

June 7, 2022



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE SALVADOR MENDOZA
TO THE U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT**

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 support for the confirmation of Judge Salvador Mendoza to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Judge Mendoza's years of distinguished public service make him a wonderful choice for the Ninth Circuit. Since 2014, Judge Mendoza has served as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington. Before serving on the federal bench, he had a long judicial career in Benton County and Franklin County, including his time as a superior court judge, district court judge pro tempore, and juvenile court judge pro tempore. He also served as a municipal court judge pro tempore for the City of Pasco Municipal Court. Prior to his judicial service, he worked as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's Office as well as in private practice at Haney & Mendoza, P.S. and Mendoza and Johnson P.S, specializing in criminal defense litigation. Additionally, Judge Mendoza has spent a considerable amount of time serving his community. For instance, he served nearly 10 years on the board of directors for the Benton-Franklin Legal Aid Society, helping to support the organization's efforts to ensure access to justice for those who are unable to afford an attorney. Judge Mendoza is a graduate of the University of Washington and the University of California Los Angeles School of Law. His experience administering fair and impartial justice will make him an excellent addition to the court.

Judge Mendoza's legal career has been dedicated to making sure people have access to qualified counsel, bringing much needed experience to the bench. Prior to serving on the bench, Judge Mendoza spent many years in private practice, where he focused on criminal defense matters. It is especially notable that half of Judge Mendoza's caseload was pro bono on behalf of clients navigating the criminal-legal system who could otherwise not afford counsel.¹ During his time on the bench, Judge Mendoza has shown that he is a neutral arbiter and dedicated to equal justice. For example, he protected the rights of migrant farmworkers, including wage and hour rights, as well as fair labor practices such as adequate breaks and hourly record-keeping.² Judge Mendoza's demonstrated commitment to equal justice and his impressive judicial career make him extremely well-qualified for this position.

In addition to the professional experience that Judge Mendoza would bring to the Ninth Circuit, he would bring important lived experiences as well. In 2014, he became the first Latino judge to ever serve on the

¹ Committee on the Judiciary, *Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees*, UNITED STATES SENATE.

² *Carranza v. Dovex Fruit Co.*, No. 16-CV-00054 (E.D. Wash.).



Eastern District of Washington and, if confirmed to this position, would be the first Latino judge to ever serve on the Ninth Circuit from Washington state.³ The Ninth Circuit is home to nearly 21 million Hispanic and Latino people, with more than a million living in Washington.⁴ Public trust in the judiciary is bolstered when our courts reflect the rich diversity of our country.⁵ Different lived experiences, especially from communities that have long been excluded from serving on our courts, bring varied perspectives to our federal courts that are crucial to improving judicial decision-making.⁶ The confirmation of Judge Mendoza would be an important step towards ensuring that our federal courts reflect and represent the diversity of our nation.

Judge Mendoza is an excellent choice to serve on the Ninth Circuit, and we urge the Senate to confirm his nomination. 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,

Maya Wiley
President & CEO

Jesselyn McCurdy
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs

³ See [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.

⁴ [Quick Facts](#), UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU (accessed in June 2022).

⁵ See Maya Sen, [Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time](#), WIS. L. REV. 367 (2017).

⁶ Berry, Kate, [Building a Diverse Bench: Selecting Federal Magistrate and Bankruptcy Judges](#), BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE AT NYU SCHOOL OF LAW AND AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION JUDICIAL DIVISION (2017).