



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

October 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 151 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to support the confirmation of Matthew L. Garcia to the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico.

Mr. Garcia's extensive plaintiff-side litigation career and his work in government service demonstrate his deep commitment to equal justice and rule of law. His extensive ties to the New Mexico legal community and litigation experience at both the state and federal level make him an ideal choice to serve on the District Court of New Mexico. Born and raised in Albuquerque, Mr. Garcia went on to earn both his bachelors and his law degree from the University of New Mexico. He also holds a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and was a Fulbright Fellow at the Helsinki School of Economics.

Mr. Garcia has spent most of his professional career as a plaintiff's attorney. He began his career working on large multistate antitrust actions at Freedman, Boyd, Daniels, Hollander, Goldberg & Ives in Albuquerque. Next Garcia opened his own litigation firm where, for the next decade, he would represent New Mexicans on claims for civil rights violations, tort matters, unlawful discrimination, and wage theft.

Mr. Garcia was the lead attorney on nearly all his cases, handling depositions, oral argument, evidentiary hearings, mediations, and trials. He frequently represents vulnerable plaintiffs, often overlooked by society and the legal system. For example, in *Tolbert v. Correctional Healthcare Management*, Mr. Garcia brought wrongful death claims on behalf of a minor child whose mother had died of a drug overdose while incarcerated. In another case, he represented an inmate in *Gutierrez v. Corizon Health, Inc* who was denied proper medical treatment for her breast cancer while incarcerated. Mr. Garcia has also represented classes of individuals, such as in *Nelson v. City of Las Vegas*, where he represented a class of police officers who were systematically underpaid for overtime work and training activities.

Mr. Garcia brought his legal expertise to the New Mexico Governor's office where, first as General Counsel and later as Chief of Staff in Governor Michele Lujan Grisham's administration, he served as the executive's primary advisor on legal matters encompassing a broad spectrum of policy issues. For example, he oversaw drafting of the various executive orders and public health directives enacted in response to the Covid-19

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pandemic. He successfully represented the administration in *Grisham v. Romero*, when a group of restaurants challenged one of the temporary bans on in-person dining during a surge of Covid-19 infections and the New Mexico Supreme Court permitted the public health regulations.

In addition to his work as a litigator and in government, Mr. Garcia is committed to a just legal system in New Mexico. In fact, Mr. Garcia was appointed to the U.S. District Magistrate Judge Selection Panel, where he assisted in vetting candidates for open federal magistrate positions. Mr. Garcia has also volunteered as a member of the New Mexico Disciplinary Board Hearing Committee where he assisted in recommending appropriate disciplinary action against attorneys charged with ethics violations. This work underscores his recognition of the importance of maintaining an ethical and trustworthy legal system

Mr. Garcia has also demonstrated a dedication to giving back to the community. As a member of the Second District Volunteer Attorney Pool and the District of New Mexico Federal Court Pro Bono Panel, he has represented numerous clients on a pro-bono basis and participates in other organizations assisting the local legal community. Mr. Garcia has earned various accolades in recognition of his accomplishments, including being named one of the Top 25 Lawyers in New Mexico by Super Lawyers (2017, 2018) and one of the Best Lawyers by U.S. News & World Report (2014-2019), to name a few.

While President Biden has prioritized professional diversity, plaintiff's attorneys are still underrepresented on the federal bench. Mr. Garcia's confirmation would bring our courts one step closer to reflecting the full breadth of the legal profession.

Given his exemplary qualifications, extensive federal and state court experience, and proven track record seeking justice for some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society, the Senate should expeditiously confirm Matthew Garcia to the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Rakim A.D. Brooks

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice