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March 4, 2024

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

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

Re: Letter of Support for the Honorable Dena Coggins, Nominee for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

On behalf of the Association of African American California Judicial Officers, Inc. (“AAACJO”) we write to express our organization’s unequivocal support of the nomination of Judge Dena Coggins to serve as a judge on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. AAACJO is a statewide organization of approximately 200 judicial officers committed to recommending the appointment and confirmation of outstanding candidates for state and federal judicial offices. As an active member of this organization, Judge Coggins is eminently qualified for this role, and we are confident she will serve with honor and distinction.

A review of her professional and personal background reveals a brilliant attorney, a hardworking and ethical jurist, and someone who is both compassionate and fair, while emanating a humility that ensures that all litigants are treated with professionalism, dignity, and respect. She has excelled both in the private and public sector and has aptly demonstrated her sound judgment and analytical skills in both arenas.

As a bench officer in Sacramento, she has often been described as “dedicated” and “unflappable” and someone who makes decisions in a “sound” and “well-reasoned” manner. Despite only being on the bench for a few years, the Presiding Judge selected her to be the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division in March 2021. In that role, she supervises seven of her colleagues and has demonstrated strong management and collaboration skills with justice partners, and community-based organizations.

Her leadership extends to her involvement in statewide judicial associations like the Association of African American Judicial Officers of California and the Center for Judiciary Education and Research where, despite her relatively short tenure on the bench, she serves as a faculty member teaching new judicial officer about the nuances of juvenile law. Judge Coggins' generosity in sharing her knowledge and time with other judicial officers allows her to mentor judicial officers and further improve the caliber of the judiciary statewide.

Judicial independence is the key to our democracy and judges who reflect our communities are integral to public confidence in the justice system. Judges who are impartial, who faithfully apply the law to the facts in every case, can only promote that confidence. Throughout her legal career, Judge Coggins has shown her immense respect for the judicial system and demonstrated her commitment to instilling public trust and fostering confidence in our judiciary. She is an exemplary jurist, and her distinguished career illustrates her tremendous work ethic, her history of serving with compassion and integrity, and her abiding commitment to working tirelessly to serve the public and ensure access to justice for all.

For all these reasons, AAACJO is honored to support the nomination of Judge Dena Coggins. We urge her swift confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Monica F. Wiley
President, AAACJO

Hon. Huey Cotton
Immediate Past President, AAACJO

Hon. Michal Carter
Vice-President, AACJO

Hon. Myrllys Stockdale Coleman
Secretary, AAACJO

Hon. Kimberly Parker
Member At Large, AAACJO

Hon. John Weller
Member At Large, AAACJO

Hon. Terrie Roberts
Member At Large, AAACJO

Hon. Karen Robinson
Treasurer, AAACJO

Hon. Tilisha Martin
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