

May 23, 2024

BY EMAIL

Chairman Richard Joseph Durbin
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Lindsey Graham
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
211 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Confirmation of Julia M. Lipez to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

We are the two immediate past, and only living former, Chief Justices of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. Chief Justice Wathen began his service as Chief in 1992, when he was appointed by Republican Governor John R. McKernan, Jr. Chief Justice Saufley began her service as Chief in 2001, when she was appointed to the position by Independent Governor Angus King upon Chief Justice Wathen's decision to step down, and concluded her service in 2020. We write now to state our enthusiastic support for the nomination of Justice Julia M. Lipez to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and to urge the Senate to confirm her swiftly.

Justice Lipez has distinguished herself as a civil practitioner, a federal prosecutor and appellate advocate, and most recently as a Justice of the Maine Superior Court. Julia graduated from Stanford Law School, with distinction and bestowed with the honor of order of the coif. She began her legal career as a clerk for Judge Diana Gribbon Motz of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and then as a civil litigator for the international firm WilmerHale. We were pleased when, after several years with WilmerHale, Justice Lipez returned to her native Maine to accept a position as Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Maine.

While serving as an AUSA, Justice Lipez took on some of the office's most challenging cases, including those involving child exploitation, ultimately distinguishing herself as a driving force behind the prosecution of human trafficking crimes in Maine. Justice Lipez was an indefatigable advocate for young women who suffered sexual violence and had been coerced into prostitution. In reflection of her excellent work, United States Attorney Halsey Frank elevated Justice Lipez to Chief of the Appellate Section in the United States Attorney's Office. In that role, Justice Lipez handled some of the office's most important and high-profile appeals, including a

successful government appeal of a District Court decision to suppress evidence in a triple homicide that occurred in Acadia National Park.

Governor Janet Mills nominated Justice Lipez to the Maine Superior Court in 2022, and she was quickly confirmed on a unanimous and bipartisan basis by the Maine Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary and ultimately the entire Maine Senate. As a Justice of the Maine Superior Court, Justice Lipez has presided over countless civil and criminal matters, as well as appeals of municipal and state administrative decisions. In addition to our respective terms as Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, we together have several decades of experience as trial judges in Maine's court system. We know the challenges and difficult decisions trial judges face every day. Justice Lipez has earned a reputation as an intelligent, fair, courteous, and thoughtful judge.

We strongly believe Justice Lipez will make an excellent Court of Appeals judge and urge the Judiciary Committee, and the full Senate, to take up and approve her nomination without delay.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Hon. Leigh I. Saufley
President and Dean, University of Maine School of Law
Former Chief Justice, Maine Supreme Judicial Court



Hon. Daniel E. Wathen
Former Chief Justice, Maine Supreme Judicial Court

cc: Senator Susan M. Collins
Senator Angus S. King, Jr.