



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

January 20, 2023

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing over 150 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to support the confirmation of Orelia Merchant to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Ms. Merchant has spent her entire professional career in public service, demonstrating a commitment to solving problems with fairness and efficiency. She began her career as an Assistant Regional Counsel for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) in Chicago, Illinois, where she worked on behalf of the agency to enforce environmental protections and uphold the rule of law. For example, she represented the EPA in [holding](#) an oil refining company accountable for failing to properly dispose of hazardous waste. When Ms. Merchant served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Civil Division of the Eastern District of New York, she worked diligently to serve her community and demonstrated a commitment to swift justice when feasible. For example, in 2014, Ms. Merchant was instrumental in [achieving](#) favorable results for homeowners affected by Hurricane Sandy who had improperly been denied insurance coverage for damages suffered as a result of the storm. From 2016 to 2019, Ms. Merchant served as an Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Civil Division, serving New Yorkers in the Eastern District. Finally, since 2019, Ms. Merchant has served as Chief Deputy Attorney General for State Counsel, a member of the New York State Attorney General’s executive leadership team, oversees more than 8,000 active cases, and manages 450 employees, including 250 attorneys, in prosecution and defense of cases in state and federal court on behalf of the state.

Her impressive career trajectory is not the only indicator of the expertise, respect, and trust she has gained through the years. Ms. Merchant has been formally honored for her exemplary service throughout her career. In 2016, she received the U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office for United States Attorneys Director’s Award for Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney. Additionally, she received commendations for Outstanding Work on Employment Law Matters from the U.S. Probation Department of the Eastern District of New York in 2002, 2019, 2011, and 2015. In 2013, she received the U.S. attorney’s Office of the Eastern District of New York’s Community Service Award.

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Ms. Merchant's public service record, decades of complex civil and criminal litigation experience, and her deep ties to the Eastern District of New York make her highly qualified for a federal judgeship. For these reasons, I urge you to confirm Ms. Merchant to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Sincerely,

Rakim H.D. Brooks

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice