

824 Skyline Drive
Sunnyside, WA 98944
May 9, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter of Support for the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. to Serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Dear Senators Durbin and Grassley:

It is with great enthusiasm and pride that I support the nomination of Salvador Mendoza Jr. for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. I write in my capacity as a committee member from the Washington State TRIO Association (WSTA), where I have worked with the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. on various community events.

WSTA is a group of TRIO professionals who provide a venue to support the success of low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students to obtain a quality education. WSTA helps these underrepresented populations by promoting program development, disseminating best practices/high impact educational practices and collecting data on the students' specific educational needs to assist our first-generation, low-income populations better. WSTA provides support services and opportunities not normally accessible to these students to help them reach their full potential and develop into professional individuals. In order to best serve low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students and improve the changing needs of these populations, WSTA sponsors professional conferences, meetings, training, mentoring and other educational forums for its members throughout the calendar year. WSTA understands the contribution that low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students provide to our nation and believes in supporting these individuals as they pursue their higher education degree.

During my three years in WSTA, I have had the opportunity to work with the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. in various community events. During these community events, the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. would connect with students from the Yakima Valley about his educational journey and provided insight and mentorship to high school age students. The Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. would make time to connect with each student and made sure to address all and any questions students had about his education and career journey. For many of our TRIO students this was the first time they had the opportunity to connect with a judge that came from a similar background as themselves. Students often left the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. session feeling motivated and inspired to pursue their educational dreams too. In addition, I have also seen the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. host community events with local high schools to bridge students with various parts of the legal field. These types of community events are not part of his job description but he does them to connect with youth and help them move

academically not only to high school graduation but beyond. These interactions play a huge part in motivating students to take the next step in their college journey, as they can see and hear themselves in the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. story and feel inspired to pursue and achieve great things. The Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. has always made time to make students feel seen, heard and supported.

I strongly urge the Committee on the Judiciary to approve the nomination of the Honorable Salvador Mendoza Jr. to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Sincerely,

Catalina A. Villanueva

Catalina Villanueva
TRIO Upward Bound Director
WSTA Secretary