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May 17, 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 Michelle Williams Court, Nominee for the United States District Court for the Central 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 unreserved support of the nomination of Judge Michelle Williams Court to serve as a judge on the United States District Court for the Central 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 Court is exceptionally well-qualified for this role, and we are confident she will serve with honor and distinction.

Judge Court's journey from her Great Falls, Montana roots to Supervising Judge of the Civil Division of the Los Angeles Superior Court demonstrates her exceptional commitment to public service, her community, and to improving access to justice. In her judicial career, she has more than 80 legal and civic speaking engagements and has published a dozen articles about technology and its application within the legal system. The common thread for each of these public offerings is Judge Court's singular commitment to helping others understand the law and how technology can best serve the ends of justice. Indeed, the title to a 2011 panel discussion on which Judge Court spoke sums up her recurring message: "You Can Do It Conference." She serves as the President of the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Law Library to further emphasize her commitment to helping others understand the law. She also serves as Chair of the Los Angeles Superior Court's Technology Committee, which enhances court user access to justice. Her core commitment to learning, fairness and justice is emblematic of who she is as a person.

As a bench officer in Los Angeles, she has been described by her colleagues as someone who runs toward the problem to help find solutions – a problem solver. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Judge Court helped devise ways to keep the courtroom doors open and accessible to the most vulnerable members of the Los Angeles community. Her exemplary service earned her appointment as Supervising Judge of the Civil Division of the court (supervising more than 150 judges), and recognition from the California Women Lawyers as the 2023 Joan Dempsey Klein Distinguished Jurist Award recipient. As a jurist, Judge Court has tried more than 200 trials, including some of the most complicated civil trials in recent history in Los Angeles. Her legal acumen has been recognized most prominently by her admission to membership in the American Law Institute (ALI), which was established in 1928 as “a permanent organization for the improvement of the law.”

Judge Court’s intellect and achievements have also been recognized with distinguished appointments to statewide judicial branch leadership committees. In 2023, California Chief Justice Patricia Guerero appointed her a voting member of the Judicial Counsel of California, the policy making body of the California Judicial Branch. She also serves on the California Supreme Court’s Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions, is a founding member of the Association of African American California Judicial Officers, serving as Chair of its Technology Committee, and is a member of the ALI consultative group: Principles for a Data Economy. As the Federal Courts pivot into the realm of establishing policies to guide the courts in how best to ethically harness artificial intelligence and other technological advancements, it is appropriate to conclude that Judge Court is the right person at the right time for helping our country address these challenges.

Your confirmation of Judge Court to the federal bench serves another significant purpose. By her presence on the bench, and by the exemplary work she will perform as a jurist who is engaged in next generation thinking, Judge Court will continue to serve as a role model for historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities. We are confident she will continue to be a dedicated public servant, and an inspiration to all who appear before her.

For these reasons, AAACJO is honored to support the nomination of Judge Michelle Williams Court. We urge her swift and unanimous confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Monica F. Wiley
President, AAACJO

Hon. Terrie Roberts
Member At Large, AAACJO

Hon. Huey P. Cotton
Immediate Past President, AAACJO

Hon. Tilisha Martin
Member At Large, AAACJO

Hon. Michal D. Carter
Vice-President, AACJO

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Hon. Myrlys Stockdale Coleman
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Hon. Kimberly Parker
Member At Large, AAACJO