

August 30, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Kelley Brisbon Hodge to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are professors from academic institutions around the country, writing to express support for the confirmation of Kelley B. Hodge as a judge on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. We thank President Joe Biden for putting forth Ms. Hodge's nomination and the Committee and full Senate for engaging in a prompt review. Although not all of us know Ms. Hodge personally, the breadth of her career and stellar leadership efforts will give her the ability to face the public with integrity as a trial judge on the federal bench.

As academics, we are committed to promoting professionalism, integrity, diversity, and inclusion through our respective programs. We recognize the need for those serving in the judiciary to represent the highest levels of integrity, commitment to service, and impartiality to ensure public confidence in the legal process. Ms. Hodge exemplifies those values and is an excellent candidate for this appointment.

Ms. Hodge has served the people of the Eastern District in important capacities throughout her career, demonstrating an unparalleled commitment to fairness. She has shown an ability to navigate complex and emotionally fraught issues within the community both as the Governor's appointed Safe Schools Advocate for Philadelphia through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and as the first Black woman to serve as Philadelphia's District Attorney.

The people within the Eastern District of Pennsylvania will benefit immensely from the diversity of experience, perspective, and background Ms. Hodge will bring as a trial judge. She began her career as a public defender serving the most vulnerable, representing indigent criminal defendants. After six years learning the practice of criminal law and handling disputes between her office and the courts, Ms. Hodge moved to Philadelphia where she took on the role of prosecutor. There she was recognized for her leadership and promoted to Chief of the Municipal Court section where she supervised new lawyers and represented the office with the judiciary. Following her service as a prosecutor, Ms. Hodge focused on issues related to juvenile justice and educational access through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and then serving as the Safe Schools Advocate with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Recognizing her outstanding leadership skills and ability to manage complex systems, the University of Virginia appointed Ms. Hodge as the institution's first Title

IX Coordinator tasked with developing university-wide gender and sex-based harassment policies in the wake of a devastating scandal.

Following the forced resignation of the elected District Attorney of Philadelphia, the judges of the Court of Common Pleas selected Ms. Hodge to steer the office for the remainder of the term, making her the first Black woman to serve in the position which dates back to 1850. In that capacity, Ms. Hodge was charged with re-establishing the office's legitimacy and commitment to integrity. She instituted new protocols within the office to address accountability and stability. As the City's chief law enforcement officer, Ms. Hodge worked closely with the Mayor, City Council, the Philadelphia Police Department, and community groups on local issues and coordinated ongoing state investigations with the Attorney General of Pennsylvania. Part of her duties also included analyzing pending civil actions related to past arrests and convictions which had been reversed due to professional negligence and even malfeasance.

Finally, Ms. Hodge chose to employ her various experiences to help educate and train the next generation of lawyers. At the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, Ms. Hodge taught professional responsibility advising students seeking to become prosecutors and criminal defense lawyers. Her experience as both criminal defense lawyer and prosecutor gave her the unique ability to advise students interested in careers on both sides of the aisle. Moreover, she was invited to teach at the University of Virginia School of Law on issues related to her experiences working in the complex area of the intersection between higher education and law including Title IX litigation, free speech/first amendment concerns, and diversity and admissions.

These diverse experiences and dedication to serving the public give Ms. Hodge the ability to serve as a judge overseeing matters reflecting personal concerns as well as complex institutional questions. She has shown the temperament, intelligence, and flexibility to fulfill the duties of a federal trial judge.

As academics responsible for educating our nation's next generation of leaders, we will have in Ms. Hodge a jurist to hold up as an example for students to observe and emulate as they begin to form their professional goals. We urge the Committee and the full Senate to swiftly confirm Ms. Hodge to the bench.

Sincerely,*

Valena Beety

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* All signatories have signed in their personal capacities, and institutional affiliations are noted for identification purposes only.

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