



The Superior Court

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
CHAMBERS OF
SAMANTHA P. JESSNER
PRESIDING JUDGE

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November 18, 2024

Sent via email: Anna_Noone@judiciary-dem.senate.gov

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of the Honorable Serena R. Murillo

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

We, the undersigned judges, would like to take this opportunity to enthusiastically support the nomination of Judge Serena R. Murillo to the United States District Court for the Central District of California.

We have had the opportunity to work closely with Judge Murillo since she joined the Court in 2015. In our position, it is our responsibility to intimately know the work of our judges based on our observations and information provided by our judicial colleagues, staff, attorneys, and litigants. We can objectively say that we know our judges' performance, demeanor, and work ethic and recognize what makes a good judge in any court. Based on our unique perspective and insight, we can unequivocally and confidently state that Judge Murillo is exceedingly qualified to be a District Court judge in the Central District of California.

Even a cursory review of Judge Murillo's resume and judicial application reveals that she possesses the credentials and experience to excel as a federal district court judge. What is less obvious is that she has a seemingly inexhaustible dedication to getting her rulings and decisions right, no matter the amount of time or attention to detail required. Judge Murillo is an exemplary jurist. She is hardworking, intelligent, personable, and the epitome of an impartial jurist.

As her resume shows, Judge Murillo is passionate about the law and possesses a formidable legal mind. Given her experience as an attorney and on the bench, it is clear that she has deep expertise in criminal and civil law. In addition to performing what we think of as the traditional work of a Deputy District Attorney, handling pretrial and trial proceedings in misdemeanor, juvenile, and serious-felony matters, she took an interest in appellate work early in her career with the District Attorney's Office. In our experience, few attorneys join the District Attorney's Office to hone their skills in legal research and writing. Judge Murillo is an exception.

Judge Murillo's intellectual curiosity and depth and her interest and dedication to legal research and writing are manifested by the various assignments she has provided over in addition to the time she has spent working in appellate environment. Judge Murillo served with distinction in a pro tem capacity in Division Three of the Second District of the Court of Appeal, and she served in the Los Angeles Superior Court's Appellate Division. When our Appellate Division needed a judge to fill in for a judge who was regularly assigned to the Appellate Division and had been asked to serve as a pro tem on the Court of Appeal, the Supervising Judge of the Appellate Division would only agree to the pro tem assignment if Judge Murillo would serve temporarily in the Appellate Division. This was the ultimate recognition of Judge Murillo's skills as a writer and her breadth of experience, particularly given that the Supervising Judge of our Appellate Division has notably exacting standards. In both Division Three and the Appellate Division, Judge Murillo excelled and brought her trademark work ethic to bear. As a result of her experience, her writing style is impressive and clear. She analyzes complicated subjects and conveys them in an understandable and concise way. Any reader of Judge Murillo's writing can easily understand the issues presented, the applicable law, the analysis of the issues and the law, and the reasons for the decision.

Judge Murillo not only has extensive trial-court experience, but she also has a wide range of experience as a judge, having presided over criminal, civil, and appellate matters. In addition, her experience in the District Attorney's Office included handling juvenile and mental health matters. She will smoothly transition to the United States District Court and embrace the breadth of subject matter that characterizes a United States District Court docket.

Furthermore, Judge Murillo is the consummate colleague. During her tenure at the Los Angeles Superior Court, she has worked on diverse assignments in a number of courthouses. Beyond being warm and friendly, Judge Murillo connects with everyone with whom she interacts, from custodians to staff members to lawyers to other judicial officers, no matter what the other person's background and beliefs are.

Judge Murillo does not simply surround herself with people who think like she does or share the same values. Rather, if she comes across a colleague or person who holds different views or opinions, she undertakes to get to know them and understand their background and experience to better understand them. She is one of the least judgmental people we know.

One of the many benefits of appointing sitting judges to the district court is that they do not have to spend time learning how to be a judge. We firmly believe that mastering unfamiliar subjects is not the difficult part of being a new judge. Rather, the difficult part of being a new judge is learning how to be a judge, including when to make a ruling, how to articulate a ruling to a litigant in an understandable way while making a sufficient record, how to work with court staff, how to maintain a proper judicial demeanor when faced with difficult litigants and heavy caseloads, and how to communicate effectively with jurors. Judge Murillo has been doing all these things every day, all day, for the last nine years. She has an impeccable judicial demeanor, genuinely cares about the needs of others, and is held in high esteem by her colleagues, litigants, the bar, court staff, and court administration, both on our Court and statewide. She is the epitome of what it means to be a judge in terms of both demeanor and intellectual acumen.

Finally, Judge Murillo brings much-needed diversity to the federal judiciary. We know that you are keenly aware of the dearth of women and women of color on the federal bench. Judge Murillo is deeply connected to her heritage. In addition, she is unstinting in her efforts to support women and people of color. She is a role model, mentor, and supporter of students, attorneys, and judges from traditionally underrepresented constituencies. She represents everything that we understand President Biden believes a federal judge should be.

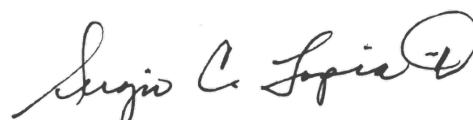
We could continue to lavish praise on Judge Murillo but fear that we would still fail to do justice to her, given how deeply we respect her and how strongly we believe in her ability to excel as a district court judge. We hope we have brought dimension to the portrayal of Judge Murillo found in her judicial application and resume. She is truly an exceptional person and jurist who will bring honor, intelligence, compassion, and excellence to the United States District Court.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at (213) 633-0400. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



SAMANTHA P. JESSNER
Presiding Judge
Los Angeles Superior Court



SERGIO C. TAPIA II
Presiding Judge-elect
Los Angeles Superior Court