

**Written Testimony of Mike Urgo, President, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut Legislature**

To the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, I would like to express our strong support for the nomination and confirmation of a candidate who not only reflects the demographic diversity of our state but also brings a breadth of professional experience that is often underrepresented in the judiciary. It is our hope that the upcoming vacancy on the Connecticut Supreme Court will be filled by a woman of color, someone whose lived experiences and professional background can enrich the court's deliberations and foster greater equity in our legal system.

While Connecticut has made strides toward increasing diversity on the bench, significant gaps remain. No Black woman has ever been appointed to serve on the Connecticut Supreme Court, and the court remains predominantly composed of judges with backgrounds in prosecution and corporate law. This imbalance limits the court's perspective, particularly in cases that involve civil rights and public interest matters. The absence of voices with backgrounds in public defense, legal aid, labor law, and environmental advocacy undermines the court's ability to fully represent the citizens it serves.

We believe that broadening the range of professional and personal experiences represented on the bench will enhance not only the credibility of the judiciary, but also the quality of justice in Connecticut. Empirical research shows that judges' backgrounds and experiences strongly influence how they make decisions. A bench that reflects the diversity of our state and includes individuals who have represented marginalized communities is better equipped to address the needs and concerns of all residents.

The importance of representation in the judiciary cannot be overstated. When individuals and communities feel that the courts reflect their lived experiences, public trust in the judicial system grows. We urge this committee to take a deliberate step toward correcting the historical underrepresentation of women of color and public interest attorneys by prioritizing the appointment of such a candidate to the Connecticut Supreme Court.

As our nation faces ongoing challenges to civil rights and environmental protections, it is more important than ever that our state courts serve as bastions of justice for all. We look to the Connecticut Supreme Court to uphold these values, and we firmly believe that appointing a justice from a historically underrepresented background is a critical step toward realizing that vision.

Thank you for your attention and for considering our perspective on this important matter. We trust that you will make a decision that reflects the values of equity and inclusion that are essential to the future of our judiciary.

Respectfully,
Mike Urgo
President, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters