



Samish Indian Nation

OF WASHINGTON

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:

It is with great pleasure that the Samish Indian Nation writes in support of Lauren J. King's nomination to serve as U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Washington as a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, Ms. King would become the first Native federal judge in Washington State, and the third sitting Native judge in the nation.

Ms. King is a first-rate attorney with impeccable qualifications for a federal judgeship. She is an experienced litigator with over a decade of experience handling complex federal litigation matters ranging from complex 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.

The United States Constitution gives the federal government exclusive authority over Indian affairs, and the federal judiciary is regularly tasked with making decisions that have a lasting impact on day-to-day life in tribal communities. The jurisdictional scheme on Indian lands is painfully complex, and due to the federal enforcement responsibilities under various federal laws and administrative regulations, Native people are parties to federal court proceedings at grossly disproportionate rates to their non-Native counterparts. Despite this fact, few federal judges have ever visited an Indian community or a tribal court, let alone lived or worked in them. We believe that Ms. King's knowledge and experience are vitally important for the federal judiciary.

We are committed to seeing the federal judiciary include individuals who understand the unique legal status of Indian tribes and can approach Indian issues from an informed, unbiased perspective. We hope that the Judiciary Committee will move swiftly to confirm Ms. King. Should you have any questions, please contact me at tomwooten@samishtribe.nsn.us.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Wooten
Tribal Chairman

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