



May 10, 2022

United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Committee Members:

On behalf of our 1.5 million supporters nationwide, People For the American Way enthusiastically supports the nomination of Nancy Maldonado to be a federal district court judge in the Northern District of Illinois. She has a demonstrated record of commitment to the legal rights and dignity of all people.

Maldonado graduated with honors from Harvard in 1997, and she graduated from Columbia Law School in 2001. She started her legal career with a prestigious clerkship at the Northern District of Illinois with Judge Rubén Castillo. Since 2003, she has been in private practice at Miner, Barnhill & Galland, focused largely on representing plaintiffs in employment, civil rights, and fraud cases.

Miner, Barnhill & Galland is well known for its civil rights work. In Maldonado's early years at the firm, she represented classes of farmworkers in wage and hour cases, individual clients in harassment and discrimination matters, and not-for-profit and health care entities in employment and other disputes. She then expanded her practice to litigating whistleblower cases under federal and state false claims statutes, even serving one time as a Special Assistant State's Attorney to Cook County investigating fraud alleged by a whistleblower. Maldonado's successes led to her becoming a firm partner in 2010. Her work now includes consent decree monitoring, consumer protection, and other work for governmental entities.

Maldonado's commitment to civil rights is evident in other facets of her life. For instance, she has been a member of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights since 2005, including a year as board president. The organization champions equal justice and community development for underrepresented people by partnering with volunteer lawyers to provide pro bono litigation and transactional representation. Maldonado also serves on the board of Apna Ghar ("Our Home"), a local organization working across communities in the Chicago area to end gender violence. She is also on the legal advisory board of ARISE Chicago, an organization established to build partnerships between faith communities and workers to fight workplace injustice.

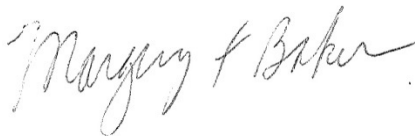
For years, people who have been unlawfully hurt by others have been able to turn to Maldonado to help them vindicate their rights. A recent example is Dilan Abreu, a Latino bricklayer with the Chicago Department of Water Management. Abreu claims his supervisor regularly directed racial and ethnic slurs at him and tried to push him into a six-foot hole on a job site. After he filed a federal complaint, he says he faced a campaign of retaliation. The lawsuit Maldonado

filed on his behalf outlines a culture of overtly racist behavior and attitudes throughout the department, which allowed such harassment to happen.ⁱ The trial is scheduled to begin later this year.

Maldonado also represented Maura Anne Stuart, a school bus driver who was repeatedly denied opportunities for much higher-paying assignments driving courtesy vans for local movie and television productions. She sued her union for denying her such assignments due to her sex. After a court refused to dismiss the case and allowed discovery, the union settled the case with Stuart.ⁱⁱ Maldonado also helped homeowners who alleged that the Cook County Assessor illegally shifted tax burdens from property owners in majority-White neighborhoods to property owners in majority-Black and Latino neighborhoods. After a lawsuit was filed, the county reformed its tax assessment system, and the claims were voluntarily dropped.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Northern District of Illinois has never had a Latina judge. If confirmed, Maldonado will correct that historical injustice. She will also bring to the bench a demonstrated commitment to civil rights. She will make an excellent judge, and we urge her prompt confirmation.

Sincerely,



Marge Baker
Executive Vice President

ⁱ *Abreu v. City of Chicago*, No. 19-CV-2161 (N.D. Ill.) (Pallmeyer, Harjani, JJ.); “City water department worker alleges boss tried to throw him in a hole, called him ‘dumb Puerto Rican,’” *Chicago Tribune*, March 29, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/ct-met-chicago-water-department-latino-slur-lawsuit-20190328-story.html>.

ⁱⁱ *Stuart v. Local 727, Int’l Bhd. of Teamsters*, No. 13-cv-9262 (N.D. Ill.) (Shadur, Chang, Cox, JJ.), No. 14-1710 (7th Cir. 2014) (Posner, Rovner, Hamilton, JJ.).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Brighton Park Neighborhood Council v. Berrios*, No. 2017 CH 16453 (Cook Cty. Cir. Ct.) (Gamrath, J.).