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Contact: David Jacobs  
212-965-2255 / djacobs@naacpldf.org

LDF Condemns Renomination of Thomas Farr; Renews Call for Additional Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing

Today, the White House renominated Thomas Farr to serve as a federal judge in the Eastern District of North Carolina. In November, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) called on the Senate Judiciary Committee to recall Farr to appear before the Committee to answer additional questions.

Farr appears to have explicitly misled the Senate about his participation in a campaign-related scheme to frighten black North Carolinians into not casting a ballot. Farr served as counsel for The Jesse Helms for Senate Campaign, which, in 1990, sent more than 100,000 postcards to mostly black voters suggesting that they could be prosecuted for voting in the upcoming midterm election. Recently, Farr told the Senate Judiciary Committee that he didn't know about the postcards until after they had already been sent. However, former U.S. Department of Justice lawyer Gerry Hebert, who investigated the scheme at the time, noted that Farr “was certainly involved in the scheme as it was being developed.” Given this evidence and Farr’s subsequent statements on the subject, he should never have been renominated and, at this point, he should not be allowed to proceed in this process without a new hearing.

LDF Policy Director Todd A. Cox issued the following statement:

“In August, Congressional leaders from across the ideological spectrum were quick to express condemnation of the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. Now, months later, Senators are faced with an opportunity to forcefully rebuke the extremist ideology that they supposedly despise. Indeed, a vote to confirm Thomas Farr to serve on the federal bench would be a vote to further entrench white supremacy in the United States. His career is characterized by his continual efforts to advance and codify racism in North Carolina. From approving racially discriminatory materials to intimidate Black voters on behalf of the Jesse Helms for Senate Campaign, to fiercely fighting for laws that disenfranchise and weaken opportunities for people of color, Farr’s record is clear.

“But Thomas Farr hasn’t simply championed white supremacy. His inaccurate testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee suggests he’s also dishonest. Individuals selected for the judiciary are given a lifetime appointment, and must be able to adjudicate difficult legal disputes fairly and without bias. Farr’s career and misleading Committee testimony suggest he is simply incapable of doing so. Confirming him would send the chilling message
to Black North Carolinians that their rights will not be honestly protected in federal court. Senators must stop rubberstamping judicial nominees, and vote against this aggressively regressive choice. Our federal courts require competent and qualified judges, and Farr does not come close to meeting that standard.”

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*