

February 28, 2023



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE JEFFREY CUMMINGS
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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 Judge Jeffrey Cummings to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. The Leadership Conference intends to include your position on the confirmation of Judge Cummings in our voting record for the 118th Congress.

Judge Cummings possesses an impressive background protecting the rights of all people, and he is extremely qualified to serve on the federal bench. Currently, Judge Cummings is a U.S. magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Prior to his judicial service, he spent 30 years with Miner, Barnhill & Galland, first as an associate and then as a partner. He also served as an administrative hearing officer with the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations, enforcing the city's anti-discrimination laws. Judge Cummings oversaw disciplinary hearings for police misconduct as a hearings officer on the Chicago Police Board. He also worked as a research fellow at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law's Center for Urban Affairs. A graduate of Michigan State University and Northwestern University School of Law, he clerked for Judge Ann Claire Williams on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Judge Cummings has had a distinguished career and would bring vital experience to this court.

Judge Cummings' vast legal portfolio covers a broad range of civil rights law. He has litigated numerous complex cases on behalf of working people on issues such as workplace harassment and discrimination. For example, he successfully represented a class of more than 12,500 women who were denied promotions and other advancement opportunities by their employer because of their sex.¹ In another case, he secured a favorable settlement for women law enforcement officers who were sexually harassed during workplace trainings by fellow officers.² Judge Cummings also has significant voting rights experience. He spent nearly a decade representing Black voters who challenged a Chicago redistricting map that diluted the voting strength of Black and Latino/a voters, eventually securing a victory for his clients.³ As

¹ *Orlowski v. Dominick's Finer Foods*, 172 F.R.D. 370 (N.D. Ill. 1997).

² *Markham v. White*, 1999 WL 1072647 (N.D. Ill. 1999); 172 F.3d 486 (7th Cir. 1999); 171 F.R.D. 217 (N.D. Ill. 1997); 1996 WL 446887 (N.D. Ill. 1996); 1996 WL 167329 (N.D. Ill. 1996); 1995 WL 669643 (N.D. Ill. 1995).

³ *Barnett v. City of Chicago*, 835 F. Supp. 1063 (N.D. Ill. 1993), *rev'd*, 32 F.3d 1196 (7th Cir. 1994), *on remand*, 969 F. Supp. 1359 (N.D. Ill. 1997), *vacated and remanded in relevant part*, 141 F.3d 699 (7th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 524 U.S. 954 (1998), *on remand*, 17 F. Supp. 2d 753 (N.D. Ill. 1998); 1999 WL 138813 (N.D. Ill. 1999); 122 F. Supp. 2d 915 (N.D. Ill. 2000), *aff'd*, 3 F. App'x 546 (7th Cir. 2001).



this record demonstrates, Judge Cummings' depth and breadth of experience has prepared him well for this role.

In addition to Judge Cummings' important professional experience, his lived experience will also bring important perspectives to the judiciary. If confirmed, he would be only the second Black man currently serving on the Northern District of Illinois.⁴ Public trust in the judiciary is strengthened when it better reflects the diversity of the community it serves.⁵ These diverse experiences, particularly from communities that have historically been underrepresented on our federal bench, bring their unique perspectives to our federal courts — vitally improving judicial decision-making.⁶ The confirmation of Judge Cummings would be an important step towards ensuring that our federal courts reflect and represent the diversity of our nation.

Judge Cummings is an excellent choice for this position, and we strongly urge the Senate to confirm him to the Northern District of Illinois. 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

⁴ [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER (Accessed February 2023).

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

⁶ Kate Berry, [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).