



January 11, 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 supports the nomination of Andre Mathis to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. He has substantial litigation experience representing a wide variety of clients, including pro bono representation of indigent criminal defendants. When confirmed, he will become the first Black man from Tennessee ever to serve on that court.

Mathis was born in Memphis in 1980 and has called that city home throughout his life. He has a compelling personal success story, with a background that will help him understand the lives and circumstances of many of the disadvantaged people who will appear before him in court. After his parents divorced when he was a baby, he was raised in poverty by a mother who regularly abused drugs and alcohol while trying to raise four children. His family received help from welfare, but they often experienced days without water, food, heat, or air conditioning.

He earned a scholarship to become the first person in his family to attend college, graduating from the University of Memphis in 2003. Four years later, he graduated with honors from the University of Memphis's Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. He served as a law clerk to Judge D'Army Bailey, a state judge who had been involved in the founding of Memphis's National Civil Rights Museum. He then spent 15 years at the firm of Glankler Brown, PLLC, before becoming a partner at the firm of Butler Snow LLP in 2020.

Mathis also dedicates substantial time to pro bono work. Since 2010, he has handled about 70 cases as appointed counsel for indigent criminal defendants in federal court. He also spent five years doing such work in the Shelby County Criminal Court and the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals. He currently volunteers as pro bono co-counsel with the Tennessee Innocence Project for an individual wrongly convicted and sentenced to nearly 50 years for attempted murder and aggravated robbery.

Mathis has also actively given back to the community in other ways. He served as president of the Ben F. Jones Chapter of the National Bar Association, which was founded to address the unique needs of Black lawyers. In addition, since 2011, he has been an adjunct professor at his former law school, where he coaches their Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Team.

This nomination comes after White House outreach to Tennessee's senators. Mathis interviewed with the White House Counsel's office in May of 2021 and has been in contact with the Office of

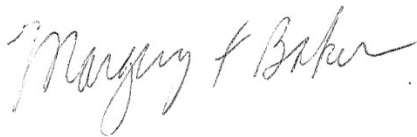
Legal Policy since June 2. On June 17, Mathis interviewed with counsels for Sen Blackburn and Sen. Hagerty. The White House waited another five months before submitting the nomination.

While Sens. Blackburn and Hagerty do not support Mathis, the era when their opposition would end a judicial nomination from their state has ended. The termination of that old tradition came through the actions of Blackburn herself, as well as every other Republican member of the Judiciary Committee and, indeed, every Senate Republican in office before Biden became president, who repeatedly voted to confirm judicial nominees of President Trump over the objections of their home state senators. Indeed, a third of the former president's circuit court nominees were selected over home state senators' objections.

While Democratic committee chairs have in the past deferred to home state senators and not even held hearings without their support, the past three Republican chairs have not. Indeed, two of those three actually changed their policies when the party of the nominating president changed. Democrats cannot effectively represent their constituents and carry out their constitutional responsibilities if they hobble themselves with rules that their Republican colleagues don't apply to themselves. There cannot be one set of rules for a Democratic president's nominees and another for a Republican's.

Andre Mathis recognizes the role that fair courts play in protecting people's lives and liberty. We support his nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marge Baker".

Marge Baker  
Executive Vice President