

September 21, 2022

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chair
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

Re: *Letter in Support of Julie Rikelman for the U.S Court of Appeals for the First Circuit*

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the National Women’s Law Center (the “Law Center”), I write to express strong support for the confirmation of Julie Rikelman for the U.S Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. The Law Center fights for gender justice – in the courts, in public policy, and in society – working across the issues that are central to the lives of women and girls. The Law Center uses the law in all its forms to change culture and drive solutions to the gender inequity that shapes society and to break down the barriers that harm women and girls – especially those who face multiple forms of discrimination, including women of color, LGBTQ people, and low-income women and families. For nearly 50 years, the Law Center has been on the leading edge of every major legal and policy victory for women.

Julie Rikelman is a distinguished attorney with a deep understanding of the impact of the laws and the Constitution on the rights of women, girls, and people of color, and is extremely qualified to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Throughout her distinguished career, she has demonstrated a tireless commitment to equal justice for all, bodily autonomy, and safeguarding the Constitutional rights of all people. Ms. Rikelman has extensive experience across the legal field practicing in public interest and the private sector. She currently serves as the United States Litigation Director for the Center for Reproductive Rights, a role she’s held for the past decade. Previously, she worked as an Associate at Feldman & Orlansky, a Senior Associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, and as the Vice President of Litigation at NBC Universal, Inc. Ms. Rikelman also clerked at both the federal and state court levels, respectively, for Judge Morton Greenberg on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and Justice Dana Fabe, the first woman to serve on the Alaska Supreme Court.¹ Ms. Rikelman earned an A.B. from Harvard College, where she graduated *magna cum laude* and

¹ The White House, “President Biden Names Twenty-Fourth Round of Judicial Nominees,” July 29, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/07/29/president-biden-names-twenty-fourth-round-of-judicial-nominees/>.

received her J.D. from Harvard Law School where she graduated *cum laude*.² Her commitment to public service is evidenced throughout her career and she has been honored with the National Law Journal's Pro Bono Award,³ and was named by Crain's New York as one of the Notable Women in Law in 2021.⁴ Ms. Rikelman's breadth of experience and commitment to equal justice for all will make her a tremendous asset to the federal bench.

Importantly, Ms. Rikelman also brings much needed professional and gender diversity to the First Circuit. Ms. Rikelman has spent over a decade of her legal career litigating reproductive rights, civil rights, and human rights cases—experience that is severely underrepresented on the federal bench.⁵ She is a well-regarded public interest appellate litigator with extensive experience appearing in federal courts,⁶ arguing twice before the United States Supreme Court to defend and protect the right to abortion and access to reproductive health care.⁷ In addition to the professional diversity Ms. Rikelman would bring to the federal bench, if confirmed, she would be the first immigrant woman and first Jewish woman to ever serve on the First Circuit.⁸ She would also be just the third woman to ever serve on the First Circuit.⁹ When our courts reflect the rich diversity of our country, judicial decision-making is improved and public trust in our courts is increased.¹⁰

Julie Rikelman is a distinguished litigator and will make an exceptional addition to the federal appellate bench. The Law Center offers its support of the nomination of Ms. Rikelman to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and urges the Senate to quickly approve her nomination. Please feel free to contact me, or Erinn D. Martin, Director of

² *Id.*

³ National Constitutional Center, "Louisiana Abortion Law at SCOTUS," accessed September 7, 2022, <https://constitutioncenter.org/news-debate/podcasts/louisiana-abortion-law-at-scotus>.

⁴ Center for Reproductive Rights, "Center's Julie Rikelman Named a Crain's New York 'Notable Woman in Law,'" December 21, 2022, <https://reproductiverights.org/julie-rikelman-named-crains-new-york-notable-woman-law-2021/>.

⁵ Center for American Progress, "Pipelines to Power: Encouraging Professional Diversity on the Federal Appellate Bench," August 13, 2020, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/pipelines-power-encouraging-professional-diversity-federal-appellate-bench/>.

⁶ *N. Fla. Women's Health & Counseling Servs., Inc. v. State*, 866 So. 2d 612 (Fla. 2003); *Planned Parenthood S. Atl. v. Baker*, 941 F.3d 687 (4th Cir. 2019); *Planned Parenthood S. Atl. v. Kerr*, 27 F.4th 945 (4th Cir. 2022); *Planned Parenthood Arizona, Inc. v. Humble*, 753 F.3d 905 (9th Cir. 2014); *Texas Med. Providers Performing Abortion Servs. v. Lakey*, No. A-11-CA-486-SS, 2012 WL 373132 (W.D. Tex. Feb. 6, 2012); *Planned Parenthood of Ind. & Ky., Inc. v. Comm'r of the Ind. State Dep't of Health*, 896 F.3d 809 (7th Cir. 2018); *Stuart v. Loomis*, 992 F. Supp. 2d 585 (M.D.N.C.); *Stuart v. Camnitz*, 774 F.3d 238 (4th Cir. 2014).

⁷ *June Med. Servs. L.L.C. v. Russo*, 140 S. Ct. 2103, 207 L. Ed. 2d 566 (2020); *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.*, 142 S. Ct. 2228 (2022).

⁸ "Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present," Federal Judicial Center, <https://www.fjc.gov/history/judges/search/advanced-search>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ See Maya Sen, *Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time*, Wis. L. Rev. 367 (2017); 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).

Nominations & Cross-Cutting Policies at erinnmartin@nwlc.org, should you have any questions.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fatima Goss Graves". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fatima Goss Graves
President and CEO