



February 23, 2024

Senator Charles E. Schumer  
100 State Street, Suite 3040  
Rochester, NY 14614

Re: Vacancy in the Western District of New York in Rochester

Senator Schumer:

The Rochester Black Bar Association (RBBA), the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys (GRAWA), and the Monroe County Bar Association (MCBA) urge you to make a recommendation for the judicial vacancy in the Western District of New York in Rochester that increases and enhances the diversity on the Federal bench.

Although the RBBA, GRAWA, and the MCBA each serve the needs of different groups within the Rochester legal community, and each group may have different priorities, all emphatically agree that diversity is needed in the Western District.

The bench should reflect the community it serves. The seventeen counties covered by the Western District include both Rochester and Buffalo, two major population centers where people of color constitute a majority. The Western District is one of 25 (out of 94) districts in the United States that has *never* had a person of color appointed as a District Court Judge. We repeat: not one judge of color has ever been appointed by the President to serve as a District Court Judge in the Western District of New York since its establishment in 1900.

Although women comprise half of the district's population, Chief Judge Elizabeth Wolford is the only woman District Court Judge in the entire Western District. Since 1900, there have been 18 judges appointed in the Western District of New York. Seventeen have been white men, and one a white woman. We acknowledge and appreciate the Senator's prior recommendation of a woman to fill the Western District vacancy, and we urge you to continue the efforts to bring diversity to the Federal bench by pressing for a nomination that will bring both gender and racial diversity to the bench.

President Biden has nominated many women and people of color to the federal judiciary, and that trend should certainly continue here in Rochester, the home of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. Indeed, within the Rochester legal community, we have numerous exceptional members of the bench and bar who would be excellent and apt candidates for this vacancy and bring much-needed diversity to the Western District bench. The bar associations welcome the opportunity to identify such candidates for your consideration. Indeed, any time a Federal judicial seat becomes available, we urge you to reach out to the local bar associations and seek our input as a resource for finding highly qualified candidates to fill the vacancies.

Race and gender impact and shape our perspectives, and it is past time for the lived experiences of diverse judicial candidates to be heard on the Western District bench. Adding different perspectives and having representation of diverse life experiences to the bench will improve the judicial decision-making in the Western District and, by extension, the Second Circuit, increase points of view, reduce unconscious bias, and enhance the public's trust and respect for the deliberations.

Lifetime appointments to the federal bench result in infrequent vacancies, so the import of this nomination, and the opportunity to shape the future of the Western District bench, cannot be overstated. Senator Schumer, the time is now for you to take action to increase the diversity on the bench in the Western District of New York.

Respectfully submitted,

**Rochester Black Bar Association**



Peachie L. Jones, President (RRBALaw@gmail.com)

**Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys**



Jennifer Schauer, President (info@grawa.org )

**Monroe County Bar Association**



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