

July 6, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Support of Judge Gina R. Méndez-Miró's Confirmation to the U.S. District Court

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

It is my honor to write this letter in support of Judge Gina R. Méndez-Miró's confirmation as a Judge to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico (USDC-PR). If confirmed, Judge Méndez-Miró will bring to USDC-PR her impeccable credentials, work and life experiences together with her keen intellect, a measured approach, careful consideration for all parties to a dispute, and a work ethic that is unmatched.

For 13 years (2006– 2019), I served as the United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico. I first started as Assistant District Attorney in the Puerto Rico Department of Justice, and subsequently in the US Attorney's office in San Juan.

As I implemented numerous initiatives to combat drug trafficking and violent crime I spent much of my time in the courtroom, a fair percentage of it in the District Court, handling all sorts of criminal cases from complex multi-defendant cases involving criminal organizations to the occasional civil matter. I believe I have a sound appreciation for what a good District Court judge should be.

I met Judge Méndez-Miró in 2016, while she was serving as Chief of Staff for the Puerto Rico Senate. There, she built upon a reputation as a sharp attorney and a consensus builder, mediating between the House and the Senate during the most complicated dynamics of the legislative process. She was known for her ability to reach across all

sides of the aisle to unite legislators in a bi-partisan fashion so they could seek common ground on any piece of legislation or other related matters.

Based on my experience and knowledge of her strengths and capabilities, I know that she is remarkably qualified to occupy any position she desires. While writing this letter, I recall that years ago I even invited her to consider a position as a prosecutor in the Civil Division of the USAO-PR. Upon the opportunity to work anywhere in the private sector, she has consistently chosen public service. Having made those choice myself and knowing the sacrifice and compromise it entails, I fully understand that she is guided by a true commitment to service and justice. That is why, having such qualities coupled with an impeccable record of public service in all three branches of government and as an attorney in private practice, it came to no surprise when in 2016 she was appointed to the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals.

For almost 6 years, she has served exceptionally on that appellate bench. Her record as a sitting judge, joining thousands of judgments and delivering over seven hundred opinions, demonstrates her capacity as a fair and impartial adjudicator, whose determinations are based on the record and the law, without fear or favor. Her judicial work reflects her strong ability to articulate the law clearly and a remarkable ability to analyze and explain facts and complex legal issues in an accessible and straightforward manner. Moreover, during this time she has considered a multitude of complex legal issues in matter of civil and criminal law that are also often addressed in the federal court, showing that she is highly knowledgeable across an enormous range of law. Particularly, she has navigated the interactions of various procedural rules and shows command of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendment doctrines, among many other. In sum, as a sitting judge she has been exposed to a wide range of criminal and civil cases, and I am confident that her professional experiences will allow her to make a seamless transition from being a state court judge to a federal judge.

Additionally, Judge Méndez-Miró will also bring much-needed diversity to the federal bench. Her confirmation, together with the two other remarkable women that are nominated, will certainly be historic and will bring a unique and necessary perspective to the Court.

In conclusion, based on my experience, I understand how critical it is that district judges possess the impartiality, judgment, integrity, and intellect necessary to serve in that role. Judge Méndez-Miró possesses the qualities and the traits that are crucial to serve on the Court. In sum, I strongly recommend her for the position of United States District Judge.

Sincerely,


Rosa Emilia Rodríguez Velez, Esq.

