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May 5, 2023

Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn,

Greetings from the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights membership organization. As national president of LULAC I have the opportunity, privilege and honor of recommending candidates for positions of great importance and responsibility to our country for positions within the government. In this capacity I am proud to submit our organization's strongest endorsement in support of Ernest Gonzalez for United States District Judge. LULAC truly believes that Mr. Gonzalez is the ideal candidate for a critical judicial vacancy in either Laredo or Del Rio, Texas.

Mr. Gonzalez' is a first generation American, he is the youngest of seven siblings from immigrant parents. He was raised in San Antonio, Texas and quickly learned the values of hard work, being ethical in all things and treating everyone with civility and respect; the type of values which make our nation great. Though raised in a socio-economically challenged neighborhood, he was able to overcome this and many other obstacles and became a true success story.

LULAC is exceptionally proud of Mr. Gonzalez's dedication in the legal field to public service in his capacity as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas. Mr. Gonzalez' body of work has contributed significantly to not only the safety and well-being of our Latino community, but to the safety of all the communities where Mr. Gonzalez has worked throughout Texas. Since 2004, when he began his career as a federal prosecutor Mr. Gonzalez has not relented in the prosecution and bringing to justice many high-level leaders and organizers of domestic and international drug trafficking cartels, and in the process placing himself in danger. However, Mr. Gonzalez has never been deterred by threats to his own safety, unfortunately, of which there have been a number. Further, in addition to bringing cartel leaders to justice he has also prosecuted white collar defendants including one which resulted in the loss of over \$500 million.

As a result of his extraordinary work, Mr. Gonzalez was selected by his office as the lead prosecutor for the Eastern District of Texas Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). Astonishingly, he has successfully tried over 400 jury trials, with an approximate conviction percentage rate of ninety-eight percent. Throughout his career Mr. Gonzalez has extradited individuals from Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala and Panama. Many of the individuals being high-profile defendants indicted and wanted in the United States.

Mr. Gonzalez has also secured convictions in landmark cases, such as *US v. Mercer-Erwin*, in which the defendant was found guilty on May 4, 2023 of money laundering, wire fraud; conspiracy to manufacture and distribute cocaine; and conspiracy to manufacture and distribute cocaine knowing it would be imported into the United States. This case gained national recognition due to the nature of the charges and how she exploited the airplane registration process, to obtain money from the cartel. Mr. Gonzalez's efforts were invaluable in securing a conviction, making our Nation safer.¹

Adding to his credentials is his life experience as a native-born Texan who is bicultural and is fluently bi-lingual in the Spanish language. Further, Mr. Gonzalez has years of relevant federal legal experience as his years of federal experience is steeped within the U.S. – Mexico border region. He served as a Special Assistant United States Attorney in Del Rio, Texas, where he prosecuted significant criminal cases, including firearm and drug trafficking and associated violent crime. Mr. Gonzalez gained necessary foundational legal experience serving as an Assistant District Attorney and Law Clerk within the Bexar (San Antonio) and Harris County (Houston) District Attorney's offices, respectfully.

Senator Cornyn, LULAC is deeply committed to support actions that reduce violence along the U.S. - Mexico border and continue to confront the drug and human trafficking and smuggling in the Texas border region. For this reason, LULAC contends that Mr. Gonzalez has the necessary background, relevant experience, and achievements to make him an ideal federal judge. Your support of Ernest Gonzalez is a crucial step in advancing that battle for the security and safety of our communities.

Sincerely,



Domingo Garcia
LULAC National President

¹ United States Attorney's Office, May 4, 2023. "*Oklahoma City Woman Convicted of Federal Drug Trafficking, Money Laundering, and Financial Crimes in Eastern District of Texas*"
<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edtx/pr/oklahoma-city-woman-convicted-federal-drug-trafficking-money-laundering-and-financial>