



June 3, 2021

Senator Richard Durbin, Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for Lauren J. King for U.S. District Court Judge

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) write in support of Lauren J. King's nomination to serve as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. NCAI and NARF have long called for the appointment of federal court judges who are tribal citizens and those who demonstrate an understanding of tribal sovereignty and Indian law. As a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, Ms. King would become the first Native federal judge in Washington State, and the third active Native American Article III judge in the nation.

Ms. King is a first-rate attorney with impeccable qualifications for a federal judgeship. She is an experienced litigator who has handled complex federal litigation matters ranging from commercial transactions and intellectual property to treaty rights, cultural resources protections, and tribal jurisdiction. In addition, she has served as a pro tem appellate judge for the Northwest Intertribal Court System since 2013, where she has heard appeals on a broad range of subject matter, including commercial disputes, employment matters, and sovereign immunity.

We believe that Ms. King's knowledge and experience is vitally important for the federal judiciary, particularly in a location like the Western District of Washington. Many issues of daily life on Indian reservations are controlled by federal statutes and federal common law. Accordingly, Indian tribes are affected by the federal courts to a greater degree than any other group in the country. This is particularly true in the Western District of Washington, which is home to 26 federally recognized Indian tribes and where individual Native people are often litigants.

NCAI and NARF are proud to support Ms. King's nomination. We hope that the United States Senate will move swiftly to confirm this outstanding nominee. If you have any questions, please contact NCAI CEO Dante Desiderio at ddesiderio@ncai.org or (202) 466-7767, as well as NARF Staff Attorney Dan Lewerenz at lewerenz@narf.org or (202) 785-4166.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "F. Sharp".

Fawn Sharp, President
National Congress of American Indians

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John E. Echohawk".

John E. Echohawk, Executive Director
Native American Rights Fund

CC: Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell