



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

November 14, 2022

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing 151 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to strongly support the confirmation of Judge DeAndrea Benjamin to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

A lifelong resident of Columbia, South Carolina, and graduate of Winthrop University and the University of South Carolina School of Law, Judge Benjamin has deep ties to South Carolina and to the Fourth Circuit. She credits her father, another successful and well-established Columbia attorney, as the biggest influence on her legal career.

Justice Benjamin has experience in both public service and private practice, making her a well-rounded candidate for the federal bench. Before joining the bench, she served as an Assistant Solicitor in the Juvenile and Family Court Division of South Carolina's Fifth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office and in the Office of the Attorney General of South Carolina as an Assistant Attorney General. Later, as a partner at Gist Law Firm, she represented clients who faced racial and gender discrimination in the workplace, advocating at both the federal and state level. Despite shifting her career from public service to private practice, Judge Benjamin continued to serve South Carolina as a member of the South Carolina Board of Juvenile Parole, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to the public interest.

In addition to her experience practicing, Judge Benjamin's vast judicial experience makes her an ideal choice for the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. She began her judicial career in the City of Columbia's Municipal Court, where she heard thousands of misdemeanor cases. During that time, she also served in the city's Specialized Criminal Domestic Violence court and Quality of Life court. In 2011, Judge Benjamin was elected to South Carolina's Fifth Judicial Circuit by the Republican-led South Carolina General Assembly, garnering bipartisan support.

Not only is Judge Benjamin highly respected in the courtroom, but she has also made an impact in her community. She was the Richland County School District 2's Black History Honoree Awardee in 2019 and she

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was included in Columbia Business Journal's "20 Under 40" list in 2007. She is a member of both the South Carolina Black Lawyers Association and of the South Carolina Women Lawyers Association. Committed to diversity and justice in the legal profession, Judge Benjamin has also served on the University of South Carolina's Diversity Task Force and as a board member for Appleseed Legal Justice Center.

Judge Benjamin is a fair-minded judge who understands the importance of the rule of law in the pursuit of justice. Her experiences in public service, as a private litigator, and as a judge, in addition to her deep connections to the Fourth Circuit, make her aptly prepared to serve in this role. For these reasons, I urge you to expeditiously confirm Judge DeAndrea Benjamin to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit Court.

Sincerely,

Rakim H.D. Brooks

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice