AN OPEN LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION AND CONFIRMATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON TO THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

March 1, 2022

During his 2020 Presidential Campaign, President Joseph R. Biden promised something that has been far overdue—to nominate and appoint the first Black woman to the Supreme Court of the United States. On February 25, 2022, President Biden delivered by nominating Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to be the next, and first Black woman, Supreme Court Justice.

Judge Jackson is undoubtedly qualified and equipped to be our next Supreme Court Justice. Jackson is a fitting choice as a former judicial law clerk to Justice Stephen Breyer, whom she is nominated to replace. Jackson's vast experience includes serving as a federal appellate judge, a federal district court judge, a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, an attorney in private practice, and a federal public defender. Additionally, the U.S. Senate has previously confirmed Jackson on a bipartisan basis several times – most recently last year for her current seat on the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The nomination of Judge Jackson is historic in more than one way. If confirmed, Jackson will become the first Black woman Supreme Court Justice and will further diversify the Court in an unprecedented way by becoming the first federal public defender to grace the Supreme Court bench, and therefore the only sitting Supreme Court Justice that has represented defendants in criminal proceedings. Indeed, her criminal background will bring balance and a refreshing perspective in deliberations and decisions that impact the fates of people convicted of crimes and issues concerning criminal justice. Additionally, we are confident that she will present a level of empathy in criminal matters that the other Justices may lack, given her substantial involvement in the criminal justice system.

Judge Jackson has excelled despite the many obstacles that face Black women attorneys and professionals. There is a principle, often recited in U.S. black households, that to succeed as a Black person in America, you must be twice as good as your white counterparts. This notion is especially true for Black women, and undoubtedly any Black woman qualified to sit on the nation's highest Court. Black women face the negatives of both race and gender and have the challenge of carefully navigating them every day of their professional careers and personal lives. Many take on additional roles and responsibilities, including being mothers, wives, caregivers, teachers, professionals, mentors, and countless other titles on a daily basis.

Despite their continued resourcefulness and diligence, our legal institutions have historically excluded Black women. It is no secret that women of color, particularly Black women, remain one of the most marginalized groups within the legal profession. According to the American Bar Association ("ABA"), in 2021, women of color made up 20% of first-year law students in all U.S. law schools. Yet, they made up only 9% of all attorneys at U.S. law firms and hardly 3% of equity partners. In its 233 years of existence and 115 sitting Justices, the Supreme Court has only had five women and three people of color serve as Justices. Of the three people of color, only one of them was a woman. Representation matters. The Supreme Court should comprise Justices of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to fairly represent our democracy. Nominating and confirming Judge Jackson to the Supreme Court will advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in our judicial system.

Further, any position that this historic nominee is somehow not "qualified" as baseless and, frankly, unacceptable. It rejects Judge Jackson's impeccable legal career, and the examples of previous historic Supreme Court nominations. For example, President Ronald Regan fulfilled his promise to nominate the first woman to the Supreme Court by tapping Sandra Day O'Connor for a Supreme Court vacancy in 1981. Likewise, President Lyndon B. Johnson made history by nominating Thurgood Marshall—the first Black Justice to sit on the Supreme Court bench. These Justices brought a level of representation to the judicial system and provided an essential perspective to Supreme Court jurisprudence. We are confident that Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson will do the same.

Like many Presidents before him, President Biden made a historic choice for the Supreme Court in effort to diversify its makeup by nominating Judge Jackson. As the Las Vegas affiliate of the National Bar Association—the oldest and largest association of predominantly Black lawyers, judges, law professors, and other legal professionals in the United States—we support the nomination and confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as first Black woman on the Supreme Court of the United States. We are proud, elated, and confident in Judge Jackson. She is a reflection of us, has endured similar life experiences, and most of all, will provide a unique perspective to complex legal issues that she will be presented with on the Court.

The Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association (LVNBA) was originally incorporated in 1981 and reincorporated in 2005. Over the years, the LVNBA has grown from a small group of 14 trailblazing attorneys and judges into a vibrant organization. Since its founding, the LVNBA has increased in size and influence. Today, our members own their own companies and firms, are partners and associates at small, medium, and large law firms, are industry professionals and General Counsels, are students and professors at community colleges and the University of Nevada, hold elected office in local jurisdictions across Southern Nevada, pursue justice for clients as prosecutors and public defenders, serve Nevadans as members of the state's Legislature, Judiciary, Gaming Control Board, and Attorney General's Office as well as serve

on the federal level in the Department of Justice and as members of the Federal Judiciary. You can read more about the LVNBA here: www.lasvegasnba.org