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PRESIDENT

Rachel Rossi

CHAIR

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October 2, 2026

Senator Charles Grassley
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

Senator Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chair Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin,

On behalf of the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), a national association representing over 140 public interest and civil rights organizations, we firmly urge you and your colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject the nominations of Lee Rudofsky to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Jesus Osete to the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Samuel Adkisson to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, and Bobby Long to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Having graduated from law school only ten and eight years ago, Osete and Adkisson lack both the years and the breadth of experience that the American Bar Association considers the minimum 12 years of experience recommended for a lifetime appointment to the federal bench. These nominees lack even the most rudimentary levels of federal courtroom litigation experience necessary to effectively manage a federal courtroom.

Rudofsky, Osete, and Adkisson have failed to demonstrate a commitment to fairness, independence, and equal justice for all. Instead, they have advanced ideologically driven far-right agendas that undermine racial justice, restrict access to reproductive care, weaken immigrant rights, and erode LGBTQ+ equality. Long has deep ties to the far-right Federalist Society and served as a Blackstone Fellow with the SPLC-designated hate group Alliance Defending Freedom.

In this moment when the authoritarian Trump administration continues to nominate loyalists who value Trump's approval over the Constitution, confirming these ideologically driven nominees would further entrench far-right, politically motivated values into our legal system, case law, and the courts. We strongly urge you to reject these nominees.

Lee Rudofsky (Eighth Circuit). In the 60-year history of the Voting Rights Act, Judge Rudofsky was the first federal judge to hold that private plaintiffs cannot enforce Section 2. That ruling effectively closed the courthouse doors to the civil rights groups and individual voters who have historically brought about 90% of Section 2 enforcement suits.

As Arkansas solicitor general, he led the state's successful effort to strip Planned Parenthood of Medicaid funding and urged the Supreme Court to "revisit and overturn" the constitutional protection against abortion bans years before Dobbs. On the bench, he has since dismissed the NAACP's equal protection challenge to Arkansas's classroom censorship law. Elevating Rudofsky would reward exactly the kind of record that is eroding voting rights and reproductive freedom across the Eighth Circuit.

Jesus Osete (W.D. Mo.). As principal deputy assistant attorney general for civil rights at the Department of Justice, Osete has helped turn the Civil Rights Division against the people it exists to protect. He has been involved in litigation that gutted Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, reinstated racially discriminatory congressional maps in Alabama and Texas, and challenged California's voter-approved Proposition 50 map. In Missouri, he argued before the Supreme Court against COVID-19 vaccine requirements for health care workers and fought to reinstate the state's eight-week abortion ban. Osete once wrote about the "evils of voter suppression," but he has spent his career advancing such suppression.

Robert "Bobby" Long, Jr. (M.D. Fla.). Long has been an active member of the Federalist Society since 2005 and was a 2006 Blackstone Legal Fellow with the far-right Alliance Defending Freedom. As a state appellate judge, he joined the decision in Byrd v. Black Voters Matter that eliminated North Florida's only Black-performing congressional district, writing a separate concurrence expressing hostility to protections for minority voters.

Samuel Adkisson (E.D. Tenn.). Adkisson has tried only one case to judgment and has never tried a case before a jury. The rest of his short legal career has been spent on ideological-driven causes, including attacks on abortion clinic buffer zones, challenges to race-conscious programs, and defenses of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination framed as "religious liberty."

Taken together, these nominations show a clear pattern: that these nominees were chosen for their loyalty and ideology, rather than for their qualifications or their commitment to the rule of law. The communities who will have their cases, livelihoods, and rights interpreted and decided across Arkansas, Missouri, Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana, and the entire Eighth Circuit deserve judges who will apply the law fairly and independently rather than nominees whose records fail to demonstrate even basic levels of judicial independence. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose the nominations of Lee Rudofsky, Jesus Osete, Robert "Bobby" Long, and Samuel Adkisson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Rossi".

Rachel Rossi
President, Alliance for Justice