



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

October 18, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing more than 130 public interest and civil rights organizations, I write to strongly support the confirmation of Holly Thomas as a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Few judicial nominees can claim the breadth of experience that Judge Holly Thomas will bring to the Circuit: civil rights and prosecution, litigation and administration, civil law and criminal law at both the state and federal level. Her appellate litigation experience alone is substantial, having argued cases before the First, Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Circuit Courts and been the counsel of record on multiple Supreme Court briefs. Judge Thomas has spent time as a civil rights attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and in public service with the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, where she received different awards and commendations for exceptional performance, including the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service and the John Marshall Award for Providing Legal Advice.

Most recently, she has served as a Judge on the Los Angeles County Superior Court, where she has presided over thousands of hearings, including hundreds of cases that have gone to verdict or judgment.

Moreover, few nominees have the breadth of substantive experience with some of our nation's most important constitutional rights and legal protections, including the right to vote, the right to marry, equal employment, housing, and educational opportunities. Whether it be advocating on behalf of pregnant people, military service members, minority school children, or women athletes, Judge Thomas has worked to enforce critical protections for the American people.

If confirmed, Judge Thomas would be only the second Black woman to ever serve on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the largest federal court in the country, and the first Black woman from California. Judge Thomas's nomination is also historic given her experience as a civil rights attorney. Following in the pioneering footsteps of Supreme Court Justices Thurgood Marshall and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Judge Thomas would be one of only a handful of federal judges out of nearly 900 who have worked for a civil rights organization like the NAACP LDF.

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As a former law clerk to Judge William Fletcher, who Judge Thomas would succeed, I would add that her record befits the seat she will soon occupy. The Senate should expeditiously confirm Judge Holly Thomas to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rakim Brooks". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent initial "R" and a distinct "B".

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice