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1900 MARKET STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103-3508 215.665.2000 800.523.2900 215.665.2013 FAX www.cozen.com

June 3, 2009

Nelson A. Diaz
Direct Phone 215.665.5514
Direct Fax 215.701.2095
ndiaz@cozen.com

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
361-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
335 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Sessions:

As the first Latino Judge, Administrative Judge, Lawyer in Pennsylvania and leader in the national Hispanic community, I write this to offer my wholehearted and undivided support for President Obama's nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States. I am willing to offer testimony from the characteristics of a poor Latino boy from Harlem's Public Housing that Judge Sonia Sotomayor brings to our system in promotion of equality of opportunity to all people.

I have served the Federal government under all three Democratic Presidents in my lifetime, Governors, Mayors, and the community. My career has taken me to the pinnacle of success in the law and business. I serve on a Fortune 500 Board of Directors including many other national leadership organizations.

Judge Sotomayor has been a colleague and a friend and we have been able to collaborate and spend time together.

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Judge Sotomayor is a brilliant jurist and has never been involved in any partisan politics. I was the chair of the Hispanic Caucus of the Democratic Party and founder of Hispanic American Democrats to instill equality in the Democratic Party, also as a national leader I am aware of most of the national partisan Hispanics. You should be aware that people that succeed from the Judge's background and mine are only 10% of the entire mainland Puerto Rican community. You may be aware that only 10% of Latino students, who come from an urban educational system where the Judge and I grew up, get to go on to college. This is the reason that her appointment brings joy and pride to all Latinos and people of color.

Judge Sotomayor will be the only person on the Supreme Court to have trial experience and as a former trial judge, this is an extremely important need on any appellate court. I have reviewed many of her opinions and there is no bias or lack of fairness to rich or poor, religious differences or gender. What she brings is overcoming discrimination as a woman and a Latina into the legal profession. Having been the first to pass the bar in Pennsylvania in 1972 you should be aware that there were only two Latino lawyers in New Jersey and 75 in New York at the time of my graduation in 1972.

Judge Sotomayor also brings her experience as a woman and a New York born Puerto Rican. Puerto Ricans are migrants and not immigrants and have been denied the full rights of enjoying equality of citizenship. She understands the burdens of language and culture that are part of this struggle for equality.

Judge Sotomayor has unbelievable work ethics not only for the court but also for civic and community involvement. Always trying to motivate those less fortunate to pick themselves up by their boot straps and achieve as she becomes the example. We as descendents of Latinos and Puerto Rican are insulted by the recent comments by members of Congress to the fact that there may be a racist position on the part of this eminent, dynamic, intellectual judge. One can only see how the rights of citizenship given in 1917 have been denied and those on the mainland have third class citizenship with all Latinos.

I have witnessed her integrity and can vouch for the fact that she will be an outstanding Supreme Court Justice and roll model for all, especially those who have been neglected in our society. The Judge and I swore to uphold our laws and constitution and neither have ever swayed from this oath or our patriotic duties of being the best Americans we can be.

I unconditionally support her nomination and urge your quick confirmation as the next Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.