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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

LETTER ENDORSING THE CONFIRMATION OF HON. GINA R. MÉNDEZ-MIRÓ AS UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

As a former Puerto Rico Chief of Staff (2019), Senator at Large (2017-2019), Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (1997-2000) and practicing attorney, I am proud to endorse Hon. Gina R. Méndez-Miró's nomination for the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. Currently, she serves with notable distinction as an Appeals Court Judge in Puerto Rico. I am motivated by Judge Méndez-Miró's varied professional experience, impeccable trajectory in public service and personal qualities which already make her a distinguished member of the Puerto Rico judiciary.



To fully understand her success as a sitting judge, one must review her professional path in the legal field which speaks for itself. Judge Méndez-Miró's career as an attorney originated at O'Neill and Borges, P.S.C., (O&B) one of the most respected and well-known law firms in Puerto Rico. At O&B she excelled in the labor and employment department, litigating civil cases in both state and federal court. She was respected, highly regarded, and still missed. Judge Méndez-Miró then went on to public service at the Department of Justice where she committed to a lifetime in public service. She followed with four years at the Judicial Branch where she was dedicated to establishing and promoting policies of access to justice. Therein, she would also polish her already solid skills as an attorney serving as General Counsel at the Judicial Branch, advising in complex legal matters, and litigating high profile cases both at administrative and judicial forums. Judge Méndez-Miró later became Puerto Rico Senate's Chief of Staff spearheading historical legislation such as Senate Bill 238 to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Today, she is one of the

top judges in the Court of Appeals where she has built a reputation as hard working and fair jurist, who invariably issues very well-reasoned and well written opinions.

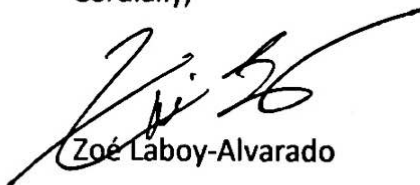
Based on my experience and first-hand knowledge of Judge Méndez-Miró's strengths and capabilities, I can attest to the value she would add to the federal judiciary both, from a legal and substantive standpoint and personally, as she possesses the highest standard of integrity. Upholding such standard commands my trust, confidence, and respect. Having served as a Senator immediately following Judge Méndez-Miró's Senate tenure, I know that you need a particularly skilled individual to navigate the too often tempestuous waters of a state legislature and rise unscathed from it. Judge Méndez-Miró was able to perform her duties effectively while never compromising her integrity. Judge Méndez-Miró is well regarded and respected by elected officials from the two major parties alike —and their staffs— as a skilled negotiator, a fair and balanced administrator, a brilliant lawyer, and an honest and straightforward communicator. Accordingly, it is not surprising that when she was nominated to serve as an Appeals Court Judge, she obtained the unanimous consent from the Senate.

Now that I am a member of the legal community in the private sector, I can attest to her solid and respected performance as a judge where she has shown for nearly six years to be a fair and impartial adjudicator. Her judgments consistently demonstrate as much. They include a detailed account of the facts, her thought process, together with a full and meticulous explanation of its legal basis. In my experience as an attorney, this leads to the parties full understanding of her decision, regardless of whether they agree or not with its outcome. When you read a decision by Judge Méndez-Miró it is well written, follows precedent and the legal rationale is clear.

In sum, Judge Méndez-Miró's demonstrated work ethic, coupled with a keen understanding of complicated legal matters and ability to discern the human factor in cases brought before her, will serve well at the District Court.

Finally, Judge Méndez-Miró's confirmation would be historic as she would become the first openly LGBTQ+ judge ever to sit at the federal District Court in Puerto Rico. I am fully convinced that she will honor this historical responsibility and make a great contribution to the federal judiciary. Therefore, I urge the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate to move swiftly in favor of her confirmation.

Cordially,



Zoé Laboy-Alvarado