

May 10, 2022



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF NANCY MALDONADO
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 230 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Nancy Maldonado to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Ms. Maldonado has dedicated her career to advancing equal justice for all. Currently, she is a partner at Miner, Barnhill & Galland, P.C., specializing in employment discrimination and other civil rights cases. She previously served as an associate and a paralegal at the firm. A graduate of Harvard College and Columbia Law School, Ms. Maldonado clerked for Judge Rubén Castillo of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. She is deeply involved in her community, including serving on the boards of directors of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Apna Ghar (Our House), a non-profit organization that works to end gender violence. Her experience and exceptional career in employment law would be a tremendous asset to the Northern District of Illinois.

Ms. Maldonado's career has been steeped in defending and protecting the rights of working people. She has repeatedly defended the rights of migrant farmworkers. For example, she successfully brought a case seeking proper overtime compensation and paid rest breaks for workers.¹ She also secured an important settlement for seasonal farmworkers by bringing a class action case challenging unfair labor practices in violation of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act.² Additionally, Ms. Maldonado vigorously defended the rights of Cook County residents, challenging a racially discriminatory tax assessment plan that intentionally over-assessed houses in low income neighborhoods, thereby requiring the residents to pay significantly higher property taxes.³ The case was ultimately resolved and resulted in significant reforms to the tax assessments in this community.⁴ Throughout her career, Ms. Maldonado has pursued equal justice and would bring much-needed professional experience to the bench.

In addition to the under-represented professional experience she possesses, Ms. Maldonado would also bring other important diversity to the bench. If confirmed, she would be the first Latina woman to ever serve as an Article III judge in the state of Illinois.⁵ The importance of a judiciary that reflects the community it serves cannot be overstated. More than 2 million adults in Illinois identify as Hispanic or

¹ *Ortega v. Leslie Farms*, No. 03 1417 (San Diego Cty. Sup. Ct. 2008).

² *Hernandez v. Kovacevich "5" Farms*, No. 04 5515 (E.D. Cal. 2005).

³ *Brighton Park Neighborhood Council v. Berrios*, No. 2017 CH 16453 (Cook Cty. Cir. Ct. 2019).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ See [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.



Latino,⁶ yet there have only been five Latino district court judges to ever serve in the state's history.⁷ Public trust in the judiciary is bolstered when our courts reflect the rich diversity of our country.⁸ Different lived experiences, especially from communities that have been excluded from serving on our courts, bring varied perspectives to our federal courts that are crucial to improving judicial decision-making.⁹ The confirmation of Ms. Maldonado would be an important step towards ensuring that our federal courts reflect and represent the diversity of our nation.

Ms. Maldonado is extremely well qualified for this position, and we strongly urge you to confirm her to the Northern District of Illinois. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Lena Zwarenstejn, Senior Director of the Fair Courts Program, at (202) 466-3311. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jesselyn McCurdy
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs

⁶ *Quick Facts: Illinois*, THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (accessed May 2022).

⁷ See *Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present*, FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.

⁸ Maya Sen, *Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time*, WIS. L. REV. 367 (2017).

⁹ Berry, Kate, *Building a Diverse Bench: Selecting Federal Magistrate and Bankruptcy Judges*, BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE AT NYU SCHOOL OF LAW AND AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIAL DIVISION (2017).