

January 24, 2023



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE RITA LIN
TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN 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 Rita Lin to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. The Leadership Conference intends to include your position on the confirmation of Judge Lin in our voting record for the 118th Congress.

Judge Lin's impressive legal career makes her a wonderful choice for the Northern District of California. Currently, Judge Lin serves as a superior court judge on the San Francisco Superior Court. Prior to her judicial service, she was an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California. Judge Lin also spent 10 years in private practice at Morrison & Foerster LLP, where she had an active pro bono caseload. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, she clerked for Judge Sandra Lynch on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Judge Lin also worked to train future lawyers as an adjunct professor at the University of California Hastings College of Law. She is deeply involved in her community, including having served as a board member of Bay Area Legal Aid, which provides legal assistance to people who otherwise would be unable to afford it. The breadth and depth of her experience will make her an excellent addition to the court.

During her time in private practice, Judge Lin took on significant pro bono work. She successfully litigated several civil rights cases, including many important LGBTQ rights cases. For example, together with Lambda Legal, she successfully represented Karen Golinski, a federal employee who was denied equal health care benefits for her same-sex spouse.¹ Not only did Judge Lin attain health care for Ms. Golinski's spouse — making Ms. Golinski the first federal employee to ever receive health care benefits for a same-sex spouse² — but the district court also struck down the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act, which banned federal recognition of same-sex marriage.³ Additionally, Judge Lin authored an amicus brief on behalf of 40 family law professors in *Kitchen v. Herbert*, challenging an unconstitutional law in Utah that banned the recognition of same-sex marriages.⁴ Judge Lin has also worked to defend the rights of people living with disabilities. In 2007, she represented people in a class action lawsuit seeking

¹ *Golinski v. Office of Personnel Management*, 781 F. Supp. 2d 967 (N.D. Cal. 2011).

² Joe Davidson, [Federal health benefits win for gay couple is limited](#), THE WASHINGTON POST (March 27, 2012).

³ *Golinski v. Office of Personnel Management*, 781 F. Supp. 2d 967 (N.D. Cal. 2011).

⁴ [Brief for Joan Heifetz Hollinger, Courtney Joslin, Laura Kessler, and thirty-seven other family law professors as Amicus Curiae](#), *Kitchen v. Herbert*, 755 F.3d 1193 (10th Cir. 2014).



to make the roadside call boxes in California accessible to deaf people.⁵ The favorable settlement that Judge Lin negotiated included implementation of accessible call boxes on California highways, giving deaf motorists access to emergency assistance.⁶ Judge Lin's commitment to equal justice will make her a tremendous addition to the federal judiciary.

In addition to her impressive professional experience, Judge Lin would also bring important lived experience to this court. If confirmed, Judge Lin would be the only active AAPI woman serving on the bench in the Northern District of California and only the second in the court's history.⁷ Additionally, she would be the first Chinese American woman to ever serve on this court.⁸ California is home to nearly 6.5 million AAPI people,⁹ yet this court did not have an AAPI judge until 2010.¹⁰ To strengthen public trust in the judiciary, our courts should reflect the communities they serve.¹¹ Diversity of experience, both personal and professional, helps improve judicial decision-making.¹² The confirmation of Judge Lin would be an important step towards ensuring that our federal courts reflect and represent the diversity of our nation.

Judge Lin is an excellent choice for this position, and we strongly urge the Senate to confirm her to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. 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

⁵ *Munoz et al. v. Sacramento Area Council of Governments et al.*, No. C05-01525 JSW (2007).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ See [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER (Accessed December 2022).

⁸ Press Release, [Feinstein, Padilla Applaud Three Nominations for California-Based Federal Judgeships](#), Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein (July 29, 2022).

⁹ [QuickFacts](#), U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (Accessed December 2022).

¹⁰ See [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER (Accessed December 2022).

¹¹ Maya Sen, [Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time](#), 2017 WIS. L. REV. 367 (2017).

¹² 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).