

January 12, 2022



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF SARAH GERAGHTY
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA**

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 Sarah Geraghty to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Ms. Geraghty's impressive experience and civil rights background make her extremely well qualified to serve on the federal bench. Since 2003, Ms. Geraghty has worked at the Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR), currently serving as senior counsel, and previously as the managing attorney for impact litigation and staff attorney. At SCHR, she works to improve fairness within the criminal-legal system and conditions in carceral settings. Prior to this, she worked as a staff attorney for the Office of the Appellate Defender. Additionally, Ms. Geraghty has worked to train future lawyers, teaching at both Emory Law School and Georgia State College of Law. A graduate of Northwestern University, University of Michigan School of Social Work, and University of Michigan Law School, she clerked for Judge James B. Zagel of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Ms. Geraghty's vast experience makes her an excellent addition to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Ms. Geraghty's commitment to pursuing equal justice for all people and her significant experience practicing in civil rights law make her an exceptional choice to serve on the federal bench. Throughout her career, Ms. Geraghty has challenged harmful and discriminatory practices in the criminal-legal system. For example, she successfully brought class action cases that reformed solitary confinement practices in a Georgia prison¹ and she challenged the unconstitutional confinement and treatment of women with mental health illnesses who were incarcerated at a Fulton County jail.² She also worked on numerous cases challenging excessive and inappropriate fines and bail that disproportionately affected people with lower incomes and survivors of domestic abuse.³ Ms. Geraghty's experience in rooting out discrimination and disparities within the criminal-legal system is much needed on the bench.

Ms. Geraghty's background as a civil rights attorney and public defender demonstrates her commitment to pursuing equal justice. If confirmed, Ms. Geraghty would be the first public defender to ever sit on this

¹ *Gumm et al. v. Sellers et al.*, Case No. 5:15-cv-41-MTT-CHW (M.D. Ga. 2019).

² *Georgia Advocacy Office et al. v. Sheriff Theodore Jackson et al.*, Case No. 1: 19-1634-WMR-RC (N.D. Ga. 2021), No. 19-14227 (11th Cir. 2021).

³ See e.g., *Walker v. City of Calhoun*, Case No. 4:15-cv-170-SCJ (N.D. Ga. 2020), Case No. 16-10521 (11th Cir. 2018); *Harrison v. Consolidated Gov't of Columbus*, Case No. 4:16-cv-329-CDL (M.D. Ga. 2017); *Edwards v. Red Hills Cmty. Probation LLC*, Case No. 15-cv-67-LJA (M.D. Ga. 2016).

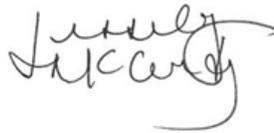
court.⁴ Diversity of professional experience is crucial to a balanced and fair federal judiciary, which currently lacks judges with the experience that public defenders possess. Of nearly 800 currently active federal judges, only 65 have experience as public defenders.⁵ In order to strengthen public trust in the judiciary and to improve judicial decision-making, our judges must come from a variety of different backgrounds, including professional experience.⁶ The addition of highly qualified jurists — like Ms. Geraghty — who have worked to uphold the rights of all people impacted by the criminal-legal system is much needed to make our federal courts fair for all people.

Ms. Geraghty is exceptionally qualified and we strongly urge the Senate to confirm her to the Northern District of Georgia. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Lena Zwarenstejn, 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

⁴ [“Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present”](#) *Federal Judicial Center* (Accessed January 2022) Search includes all judges for the Northern District of Georgia who listed “public defender” or “federal defender” as non-volunteer work experience.

⁵ *Id.* Search includes all active federal judges who list “public defender” or “federal defender” as non-volunteer work experience.

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