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PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

March 19, 2024
The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing more than 150 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to express our strong support for the elevation of Judge Nancy Maldonado to the Seventh Circuit. Maldonado is a bastion of the Illinois legal community; her nuanced and thoughtful approach to the law is a credit to the federal bench. Not only is Maldonado immensely qualified for this judgeship, she would also make history as the first Latinx judge to serve on the Seventh Circuit.

Maldonado's path to the bench began in 1997, when, after graduating cum laude from Harvard College, she joined the firm Miner, Barnhill & Galland ("Miner") as a paralegal. This initial foray into the law led to Maldonado earning her J.D. from Columbia Law School, where she served as a member of the Columbia Human Rights Law Review and earned the prestigious title of Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. After graduation, Maldonado clerked for Judge Rubén Castillo of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (the court Maldonado would later join). She then returned to Miner, this time as an associate.

At Miner, Maldonado specialized in labor and employment law, helping employees seek justice for workplace mistreatment. She also litigated an array of civil rights, constitutional, and reproductive rights cases. Maldonado's experience as a movement lawyer would bring much-needed professional diversity to the bench – as of 2022, only 6% of active circuit court judges had plaintiff- or union-side labor law experience. Given the large number of employment law cases the circuits resolve every year, having a judge with Maldonado's experience would be a boon to the Seventh Circuit.

In addition to her firm work, Maldonado has served in various state government roles. Governor J.B. Pritzker appointed her to the Illinois State Police Merit Board and Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul appointed her to serve as a Special Assistant Attorney General. Her appointments to these roles testifies to the Illinois legal community's respect and admiration for Maldonado, as a brilliant attorney and committed public servant.

In 2022, President Biden nominated Maldonado to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. She was confirmed with bipartisan support on July 19, 2022 – becoming the first Latina to serve on a federal court in Illinois. Since joining the bench, Maldonado has distinguished herself as a top-tier jurist, committed to enforcing the Constitution and upholding the rule of law.

In conclusion, we are thrilled to see a nominee of Maldonado's caliber nominated to a seat on the Seventh Circuit. She is smart, talented, and fair-minded, not to mention a lauded legal expert. We urge the Senate to work expeditiously to secure her confirmation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rakim H.D. Brooks".

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice