

ELISA CASTROLUGO, ESQ.

March 19, 2024

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

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

RE: Letter in support of Hon. Nancy Maldonado, nominee for United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

I'm a law school classmate and friend of the Honorable Nancy L. Maldonado, U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, and write to you in support of her nomination to serve as a Circuit Court Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in my capacity as a former federal criminal prosecutor.

I served in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for close to 12 years, first as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan for five years (including two special assignments to Main Justice in Washington, D.C.), then as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida for another five years (including a special overseas assignment), and lastly as a U.S. Immigration Judge in Houston, Texas for about a year. During my tenure as a federal criminal prosecutor in both Michigan and Florida, I appeared before many federal judges (magistrates, trial and appellate) with different judicial styles, temperament, demeanor, and legal backgrounds and learned to appreciate those judges with the highest levels of professionalism,

steady demeanor and temperament, fair and unbiased treatment of all parties, and respect for justice and the law, qualities which Judge Maldonado possesses and will continue to apply when elevated to the appellate court.

Judge Maldonado and I met at Columbia Law School over twenty years ago, she a third-year law student whereas I was an incoming first-year. Although we did not share any law school classes, we met through the Latino/a Law Students Association and bonded over our mutual Puerto Rican heritage. Our friendship deepened years after law school when I relocated to Grand Rapids, Michigan for my first DOJ position and visited the Chicago area frequently. We have stayed in touch over the years even as my career took me to Washington, D.C., Miami, South America, and Texas and even as I relocated to Northern Europe several years ago.

Over the course of our twenty-year friendship, I have respected Judge Maldonado's intellect and legal acumen but above all her integrity, good judgment, professionalism, temperament and desire for fairness and have no doubt she will discharge any new duties and responsibilities on the appellate bench in exemplary fashion. I therefore, both as a former federal criminal prosecutor and former immigration judge, wholeheartedly support Judge Maldonado's nomination to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elisa Castrolugo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elisa Castrolugo, Esq.