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April 22, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin (D-IL)
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
Ranking Member, Senate Committee
on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

Please consider this letter in enthusiastic support of Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, a nominee for the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi is an alumnus of the Chicago Urban League's IMPACT program, having been a fellow in the Class of 2017. The program's mission is to build the next generation of Black leaders in Chicagoland. Executed in partnership with the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, it is a selective program that enhances the self-awareness, executive leadership skills and confidence of highly accomplished emerging professionals.

Through her participation in our program, we found Candace to be an individual of impeccable character, even temperament and high integrity. She is brilliant, fair-minded, thoughtful and careful in reaching decisions. Candace's passion for and commitment to justice inspired her cohort and makes her an ideal nominee for the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

As a federal public defender and a long-term resident of Chicago's South Side, Candace is also mindful and deliberative in applying her skills as a lawyer to facilitate fair decisions, engage in open dialogue, and positively impact those in underserved communities. Additionally, she displays great analytical and communication skills, an effortless rapport with her peers, and a profound respect and enthusiasm for human dignity and community development.

Candace has impressive credentials and extensive professional experience. As you may know, Candace received her A.B., with honors, from Princeton University and her J.D. from Yale Law School. She is a partner at Zuckerman Spaeder, LLP in Washington, D.C., where she focuses on complex civil litigation, white collar criminal defense, and investigations. Previously, Candace worked as a staff attorney at the Federal Defender Program in the Northern District of Illinois where she represented more than 400 indigent clients accused of federal crimes.

Candace began her legal career as a law clerk to Judge David H. Coar on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and then for Judge Roger Gregory on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Candace also has prior experience as a litigation associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP in Chicago, Illinois.

Candace is a remarkable woman balancing the demands of professional legal practice, motherhood, and community service/engagement. In short, we think Candace Jackson-Akiwumi is an incomparable candidate for appointment to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. We all urge the members of the United States Senate Judiciary Committee and the United States Senate to confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Freeman-Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "F".

Karen Freeman-Wilson
President & CEO
Chicago Urban League