

May 17, 2024

United States Senate Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Judge Michelle Williams Court to the United States District Court for the Central District of California

Dear Members of the Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write to you regarding the nomination of my long-time colleague, Judge Michelle Williams Court, which I wholeheartedly support. I have known Judge Court for more than twenty (20) years. I worked directly with her during her time as Directing Attorney and then Director of Litigation for Bet Tzedek Legal Services, remaining in close touch during her time as Bet Tzedek's Vice President and General Counsel and during her years on the Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Under her guidance and supervision, I served as Director of the Housing Conditions Project, advocating for the needs of low-income tenants, and as Bet Tzedek's inaugural Director of Pro Bono Programs and co-founder of the Holocaust Survivors Justice Network. With her support and mentorship, I have gone on to assume leadership positions of my own, including my current position as an Executive Director.

In terms of her case management skills and her judicial temperament, I will say this: Judge Court is one of the most consistent and most consistently ethical people I know. She is unflappable, combining intelligence, strength, integrity, warmth, empathy and impartiality to ensure that everyone who walks into her courtroom gets a fair hearing of their claims and due process under the law -- whatever their demographics or position in society. These are the same qualities she brought to her role at Bet Tzedek where time and again she evidenced herself to be a savvy legal strategist with nuanced understanding of the law, conscientious insights into the human condition, and a willingness to hear all sides of a conflict.

She has also sought to improve whatever system she worked within. She is a respected expert in judicial ethics, called upon by the California Judicial Council to train other members of the bench, and led efforts to make LA County Superior Court's technological platform more accessible. At Bet Tzedek, she worked collaboratively with the courts to expand access to justice and to ensure accountability for oversight of limited conservatorships, while expanding Bet Tzedek's capacity to help more family caregivers, low-wage workers, healthcare patients, Holocaust survivors and others in need.

In closing, I note that today is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United State Supreme Court's unanimous decision in *Brown vs Board of Education*. It seems a fitting day to submit this letter in support of a strong, compassionate, effective jurist whose presence on the bench would benefit us all.

Sincerely,



Elissa D. Barrett