

January 23, 2023



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE HERNÁN VERA  
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

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 Hernán Vera to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. The Leadership Conference intends to include your position on the confirmation of Judge Vera in our voting record for the 118th Congress.

Judge Vera's work in pursuit of equal justice and his experience as a fair-minded jurist will make him an excellent addition to the federal bench. Since 2020, Judge Vera has served as a judge on the Los Angeles Superior Court in the Juvenile Division. Prior to his judicial service, Judge Vera worked in private practice at Bird Marella P.C. and O'Melveny & Myers LLP and at two prominent public interest organizations — Public Counsel and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). At Public Counsel, Judge Vera served as the president and CEO. Before assuming this role, he was the directing attorney of the organization's Consumer Law Project. Following his time clerking for Judge Consuelo Marshall on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, Judge Vera worked as a staff attorney at MALDEF. He is a graduate of Stanford University and the University of California School of Law. Judge Vera is very involved in the community. For example, he was appointed to serve as a member of the board of directors for the State Justice Institute,<sup>1</sup> was a commissioner on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Civilian Oversight Commission, and was a member of the Equal Justice Society. Judge Vera is exceedingly qualified to serve on the district court.

Judge Vera's background in defending and protecting the rights of all people would bring much needed experience to the court. During his time at Public Counsel, he was involved in significant litigation to protect the rights of people, including defending vulnerable patients who were treated without dignity after being inappropriately discharged from hospitals without necessary support,<sup>2</sup> protecting people who spoke Mandarin against fraud and discriminatory consumer practices,<sup>3</sup> and advocating for safety protections for farm workers.<sup>4</sup> Judge Vera also served as an education staff attorney with MALDEF, where he worked on educational equity cases including a successful challenge to California's Proposition

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<sup>1</sup> Judge Vera was nominated to the State Justice Institute by President Obama in 2010 and confirmed by a voice vote in the Senate.

<sup>2</sup> *Reyes v. Kaiser Found. Hosps.*, No. BC362075 (L.A. Sup. Ct.)

<sup>3</sup> *Hua Bai v. Bob Wondries Toyota*, No. BC286661 (L.A. Sup. Ct.)

<sup>4</sup> *Alvarez Bautista v. California*, No. BC418871 (L.A. Sup. Ct.).



187, which would have denied the right of a free public education to immigrant children.<sup>5</sup> Judge Vera's significant experience pursuing equal justice would make him a tremendous asset to the federal bench.

In addition to his impressive career, Judge Vera's lived experience brings important perspectives to the federal bench. The United States is home to more than 331 million Hispanic individuals, making up 18.5 percent of the population<sup>6</sup> — yet fewer than 9 percent of active federal judges identify as Hispanic.<sup>7</sup> Judges should share characteristics and experiences with the people impacted by their decisions. Not only does this help increase public trust in the judiciary,<sup>8</sup> diversity on the bench also makes for better judicial decision-making.<sup>9</sup> The judiciary needs to reflect both demographic diversity and the experiential diversity of the legal profession, including more judges experienced in ensuring that the civil rights of all people are protected and defended. Judge Vera would bring this meaningful experience to the federal bench.

Judge Vera is an excellent choice to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, and we strongly urge the Senate to confirm his nomination. 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,

Maya Wiley  
President & CEO

Jesselyn McCurdy  
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs

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<sup>5</sup> See [Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees](#), United States Senate Committee On the Judiciary

<sup>6</sup> [Quick Facts](#), United States Census Bureau (April 1, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), Federal Judicial Center (Accessed November 2021)

<sup>8</sup> 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)

<sup>9</sup> Sen, Maya, Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time, 2017 *Wis. L. Rev.* 367 (2017).