



APALIE

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LAWYERS OF THE INLAND EMPIRE

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January 31, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Judge Kenly Kiya Kato for the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Committee Members:

The Asian Pacific American Lawyers of the Inland Empire (APALIE) submits this letter to express its enthusiastic and wholehearted support for Judge Kenly Kiya Kato's confirmation as a District Judge of the United States District Court for the Central District of California. A dedicated public servant and an exemplary judicial officer in the Central District, Judge Kato's wealth of experience as a Magistrate Judge since 2014 and in indigent criminal defense, her unimpeachable reputation throughout the district and beyond, and her longstanding commitment to public service make her an excellent nominee for the Central District bench. If confirmed, she would become the first Japanese American woman and the third Asian American woman to serve as a District Judge in the Central District. She would also be the first Asian American District Judge serving in the Eastern Division that serves 5 million Californians in the region also known as the "Inland Empire." APALIE respectfully urges you to confirm Judge Kato to the Central District of California without delay.

We know well Judge Kato's remarkable record as a Magistrate Judge, a Deputy Federal Public Defender, and a criminal defense attorney. At each turn in her career, she has shown herself to be extraordinarily thorough, patient, fair-minded, and compassionate. She is known for her impeccable preparation on all matters, clear and well-reasoned content of her decisions, and, above all, kindness and graciousness toward all who interact with her and appear before her. Her stellar

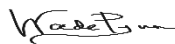
record, qualifications, and character make her truly worthy of a lifetime appointment to the federal bench.

As the sole organization that represents the Asian Pacific American legal community in the Eastern Division of the Central District, APALIE has a particularly strong interest in Judge Kato's confirmation. Already in 2016, APALIE recognized Judge Kato's trailblazing and distinguished service to the public by awarding her its annual Stephen K. Tamura Award. We can confirm that Judge Kato continues to enjoy resounding support in our community, as well as high praise and admiration for her judicial record throughout the Central District. We can also confirm that attorneys and judicial colleagues, including those who are members of APALIE, have deep respect for her, and hold her in great esteem as an indispensable member and role model in the Inland Empire communities. We also know that court staff appreciate the considerate and thoughtful regard that Judge Kato demonstrates in her daily interactions with others. To her law clerks and externs, Judge Kato is a beloved mentor and teacher who cares deeply and forges strong bonds with them. The composition of her clerks over the past eight years also demonstrates her deep-seated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Finally, Judge Kato's background and personal history show why she should be confirmed to the Central District bench. Judge Kato was born to parents who, along with their own parents, were imprisoned during World War II alongside 130,000 other persons of Japanese ancestry. She excelled in academics, earning degrees from two of the nation's most prestigious universities at UCLA and Harvard Law School, while also demonstrating a commitment to serving the public, even at the earliest stages of her legal career, through her work as a law clerk to Judge Robert Takasugi in the Central District, who was the first Japanese American federal judge. She then served as a Deputy Federal Public Defender in the Central District, representing indigent criminal defendants and working to ensure their due process and equal protection rights. As a criminal defense practitioner thereafter, she continued to represent, as a member of the Criminal Justice Act panel, indigent defendants. As a Magistrate Judge, Judge Kato has continued to dedicate herself to advancing constitutional protections and equal access to justice for all. APALIE has full confidence that, as a District Judge, Judge Kato will continue to be a strong defender of the Constitution and a fair and impartial jurist who inspires faith and trust in our system of justice.

For all the reasons above, APALIE respectfully urges you and your fellow Senators to confirm Judge Kenly Kiya Kato expeditiously as a District Judge of the Central District of California.

Sincerely,



Wade Pyun
President
Asian Pacific American Lawyers of the Inland Empire