

Hon. Dick Durbin, Chairman  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 13, 2021

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

It is in support of increased transparency and accountability of our nation's judges that we write to ask that the financial disclosure reports and statements of net worth required of all judicial nominees be made public as a standard appendix to the public Senate Judiciary Questionnaire.

Over the course of the last several Congresses, the Judiciary Committee has made these reports public for Supreme Court nominees but not for district or circuit court nominees. Yet with all federal judges and justices serving for life once confirmed, there is significant oversight value in identifying and understanding the types of debts, severance agreements and other financial entanglements that may indicate substandard judgment in the present or potential conflicts of interest down the line.

That these forms may, in fact, bolster the public's assessment of a nominee's character is no reason for them to remain private. Such a showing could help strengthen the public's trust in the third branch.

In addition to including disclosures and statements of net worth in a nominee's public SJQ, we ask that you also ensure that they are included in the official transcripts of all judicial nomination hearings—and that the transcripts themselves are published online by the GPO.

Publishing hearing transcripts is a long and important tradition maintained by the Senate Judiciary Committee, but it appears to have been briefly paused in recent years. We hope that under your leadership it will resume for new hearings and that any gaps in past years will be closed so that a continuous tradition is restored.

At a time when judicial nomination battles too often devolve into partisan affairs, we hope that you and your Judiciary Committee colleagues can come together to raise the bar for transparency by acting on this request.

Sincerely,  
Gabe Roth  
Executive Director  
Fix the Court

Mike Lissner  
Executive Director  
Free Law Project