



The Leadership  
Conference



December 13, 2017

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter Urging the Appointment of an African American to Serve on the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Dear Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer,

On behalf of the national racial and social justice organizations listed below, we write to express our firm support for the appointment of an African American Senator to serve on the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary ("Senate Judiciary Committee"). As organizations with a history of working collaboratively to protect civil rights and advance the cause of racial justice, we are at an unprecedented moment where the faith in the institutions of our federal government have been shaken. Now, more than ever, an African American member should be added to the ranks of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The Senate Judiciary Committee serves as one of the most critical standing committees in Congress. Charged with both oversight and legislative responsibilities, this body has long-served as a check on the appointment powers of the Executive Branch. In addition, the Senate Judiciary Committee exercises broad jurisdiction over matters that relate to civil rights, issues that deeply impact the everyday lives of African Americans. We find it deeply concerning that only one African American Senator (Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill)) has served on this distinguished body in its 201 year history; and in the 22 years since her transition, no African American Senator has been given the opportunity to serve.

We are indeed at an unprecedented moment in history where a record number of African American Senators serve in Congress. This vacancy creates the opportunity to further diversify the perspectives and voices overseeing issues that impact the most vulnerable communities in our country. We urge Senate Leadership to ensure that the voice of the African American community is reflected, not only in its mission, but in its makeup.

We strongly support the appointment of an African American Senator to fill the current vacancy on the Judiciary Committee. We thank you for your consideration of the points raised in this letter. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Kim Tignor, Director of Public Policy at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, at (202) 662-8310 or [Ktignor@lawyerscommittee.org](mailto:Ktignor@lawyerscommittee.org).

Sincerely,

Kristen Clarke  
President and Executive Director  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Marc Morial  
CEO  
National Urban League

Derrick Johnson  
President and CEO  
NAACP

Rev. Al Sharpton  
Founder and President  
National Action Network

Melanie Campbell  
President and CEO  
The National Coalition on Black Civic  
Participation

Sherrilyn Ifill  
President and Director-Counsel  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational  
Fund, Inc.

Vanita Gupta  
President and CEO  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human  
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