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February 4, 2016

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**Judge Dax Lopez Deserves a Confirmation Hearing**

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our support for the nomination of Judge Dax Lopez to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. He would be the first Latino lifetime-appointed federal judge in Georgia. We condemn Senator Perdue's effort to scuttle Judge Lopez's nomination.

The Leadership Conference believes that Judge Lopez has proven himself well qualified for the federal judgeship throughout his career. He has served as a judge on the State Court of DeKalb County since 2010, where he has presided over both civil and criminal matters. He was just 34 when he was appointed to the state court bench by Republican Governor Sonny Perdue. Before that, he was an attorney at law firms Foltz Martin LLC; Ashe Rafuse & Hill LLP; and Holland & Knight. From 2001 to 2002, Judge Lopez clerked for the Honorable Hector Laffitte, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.<sup>1</sup>

In September, when President Obama nominated Judge Lopez to fill a federal judgeship, State Republican Party counsel Anne Lewis, former state House Majority Whip Ed Lindsey, and other prominent Republicans signed a letter of support to Senators Isakson and Perdue. Further, Erick Erickson, the conservative WSB Radio host, also supported Judge Lopez's nomination, calling Lopez the "most free-market" of all judicial picks nationwide and the "best pick you could hope for from the president of the United States for Georgia."<sup>2</sup> In fact, both Georgia Senators told the White House Counsel's office that they supported the

<sup>1</sup> The White House, "President Obama Nominates Seven to Serve on the United States District Courts." Jul 30, 2015. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/07/30/president-obama-nominates-seven-serve-united-states-district-courts>

<sup>2</sup> Bluestien, Greg. "David Perdue blocks Latino judicial nominee," The Atlanta-Journal Constitution. Jan 21, 2016. <http://politics.blog.ajc.com/2016/01/20/david-perdue-wont-back-dax-lopezs-judicial-nomination/>



nomination<sup>3</sup>, which Sen. Isakson still does. Surprisingly, Sen. Purdue has reversed himself, and now opposes Lopez.<sup>4</sup>

Judge Lopez's previous work with the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO), a highly respected bipartisan organization with the mission to "increase civic engagement and leadership of the Latino/Hispanic community across Georgia,"<sup>5</sup> should not disqualify him from being a federal judge. At the very least, Judge Lopez deserves a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee where any questions about his views or qualifications could receive a public airing.

We ask you to support the historic nomination of Dax Lopez to a federal judgeship. Hiding behind immigration politics and blocking judicial nominations does serious damage to the judicial system and is an irresponsible abdication of the Senate's constitutional responsibility of advice and consent on nominees. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nancy Zirkin at [zirkin@civilrights.org](mailto:zirkin@civilrights.org) or (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson  
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President

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<sup>3</sup> United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees.

<http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Lopez%20Senate%20Questionnaire%20Final1.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Bendery, Jennifer. "Sorry, Georgia, You Won't Get Your First Latino Federal Judge After All," The Huffington Post. Jan 29, 2016. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/david-perdue-latino-federal-judge\\_us\\_56aba8e1e4b00b033aace991](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/david-perdue-latino-federal-judge_us_56aba8e1e4b00b033aace991)

<sup>5</sup> GALEO. <http://www.galeo.org/about-us/>