



March 21, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the 100,000 members and supporters of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, a Catholic organization founded by Catholic Sisters 50 years ago and committed to the values of social, economic and racial transformation for all, I write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court. We are confident Judge Jackson's confirmation to the Court will bring our country a significant step closer to achieving a more representative, inclusive, and just democracy.

Under the Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Supreme Court to safeguard and uphold the God-given dignity of every person, no matter their race, origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status, in every situation, whether at the ballot box, at work, in their home or in the community. We believe Judge Jackson embraces that responsibility and we celebrate the perspective Judge Jackson will bring to the highest court because of her broad experience across the legal profession. This includes her years of service on the Federal District Court of D.C. and the D.C. Circuit Court, her work as a member of the bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission, as well as her formative service as a federal public defender.

Her work representing criminal defendants as well as her participation on the bipartisan Sentencing Commission is particularly meaningful from the Catholic tradition. The Gospels echo a sacred call proclaimed by the prophet Micah to act with both justice and mercy (Micah 6:8-9). During World Youth Day 2016, Pope Francis used the three parables in Luke Chapter 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son—as a model of Christian mercy, saying: "Our Lord's mercy can be seen especially when he bends down to human misery and shows his compassion for those in need of understanding, healing and forgiveness." Judge Jackson's work to eliminate racial disparities in sentencing and other sentencing reforms as well as her call for robust public defense systems to ensure just, fair, and reliable outcomes demonstrate her profound regard for the humanity of defendants. This is Christian mercy in the public square.

Judge Jackson's professional experience will add a new dimension on the Supreme Court. There is currently no Justice on the Court who has served as a public defender, a civil rights lawyer, or has done significant criminal defense work. The last Supreme Court justice with real experience representing criminal defendants was the late Justice Thurgood Marshall who retired from the Court decades ago.

Given the Supreme Court regularly decides critical civil rights and civil liberties cases, Judge Jackson's confirmation would lend an important perspective to the Court's deliberations.

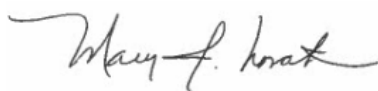
Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson has proven herself to be one of our nation's brightest legal minds who serves with integrity, professional competence and sound judicial temperament. Her fitness is evidenced by the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary, which unanimously determined Judge Jackson is "Well Qualified" to serve on the United States Supreme Court.

NETWORK vigorously rejects the comments of those who have questioned Judge Jackson's qualifications as racist and sexist. No such comments were heard when Presidents Reagan and Trump announced their intentions to appoint a woman to the Supreme Court and followed through on that promise. The only conclusion that can be drawn about these comments is that the objection is about race. Judge Jackson's historic appointment will contribute to making the Supreme Court more representative of the people of the United States—all of the people. Of the 115 justices on the Supreme Court since its creation in 1789, 108 have been white men, including 5 of the 9 currently serving, and none have been Black women. Increasing the Supreme Court's racial diversity and expanding the professional backgrounds of the justices will improve decision-making on the bench and increase public trust in our courts.

In this moment, the signs of the times cry out for us to build the beloved community here on Earth. The Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, is the final arbiter on the most consequential legal issues governing our country and our society. For that reason, it is imperative that a Justice on the Court demonstrate a firm commitment to the rule of law and to preserving the basic tenants of our democracy. Judge Jackson's more than 600 rulings reflect her dedication to being a fair-minded, even-handed jurist committed to equal justice for all. She has garnered respect and recognition across partisan and ideological lines, and received broad support from the Senate for several high-level appointments.

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is undeniably qualified to serve on the highest court in the land. In light of her qualifications, unimpeachable record, and diversity of experience, we ask that you work to ensure a respectful, thorough, and swift confirmation process for Judge Jackson. If you have any questions, please contact Minister Christian Watkins, NETWORK's Justice Systems Reform Government Relations Advocate, at cwatkins@networklobby.org.

Sincerely,



Mary J. Novak, Executive Director
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee