

November 17, 2021



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF CHARLOTTE SWEENEY  
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 230 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Charlotte Sweeney to the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

Ms. Sweeney's impressive experience and civil rights background make her extremely well-qualified to serve on the federal bench. Ms. Sweeney has dedicated her career to protecting and defending the rights of working people, most recently as a founding partner of Sweeney & Bechtold, LLC. Ms. Sweeney is a graduate of California Lutheran University and the University of Denver College of Law. She is deeply involved in her community, including serving on the board of directors for the Matthew Shepard Foundation. Her commitment to civil rights and exceptional career in employment law would be a tremendous asset to the District of Colorado.

Ms. Sweeney has dedicated her career to defending the rights of working people. She has litigated numerous complex cases on issues such as retaliatory termination based on national origin and disability discrimination.<sup>1</sup> She has also worked tirelessly for equal pay. For example, in 2017, she successfully represented six female law professors from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law after decades-long pay disparities and discrimination based on sex.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Ms. Sweeney helped to pass Colorado's Equal Pay for Equal Work Act in 2019, which strengthens protections against wage discrimination on the basis of sex.<sup>3</sup> Ms. Sweeney has worked in pursuit of equal justice and would bring much-needed experience to the bench.

In addition to the important professional experience she would bring to the federal bench, Ms. Sweeney would also bring other meaningful diversity to the role. If confirmed, Ms. Sweeney would be the first openly LGBT federal judge in the state of Colorado, and she would be the first openly LGBT woman to

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g.: *Gonzales v. Univ. of Colo.*, Civil Action No. 1:18-cv-01178-RBJ (D. Colo.) (a doctor was fired from his job with the University of Denver after he filed complaints of discrimination based on race and national origin); *Vanech v. US. Dep't of Labor*, Civil Action No. 13-cv-00168-RPM (D. Colo.) (plaintiff was disabled and terminated after her employer refused to provide reasonable accommodation).

<sup>2</sup> *EEOC v. Univ. of Denver*, Civil Action No. 16-cv-02471-WYD-MJW (D. Colo.).

<sup>3</sup> See *Hearing on S.B. 19-1085 (Equal Pay for Equal Work Act) Before the H Comm. on Bus. Affairs and Labor* (Apr. 17, 2019); *Hearing on S.B. 19-1085 (Equal Pay for Equal Work Act) Before the S. Judiciary Comm.* (Feb. 20, 2019); *Hearing on HB. 18-1378 (Equal Pay for Equal Work Act) Before the H Fin. Comm.* (Apr. 23, 2018).



serve on a federal district court west of the Mississippi River.<sup>4</sup> The importance of a judiciary that reflects the community it serves cannot be overstated. More than 11 million adults in the United States identify as LGBT, yet only 11 out of 673 Article III district court judgeships are filled by those who identify as LGBT.<sup>5</sup> Public trust in the judiciary is bolstered when our courts reflect the rich diversity of our country.<sup>6</sup> Different lived experiences, especially from communities that have been excluded from consideration, bring varied perspectives to our federal courts and are crucial to improving judicial decision-making.<sup>7</sup>

We strongly urge the Senate to confirm Charlotte Sweeney to the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Lena Zwarensteyn, Senior Director of the Fair Courts Program, at (202) 466-3311. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson  
Interim President & CEO

Jesselyn McCurdy  
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs

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<sup>4</sup> Press Release, THE WHITE HOUSE, [President Biden Names Sixth Round of Judicial Nominees](#) (August 5, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> See Kerith J. Conron & Shoshana K. Goldberg, [Adult LGBT Population in the United States](#), THE WILLIAMS INSTITUTE (July 2020).

<sup>6</sup> See Maya Sen, [Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time](#), Wis. L. Rev. 367 (2017).

<sup>7</sup> See Maya Sen, [Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time](#), Wis. L. Rev. 367 (2017).