

November 18, 2013

Re: *Nomination of Judge Robert Wilkins to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit*

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center (the "Center"), an organization that has worked since 1972 to advance and protect women's legal rights, we write in strong support of the nomination of Judge Robert Wilkins to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ("D.C. Circuit").

Judge Wilkins is exceedingly well-qualified to serve on this important court. He graduated from the Rose Hulman Institute of Technology, *cum laude*, with a degree in chemical engineering, and received his law degree from Harvard Law School, where he served as the Executive Editor of the school's Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review. Judge Wilkins then clerked for the Honorable Earl B. Gilliam of the United States District Court for the Southern District of California—the first African American to serve on that Court.

Judge Wilkins subsequently joined D.C.'s Public Defender Service ("PDS"), widely considered the best local public defender in the country. Judge Wilkins worked first as a staff attorney, and later as head of the Special Litigation division. During his ten-year tenure, he tried hundreds of cases before the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and also argued numerous cases before the D.C. Circuit. In addition, he worked on the D.C. Truth-in-Sentencing Commission and the D.C. Advisory Commission on Sentencing, which provided a roadmap for the D.C. Sentencing Guidelines implemented in 2004.

Not only did Judge Wilkins demonstrate extraordinary commitment to public service at PDS, but he left PDS in 2000 to work full-time without pay towards the creation of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Along with a bipartisan group of lawmakers, Judge Wilkins drafted a law to establish a blue-ribbon Presidential Commission for the museum, which was passed unanimously by both Houses of Congress, and signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001. Judge Wilkins then served on the Commission and chaired its Site and Building Committee. In large part as a result of Judge Wilkins' efforts, the museum will open in 2015.

In 2002, after his work on the Presidential Commission, Judge Wilkins joined the law firm Venable LLP as a partner. At Venable, Judge Wilkins specialized in white collar defense, intellectual property, and complex civil litigation, and continued his commitment to the public good by devoting thousands of hours to pro bono work on civil rights, child custody, asylum, Social Security benefit denial, and other cases. In

recognition of his enormous legal talent, Judge Wilkins garnered numerous accolades, including the National Law Journal's "40 under 40 Most Successful Young Litigators in America" (2002); Washington Magazine's "Washington's Top Lawyers" (2007); and the Legal Times' "90 Greatest Washington Lawyers of the Last 30 Years" (2008).

Judge Wilkins' current position on the United States District Court for the District of Columbia is only the latest accomplishment in his impressive legal career. Based on his outstanding record, he was confirmed unanimously by the Senate in 2010, and has served with distinction ever since. Judge Wilkins received a unanimous "Well-Qualified" rating from the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary both for his nomination to the district court and for his current nomination to the D.C. Circuit.

In addition to his professional accomplishments and public service, Judge Wilkins has been an engaged citizen as well, leading to improved justice and fairer treatment. *See Wilkins v. Maryland State Police*, Civ. No. CCB-93-468/CCB-98-1098 (D.Md. Apr. 22, 2003).

Judge Wilkins' exceptional personal integrity, legal talent, and broad experience make him an excellent addition to the D.C. Circuit, which regularly reviews complex cases of national import and on which eight judges are currently doing the work of eleven. In addition, Judge Wilkins' confirmation would increase the diversity on the D.C. Circuit, on which only five African Americans have served as judges in the past 120 years.

For all of the reasons described above, the Center offers its support of Judge Robert Wilkins and urges you to give his nomination an up-or-down vote.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Nancy Duff Campbell and Marcia Greenberger in blue ink.

Nancy Duff Campbell
Co-President

Marcia D. Greenberger
Co-President