



PRESIDENT
RAKIM BROOKS

CHAIR
PAULETTE MEYER

July 11, 2022

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 Judge Gina Méndez-Miró to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

Judge Méndez-Miró has spent most of her career in the public sector, working in support of the Puerto Rico government and judicial system. She has expertise in labor and employment issues and has litigated to enforce the Puerto Rico Code of Judicial Ethics. Her mastery in these areas, coupled with her sixteen years of work in public service and nearly six years as a judge on the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals, makes her an exceptional candidate for the U.S. District Court.

Judge Méndez-Miró's rulings as an appellate judge demonstrate fairness and a steadfast commitment to equal justice for all. For example, in a pair of employment cases she denied summary judgment for a multinational seed producer, Monsanto, after employees sustained work-related injuries, and upheld a finding of wrongful termination against Walmart.¹ Judge Méndez-Miró has also made decisions protecting the constitutional rights of those subject to illegal searches and seizures, always carefully weighing the government and individual interests at stake.² She has evenhandedly sought justice across a variety of other areas, including child welfare and medical malpractice.³ In nearly six years as a jurist, only four of her 538 authored majority opinions — less than 1% — have been overturned by the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico.

Prior to joining the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals in 2016, Judge Méndez-Miró had an exemplary career in both public service and private practice. After graduating from the Puerto Rico School of Law in 2001, she

¹ *Pellot Feliciano y Otros v. Monsanto Caribe, LLC y Otros*, KLCE202000487, 2020 WL 8367808 (P.R. Cir. Nov. 17, 2020); *Gomez Rivera v. Walmart Puerto Rico, Inc.*, KLAN201901058, 2020 WL 6582792 (P.R. Cir. Aug. 27, 2020).

² *Pueblo v. Martinez Ruiz*, KLCE202001188, 2021 WL 2177075 (P.R. Cir. Apr. 30, 2021); *Rentas Sanabria v. ELA*, KLAN201701405, 2018 WL 1787215 (P.R. Cir. Feb. 27, 2018).

³ *Rosario Luna v. Academia Presbiteriana Villa Carolina*, KLAN201801388, 2021 WL 3206824 (P.R. Cir. June 22, 2021); *Perez Velazquez v. Hospital Menonita de Caguas*, KLAN201601831, 2018 WL 4383243 (P.R. Cir. June 29, 2018).

spent five years as an associate at O'Neill & Borges LLC working on employment issues including collective bargaining, discrimination, and workplace harassment. From there she joined the Puerto Rico Department of Justice, advising the Attorney General on compliance with labor laws and regulations and litigating before the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in cases regarding harassment and discrimination.

Judge Méndez-Miró helped expand access to justice for survivors of violence and people struggling with addiction while working for the Puerto Rico Judicial Branch from 2008 to 2013. During this time, she also litigated ethical violations committed by sitting judges. In her highest-profile case, she served as lead counsel in a successful case against a trial judge accused of domestic violence and possession of illegal substances, resulting in the removal and disbarment of the judge in question.⁴

In addition to her professional qualifications, Judge Méndez-Miró has contributed to the legal community by developing judicial education courses for newly appointed judges regarding access to justice for *pro se* and indigent litigants. She is an active member of the Hispanic National Bar Association, International Association of LGBTQ+ Judges, and International Association of Women Judges.

As a dedicated public servant with ample experience working within the judiciary, Judge Méndez-Miró would bring a depth of knowledge and valuable perspective to the District of Puerto Rico. Furthermore, Judge Méndez-Miró would be the first openly LGBTQ+ individual to join the court. As we strive to ensure that our federal courts are reflective of the rich diversity of our nation, confirming Judge Méndez-Miró will help counteract the current lack of LGBTQ+ representation in our judicial system.

Judge Méndez-Miró's legal career reflects a deep commitment to public service and delivering equal justice to all who enter her courtroom. Given her exemplary qualifications, the Senate should swiftly confirm Judge Gina Méndez-Miró to the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

Rakim H.D. Brooks

Rakim Brooks
President, Alliance for Justice

⁴ *In re Santiago Concepción*, AD-2012-001, 189 DPR 378 (2013) (P.R.).