

September 19, 2022

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

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Committee Members:

On behalf of undersigned religious, religiously-affiliated, values-based, and faith-centered organizations and communities that are committed to civil and human rights, we write in support of Julie Rikelman's nomination to the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Her story is the classic American story — a family in search of freedom, seeking new opportunity and a better life for the next generation. Her story is familiar to so many across our communities: her story is our story.

Ms. Rikelman's family chose to emigrate to the United States because of this country's commitment to the rule of law and respect for religious freedom. Her parents were Soviet Jews seeking the religious freedom and equal treatment denied to them in Ukraine, where their family had lived for generations, and where they had experienced anti-Semitism throughout their lives. Her mother was refused admission to medical school, destroying her dream of becoming a pediatrician. Her father was blocked from admission to any university in Ukraine and was denied opportunities throughout his career due to his religion. They were unable to practice their religion freely and openly, and they believed in the promise of America and its constitutional guarantee of liberty and justice for all.

After months of travel, at the age of six, Ms. Rikelman arrived in Brookline, Massachusetts as a refugee. Growing up in the United States, Ms. Rikelman was keenly aware of the challenges her parents had faced in coming here — and witnessed her family overcome additional challenges as they navigated a new country while learning English as a second language. These experiences led Ms. Rikelman to seek a career in law, where she could advocate for the same values that inspired her family to start a new life in the United States: the importance of constitutional rights, and the promise of justice under the law for all.

Ms. Rikelman's career has been a mix of private practice and public interest litigation, but her unfailing commitment to the rule of law, regardless of case or client, has remained a constant. She clerked for Judge Morton Greenberg on the Third Circuit, appointed by President Reagan, and Justice Dana Fabe, a life-long public defender who had just become the first woman to be appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court. Both experiences taught her the importance of focusing on the practical implications of judicial rulings and empathy for the parties before the court. She has represented individuals in cases that only impacted them and their families, and she has argued two major reproductive rights cases at the United States Supreme Court that determined the rights of millions of people around the country. Ms. Rikelman has represented large corporations and individuals, and has litigated on issues ranging from corporate contract disputes to employment discrimination to constitutional law. Due to the breadth of her career, Ms. Rikelman has expertise and experience in many areas of law she would encounter on the First Circuit.

If confirmed, Ms. Rikelman would be the first immigrant woman and the first Jewish woman to serve on the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Her intimate understanding of our legal system's impact on people's daily lives, and her extensive experience advocating for fundamental rights would greatly benefit the bench and all who come before the court.

Confirming Julie Rikelman would ensure we have a legal system that better reflects the experiences of all people in America and move us closer to ensuring equal justice and liberty for all. **We urge the Senate to quickly confirm Julie Rikelman to the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.**

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

National Council of Jewish Women
ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
African American Ministers In Action
Ameinu
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Auburn Theological Seminary
Avodah
Catholics for Choice
Faith in Public Life
HEART
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Jewish Democratic Council of America
Keshet
Muslim Advocates
Muslims for Progressive Values
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Justice Resilience Project
SACReD (Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity)
SVARA
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Shalom Center
The Workers Circle
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
Women's Rabbinic Network
Zioness

State and Local Organizations:

Carolina Jews for Justice
Falmouth Jewish Congregation (MA)
Florida Interfaith Coalition for Reproductive Health and Justice
IKAR, Los Angeles (CA)
Jewish Community Action (MN)
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio (TX)
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (IL)
Jewish Democratic Women's Salon, Atlanta (GA)
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (NY)
National Council of Jewish Women Atlanta Section (GA)
National Council of Jewish Women Arizona Section
National Council of Jewish Women Austin Section (TX)
National Council of Jewish Women Chicago North Shore Section (IL)
National Council of Jewish Women Cleveland Section (OH)
National Council of Jewish Women Dallas Section (TX)

National Council of Jewish Women Houston Section (TX)
National Council of Jewish Women Jersey Hills Section (NJ)
National Council of Jewish Women Greater Kansas City Section (KS)
National Council of Jewish Women Kendall Section (FL)
National Council of Jewish Women Greater Long Beach & West Orange County (CA)
National Council of Jewish Women Louisville Section (KY)
National Council of Jewish Women Greater Miami Section (FL)
National Council of Jewish Women Michigan Section
National Council of Jewish Women Milwaukee Section (WI)
National Council of Jewish Women Minnesota Section
National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section (LA)
National Council of Jewish Women New York Section (NY)
National Council of Jewish Women Palm Beach Section (FL)
National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section (PA)
National Council of Jewish Women Greater Rochester Section (NY)
National Council of Jewish Women SE Atlantic Section (FL)
National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis Section (MO)
National Council of Jewish Women Sacramento Section (CA)
National Council of Jewish Women Saddleback Section (CA)
National Council of Jewish Women San Antonio Section (TX)
National Council of Jewish Women San Francisco Section (CA)
National Council of Jewish Women South Cook Section (IL)
National Council of Jewish Women Southern Maine Section (ME)
New York Jewish Agenda
RISE, Minneapolis (MN)
Sha'arei Shalom, Ashland (MA)
SisterReach (TN)
State Street Church, United Church of Christ: Missions, Portland (ME)
Temple Shalom of Newton (MA)
Temple Emeth, Chestnut Hill (MA)
Texas Impact