

Dear Representative:

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the undersigned organizations are pleased to support H.R. 5309, the Congressional Tribute to Constance Baker Motley Act, which would posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of her historic and trailblazing contributions to our country as a civil rights lawyer, elected official, and federal judge. We encourage you to join the bipartisan list of 174 cosponsors of H.R. 5309, and we urge the House to pass it.

Constance Baker Motley began her career at the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) in 1945 as a law clerk and rose to prominence as LDF's first Black female attorney. She successfully litigated numerous cases that ended racial segregation, including in Memphis restaurants, Birmingham lunch counters, and Topeka schools in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. She helped secure the release of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. following his arrest in Birmingham, and won the reinstatement of 1,100 Black students who had been expelled for taking part in civil rights demonstrations. She became the first Black woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court and won nine of the ten cases she argued.

After several more firsts as an elected official – becoming the first Black woman to sit in the New York State Senate, and the first woman to serve as Manhattan Borough President – Constance Baker Motley was confirmed in 1966 as the first Black woman to become a federal judge. She eventually became the Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York and handled more than 2,500 cases in her nearly four decades of distinguished service on the bench.

Throughout her life and career, Constance Baker Motley has worked tirelessly through our legal system to uphold our nation's highest ideals. In doing so, she has inspired countless people to enter the legal profession and to continue working for civil and human rights. H.R. 5309 represents a highly deserved expression of national gratitude for her remarkable contributions. We hope you will join us in supporting this important recognition.