wide range of plaintiffs in employment disputes — from delivery truck drivers to physicians — ensuring working people receive a fair shot in court.

In addition to his work as a litigator, Mr. Whitehead has been deeply involved in the Seattle legal community. Since 2020, he has co-chaired the Litigation Academy for the Federal Bar Association of the Western District of Washington, which focuses on improving participants' trial skills. From 2009 to 2015, he served on the Executive Board of the Loren Miller Bar Association, where he mentored the next generation of Black attorneys. Mr. Whitehead also played a key role in opening the Loren Miller Bar Association Neighborhood Legal Clinic to provide free legal advice primarily to low-income Black Americans in the Seattle area. He has

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received numerous accolades for his work, including being recognized by *Washington Law & Politics Magazine* as a Super Lawyer for 2019-2022.

Finally, as a Black man with a disability, Mr. Whitehead will bring much needed diversity to the federal judiciary. An estimated [one in four adults](#) in the United States — 61 million people — has a disability. Despite the prevalence of disabilities throughout American society, only a [handful of judges](#) currently sitting on the federal bench identify as persons with disabilities, and Mr. Whitehead is the first of President Biden's nominees to do so. He understands the importance of a fair playing field and has dedicated his career to ensuring the legal system works for all people. We are encouraged that, upon Mr. Whitehead's confirmation, the federal judiciary will better reflect the diversity of our nation and the perspectives of the disability community.

Given his personal and professional background, extensive trial experience, and proven track record seeking justice for working people, the Senate should expeditiously confirm Jamal N. Whitehead to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington.

Sincerely,

Rakim H.D. Brooks

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice