



Commonwealth of Puerto Rico  
SUPREME COURT

ÁNGEL COLÓN  
Associate Justice

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Support for the Confirmation of Hon. Gina R. Méndez-Miró  
as United States District Court Judge for the District of Puerto Rico**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I write to recommend the confirmation of Judge Gina R. Méndez-Miró to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. Throughout her professional career —most recently as a judge in the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals— she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to equal justice under the law.

As a public servant myself, an attorney, a former Judge at the Court of First Instance, and now an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, I take pride in the people I recommend to serve in the judiciary. Perhaps because of my humble upbringing and the fact that I received a public-school education, I am convinced that the courts need to be staffed with judges who adhere to the rule of law but who are equally committed to their constitutional obligations to promote justice and fairness. In the case of federal judges, because they serve for life, their impact on the issues that affect us all is profoundly significant. As such, it is important for me to support the nomination of judges who not only reflect on society's diverse experiences, but that also understand the real-world

implications of their decisions. Judge Méndez-Miró meets and surpasses these criteria.

Judge Méndez-Miró has served impeccably in all three branches of government, and I personally know of her commitment to public service and the administration of justice. I first met Judge Méndez-Miró when she was recruited as head of the Directorate of Judicial Programs by former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, Federico Hernández Denton. At the time, I served as Chief of Staff to the Chief Justice. She developed and significantly expanded access to justice projects such as Drug Courts, Specialized Domestic Violence Courts, and Self-Represented Litigant (Pro Se) Centers, among others, with the passion and commitment to equality that she still applies today in her adjudicative process.

Judge Méndez-Miró and I have always shared a deep commitment to access to justice. We worked closely during my tenure with then Chief Justice, and her performance led me to recommend her to serve in the top legal position at the Office of Courts Administration. As General Counsel and Director of the Legal Affairs Office, she demonstrated to be a remarkable attorney, with a solid legal mind and top litigation skills that was incredibly hard working and possessed amazing people skills.

After working in the Judicial Branch, our paths crossed again when I later went to work with then newly elected Governor Alejandro García Padilla as General Counsel and Legislative Advisor and she went to serve as Chief of Staff at the Senate. Together we worked countless hours to pass medullar pieces of legislation on important policies for the administration related to budget, education, and energy, among others. I recall, for example, that she spearheaded a significant criminal justice reform. Among the many changes of this reform, it included providing penalties according to the severity of the crime and adopting the classification of degrees of felonies from the Model Penal Code, which is an instrument drafted by some of the most significant criminal law jurists in the common law. The Governor eventually signed the bill into law. Our joint efforts continued and led to the adoption of many other legislative efforts.

Thereafter, based on her remarkable qualifications and varied professional experience as a litigator in a major law firm and as well as an attorney for the Puerto Rico Department of Justice and the Puerto Rico Judicial Branch, she was appointed in 2016 to the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals. Coupled with her undisputed credentials and based on my own experience when I was a nominee for the judiciary, I believe that Judge Méndez-Miró's even-handed treatment of senators and their staff on both sides of the aisle had a lot to do with her unanimous confirmation by the Senate.

While sitting in the appellate court she has penned over seven hundred decisions where she has had the opportunity to showcase her command of the law in a

wide range of criminal and civil matters. A review of the decisions she has written—ranging from complex constitutional controversies, application of civil and criminal procedural rules, and the rights of inmates, among others—reflect that she is committed to fairness and an equal access to justice. In criminal cases, Judge Méndez-Miró demonstrates considerable knowledge of Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendment doctrines. Also, she treats the government and defendants with equal respect, and when faced with pro se litigants, she is always careful to ensure that their case is heard and solved on the merits. In civil cases, she has showcased her expertise regarding the procedural maze one confronts when reviewing the trial court on appeal.

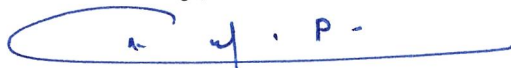
Furthermore, the body of her decisions demonstrates a judicial philosophy of a pragmatic, yet rigorous, adjudicator who thoroughly addresses the relevant facts, the legal arguments presented, the applicable statutes, regulations, and case law and provides a rigorous analysis that leaves the parties confident that their arguments have been duly considered. In addition, her ability to address legal issues and deliver a judgment in a clear and accessible language denotes that she is deeply aware of the impact the court's decisions have on people.

In my experience, people's core character does not change, and Judge Méndez-Miró has always been a person of the highest integrity and humanity. Simply put, a remarkable woman with a strong set of values: family, country, work, and law.

Lastly, I must reiterate that the inclusion of judges from diverse backgrounds and walks of life in the federal judiciary strengthens the legitimacy of the courts. Judge Méndez-Miró would add much needed diversity to the Puerto Rico District Court. This District deserves a court that is representative of its community, and Judge Méndez-Miró's life experiences and steadfast commitment to equal justice make her the ideal nominee.

In sum, Judge Méndez-Miró's service as a sitting judge and as a practicing attorney speaks for itself. Her professional record and current experience adjudicating claims involving complex issues of law reflect that she meets the very highest standards of integrity, professional competence, and judicial temperament. I can say without reservation that she is an exceptionally well qualified candidate to become a judge at the United States District Court.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Colón P.', with a large, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the signature.

Ángel Colón Pérez