



Federico Hernández Denton

*Chief Justice, Retired
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Supreme Court
San Juan, Puerto Rico*

June 29, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Endorsement of Judge Gina R. Méndez-Miró to the U.S. District Court

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am pleased to write to you to highly recommend Judge Gina R. Méndez-Miró's confirmation to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

Judge Méndez-Miró is one of the most respected appellate judges in Puerto Rico that will help fulfill your commitment to strengthen and diversify the federal courts. I have known Judge Méndez for over a decade. During that time, I have had ample opportunity to work closely with her and follow her outstanding professional career.

As Chief Justice of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court, I personally recruited her in 2008 to lead one of my most important project: the Directorate of Judicial Programs for the Puerto Rico Judiciary. Under her leadership, the Judiciary flawlessly expanded various crucial access to justice programs, such as Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts, Specialized Domestic Violence Courts, Self-Represented Litigant (Pro Se) Centers, and the Courts' Access to Homeless People, among others.

Her performance was truly impressive, and I decided that the Judicial Branch could benefit from her talents in another capacity. In 2010 I asked her to lead the Legal Affairs Office at the Administrative Office of the Puerto Rico Courts. As General Counsel, she significantly strengthened the Office's legal advisory role to the Chief Justice, while she personally litigated several high-profile matters.

Her dedication and legal skills as well as her strong commitment to the Judicial Branch always impressed me very much. For that reason, I always sought her advice in difficult and challenging situations and she never failed to deliver in an impressive way. In the process I also discovered a very warm and charming person with a good sense of humor with a common sense that exceeded my expectations and a temperament that was needed to face complex legal problems with a keen sense of their importance to the Court system.

After her tenure at the Administrative Office of the Puerto Rico Courts, Judge Méndez-Miró led various important initiatives at the Puerto Rico Senate, which I followed closely, including the legislative effort to review and update an outdated Civil Code, criminal justice reform and the passing of a Senate Bill that provided for a complete overhaul of the current educational system.

Since 2016, Judge Méndez has served at the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals, where she has become one of its most distinguished judges. Over the past six years, she has demonstrated a fair and balanced approach to the legal claims brought before her. Her judicial work reflects that she carefully and meticulously studies the judicial record and arguments of the cases at hand, resolving solely on the facts and applicable law. She is truly conscious of her role as a judge on an intermediate court of appeals, always respecting precedent and applying the deference standard when it applies. To that extent, her decisions exude impartiality and determinations based on the record and the law, without fear or favor. Furthermore, Judge Méndez legal acumen has been tested and found solid by the Puerto Rican Supreme Court, being rarely reversed. The quality of her decisions is also reflected in well written and well-reasoned judgments where she demonstrates a strong ability to articulate the law clearly and a remarkable ability to analyze and explain facts and complex legal issues in an accessible and straightforward manner. Her productivity is remarkable, delivering hundreds of judgments on important constitutional, criminal, civil and administrative law issues. In addition, she has proven to have a judicial temperament that is an essential requirement for the Federal Bench.

I can attest that Gina is a woman of character and integrity. She is empathetic and compassionate, committed to her family and the community. She understands and takes seriously her role in the court and the effect her decisions have on the everyday lives of the litigants that come before her. Her record as an attorney and as a judge speaks for itself.

The U.S. District Court needs judges who have broad and diverse experiences. Judge Méndez has worked as an attorney in all three branches of government in different capacities. More importantly, she has spent the past years working as a judge and knows how the judicial system works. I have nothing but the utmost respect for Judge Méndez as an attorney, judge, and friend.

I strongly believe that Judge Méndez is an extraordinarily qualified, outstanding legal scholar that would greatly contribute to the federal judiciary. She has the judicial temperament, intellect, intelligence, experience, character and reputation that are needed to be an outstanding federal judge. For these reasons and more, I strongly urge the members of the Committee on the Judiciary and the Senate to confirm her without delay to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Federico Hernández Denton". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Federico" being the most prominent.

Federico Hernández Denton