For Immediate Release
Tuesday, January 31, 2017

Statement of NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill on the Nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court

“Today, President Trump announced the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court.

“There are seminal moments in our history that truly show just how vital the role of the courts is to our country. Courts can reject the promise of equality and sow and spark national division as in the dark days of Dred Scott or Plessy v. Ferguson, or they can uphold the constitutional promise of equal justice under law as they did in watersheds like Brown v. Board of Education. The past few days have sharply illustrated the vital role that courts play in our democracy in ensuring that the rule of law and the Constitution and its guarantees of equality for all people are still in force.

“Any nominee to the Supreme Court must be a jurist with an unflagging commitment to the Constitution and the hard-fought gains we have made for equality and the dignity of all persons since our country’s founding. It is incumbent upon the Senate to reject any nominee to the Supreme Court who cannot and will not uphold the Constitution and the rights of the people it defends.

“As with all Supreme Court nominees, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund will thoroughly review Judge Gorsuch’s record in the area of civil rights and release a report providing our analysis of that record. Already, we are deeply troubled by statements Judge Gorsuch has made criticizing the role of courts in protecting equal rights—bemoaning an ‘addiction to constitutional litigation’—and decisions that have undermined legal protections for workers, women, students with disabilities, and victims of police violence and employment discrimination. Judge Gorsuch has also advocated radical restrictions on the federal government’s authority that could threaten its ability to guarantee equal opportunity. We will be undertaking a deep look at these and other areas in the coming days.”

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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.