

Legislation Text

File #: 220191, **Version:** 0

Congratulating Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson on her historic nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States and urging the U.S. Senate to confirm her nomination.

WHEREAS, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was born in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Miami, Florida. Her parents attended segregated primary schools, and then attended historically Black colleges and universities. Both started their careers as public school teachers and became leaders and administrators in the Miami-Dade Public School System. When Judge Jackson was in preschool, her father attended law school. In a 2017 lecture, Judge Jackson traced her love of the law back to sitting next to her father in their apartment as he tackled his law school homework-reading cases and preparing for Socratic questioning-while she undertook her preschool homework-coloring books; and

WHEREAS, Judge Jackson stood out as a high achiever throughout her childhood. She was a speech and debate star who was elected “mayor” of Palmetto Junior High and student body president of Miami Palmetto Senior High School. But like many Black women, Judge Jackson still faced naysayers. When Judge Jackson told her high school guidance counselor she wanted to attend Harvard, the guidance counselor warned that Judge Jackson should not set her “sights so high”; and

WHEREAS, That clearly did not stop Judge Jackson. She not only attended Harvard University, where she graduated *magna cum laude*, but she then attended Harvard Law School, where she graduated *cum laude* and was an editor of the *Harvard Law Review*; and

WHEREAS, Early in her legal career, Judge Jackson served as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, the seat for which she has now been nominated. Judge Jackson also served as a Public Defender, which would make her the first former public defender to serve on the Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama nominated Judge Jackson to serve as the Vice Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission in 2009, and she was confirmed with bipartisan support in 2010. By serving on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, she followed in the footsteps of her mentor Justice Breyer. The Commission, which President Biden fought to create as a member of the U.S. Senate, is bipartisan by design. Her work there focused on reducing unwarranted sentencing disparities and ensuring that federal sentences were just and proportionate; and

WHEREAS, President Obama nominated Judge Jackson to sit on the bench of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in 2012. During her confirmation hearing in 2012, Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia’s House delegate, recounted that Justice Breyer had two words when asked about her eligibility for the post: “Hire her.” She was confirmed with bipartisan support in 2013. When Judge Jackson was sworn in for the job in 2013, Justice Breyer did the honors. “She sees things from different points of view, and she sees somebody else’s point of view and understands it,” he said at the time. During her eight years as a federal trial judge in the nation’s capital, she wrote more than 550 opinions; and

WHEREAS, Judge Jackson was one of President Biden’s first judicial nominees. In 2021, she was confirmed

with bipartisan support to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, one of the nation’s most influential courts and often a stepping stone for Supreme Court Justices; and

WHEREAS, According to *The Washington Post*, “Ketanji Brown Jackson ... was a ‘child of the ’70s,’ as she puts it. Raised with an African name, dressed in early childhood in a mini-dashiki, she was expected to reap the fruit of the boycotts and sit-ins of the 1960s, taking advantage of the opportunities and equality her parents’ generation had demanded. But...her path was neither smooth nor straight. The generational pivot her parents and other civil rights activists sought turned out to be not so simple...Jackson found her way with a different approach than the confrontational activism of her parents’ generation - by deploying her smarts, good cheer and a root assumption that, whatever the obstacles, she belonged”; and

WHEREAS, Since Justice Breyer announced his retirement, President Biden conducted a rigorous process to identify his replacement. President Biden sought a candidate with exceptional credentials, unimpeachable character, and unwavering dedication to the rule of law. And the President sought an individual who is committed to equal justice under the law and who understands the profound impact that the Supreme Court’s decisions have on the lives of the American people. President Biden called Jackson “one of our nation’s brightest legal minds,” and he said she “will be an exceptional Justice”; and

WHEREAS, As President Biden said, it is a bipartisan tradition to ensure the richness and diversity of our country is represented in its leadership on the highest Court. It is long overdue that a Black woman serve on the Supreme Court, and Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is an incredibly qualified nominee with strong professional and lived experience, character, integrity, and dedication to upholding the Constitution and the rule of law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby congratulates Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson on her historic nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States and urging the U.S. Senate to confirm her nomination.