

June 12, 2024



**SUPPORT THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE MICHELLE WILLIAMS COURT  
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 charged by its diverse membership of more than 240 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Judge Michelle Williams Court 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 Court in our voting record for the 118th Congress.

Judge Court's impressive legal career and experience as a fair-minded judge make her an excellent choice for this position. Since 2012, she has served on the Los Angeles Superior Court, where she is currently the supervising judge of the civil division. Prior to this, she was the vice president and general counsel of Bet Tzedek Legal Services, where she previously had been the director of litigation as well as deputy director of litigation. She also worked in private practice as an associate at both Milberg, Weiss, Bershad Hynes & Lerach and Litt & Markez. She was a fellow with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and an attorney with the ACLU of Southern California. Judge Court is a graduate of Pomona College and Loyola Law School. She has trained future lawyers as an adjunct professor at Loyola Law School. Her commitment to protecting and defending the rights of all people would make her a tremendous asset to the federal bench.

Judge Court's robust legal career includes protecting and advancing a broad array of civil and human rights. In particular, she has worked extensively on fair housing issues, protecting the rights of homeowners and tenants to be free from discrimination and violence in their homes. For example, Judge Court successfully represented a Latino family that survived a racially motivated firebombing of their home, securing a \$1.4 million settlement.<sup>1</sup> In another case, she secured a favorable settlement for nearly 300 tenants in a class action lawsuit against several Los Angeles area public housing complexes for failure to maintain proper security and safety for their residents after tenants were the victims of racially motivated violence at the hands of other building occupants.<sup>2</sup> As general counsel of Bet Tzedek Legal Services, which provides free legal services to low-income residents, she oversaw the work of the organization's attorneys, assisting with both litigation and policy efforts. This included the creation of "know your rights" literature for the public on various legal matters, including the rights of elders housed in assisted living and nursing homes.<sup>3</sup> She also successfully brought cases against property owners who

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<sup>1</sup> *Zuniga v. Haus. Auth. of the City of Los Angeles*, No. BC063576 (L.A. Cnty. Super. Ct., 1998).

<sup>2</sup> *Person Identification Numbers 62-375 v. Hous. Auth. of the City of Los Angeles et al.*, No. CV02810-RAP-RNB (C.D. Cal., 1998).

<sup>3</sup> [Nursing Home Companion](#), BET TZEDEK LEGAL SERVICES (accessed May 2024); [Assisted Living Companion](#), BET TZEDEK LEGAL SERVICES (accessed May 2024).



continuously failed to maintain safe living conditions for tenants<sup>4</sup> and on behalf of a family who was retaliated against after protesting an illegal rent hike,<sup>5</sup> both of which ended with a settlement favorable to her clients. As this important experience demonstrates, Judge Court is eminently qualified to serve as a federal judge.

In addition to the important professional experience that she would bring to the Central District, she would also bring important lived experiences. If confirmed to this position, she would be only the third Black woman actively serving as an Article III judge on this court, and only the fifth in the court's history.<sup>6</sup> Public trust in the judiciary is vital to its function, and that trust is strengthened when the composition of our courts reflects the communities they serve.<sup>7</sup> This personal and professional diversity of experience also improves judicial decision-making.<sup>8</sup> The confirmation of Judge Court is an important step towards ensuring that our federal courts reflect and represent the diversity of our nation.

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

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<sup>4</sup> *People v. Chairez et al.*, No. BC353327 (L.A. Cnty. Super. Ct., 2008).

<sup>5</sup> *Geter v. Graham*, No. BC316425, (L.A. Cnty. Super. Ct., 2007).

<sup>6</sup> See [Biographical Directory of Article III Federal Judges, 1789-present](#), FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.

<sup>7</sup> Maya Sen, [Diversity, Qualifications, and Ideology: How Female and Minority Judges Have Changed, or Not Changed, Over Time](#), 2017 WIS. L. REV. 367 (2017).

<sup>8</sup> 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).