

May 6, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter of Support for the Honorable Salvador J. Mendoza, Jr. to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We write in our personal capacities as former law clerks to the Honorable Salvador Mendoza, Jr. to offer our enthusiastic support for his nomination to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Having worked closely with Judge Mendoza, we know he has the qualifications to excel as a federal appellate judge and, if confirmed, will bring with him his intellect and keen sense of judicial impartiality and fairness.

The undersigned are a diverse group who live or have lived in rural and urban areas and have varied life experiences and political preferences. Since our time in Judge Mendoza's chambers, we have spread across the country and are now engaged in a broad range of legal practice, including judicial clerks for other judges, government lawyers, public defenders, private practitioners at small and large law firms, and public interest lawyers. Despite our differences, we are united in our belief that Judge Mendoza is a distinguished jurist who would make an excellent addition to the Ninth Circuit. Several of us also clerked for judges on the Ninth Circuit and other appellate courts, and we have no doubt that Judge Mendoza will serve with distinction as an appellate judge.

Judge Mendoza's qualifications and achievements are indisputable. He possesses a keen intellect, strong work ethic, humility, and sound judgment which he deploys in all matters that come before him. As a district court judge, he has distinguished himself as a hard-working jurist who discharges his duties carefully and with great regard for the public he serves. We have witnessed first-hand how he takes great care to ensure fair hearings where all arguments presented are carefully considered. He thoroughly wrestles with the issues each case presents, approaches them with an open mind, and faithfully applies the relevant rules, statutes, and precedent. He is diligent and thoroughly prepares for hearings and all other matters before him. This has been no less true during his frequent sittings by designation on the Ninth Circuit, which he did at least once during most of our terms in chambers.

Equally important, Judge Mendoza has an exceptional judicial temperament—he respectfully and thoughtfully engages with everyone who comes before him and all who make our judicial system function. We have witnessed his interactions with parties and their counsel, court staff, and the public. He treats everyone with respect and ensures that all litigants are given a fair opportunity to be heard and can understand the rationale for his decisions. He also believes in the importance of diligent and expeditious resolution of legal disputes, and he impresses that on his clerks.

Before serving in his current capacity as a federal district court judge for the past eight years, and as a state superior court judge before that, Judge Mendoza was a highly respected practitioner, who not only provided his clients exceptional service, but also made time to serve the broader community. He served in leadership positions with various organizations and was deeply involved in educational and legal access efforts in Central Washington. This sense of public service and responsibility motivated him, in part, to become a judge. And he has imparted these values on his clerks, encouraging us to cultivate them in our own lives.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not touch upon Judge Mendoza on a personal level. He is kind, humble, and deeply devoted to his family. He makes it a point to take an interest in others, celebrate birthdays and other occasions, and participate in the community. It was inspiring to witness first-hand that it is possible, if difficult, to have both a highly successful and impactful legal career balanced with a full personal life. Indeed, Judge Mendoza’s approachability and care for others fostered a collegial atmosphere in the courthouse, and we are confident he will bring that sense of mutual respect and kindness to the Ninth Circuit.

Even after our time in his chambers ended, Judge Mendoza has continued to mentor us in our careers and offer his wisdom in our personal lives. Through career transitions and life events, Judge Mendoza is generous with his time and advice and celebrates our personal and professional successes.

In short, Judge Mendoza is a superb jurist and extraordinary person. He possesses all the qualities—professional and personal—that will make him a distinguished appellate judge. We were fortunate to work with, learn from, and witness him in action during our time in chambers. We support Judge Mendoza’s nomination without hesitation and respectfully recommend that you confirm him to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Sincerely,

Andrew Clark (2014-2015)  
Nicholas Cody (2019-2020)  
Gerloni S. Cotton (2015-2016)  
Yelena W. Dewald (2019-2020)  
Asti Gallina (2017-2018)  
Miguel A. Gradilla (2016-2017)  
Aileen H. Kim (2018-2019)  
Jeremy Lieb (2016-2018)  
Yurij Rudensky (2014-2015)

Christopher Schafbuch (2014-2015)  
Meredith A. Stone (2020-2021)  
Michael L. Vander Giessen (2018-2019)