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LDF Congratulates Laphonza Butler on Historic Appointment as the First Black Lesbian Woman and Third Black Woman to Serve as a U.S. Senator

Today, Laphonza Butler was sworn-in to the U.S. Senate seat previously held by Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who passed away last week at 90. Ms. Butler, who previously served as president of Emily's List, is also a labor leader, political strategist, and an advocate for women and working people. She is now the sole Black woman serving in Congress as a U.S. senator, the first openly LGBTQ person to represent California in the Senate, the first Black lesbian to openly serve in Congress in American history, and the second Black woman to represent California in the Senate following Vice President Kamala Harris.

LDF President & Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement in response:

“We applaud Governor Newsom for his historic appointment of Laphonza Butler to represent California in the U.S. Senate. We also congratulate Senator Butler on this momentous achievement in a career that has been distinguished by leadership, advocacy, and public service. She is one of only three Black women to have served as a senator in the U.S. Congress and the only Black LGBTQ+ woman to do so. These historic distinctions underscore the continued importance of embracing and empowering a diversity of perspectives at key decision-making tables. We are especially encouraged by the Senator Butler’s labor credentials and her work on the behalf of women and girls, whose rights to bodily autonomy in the current national landscape continue to require sustained defense. We look forward to the contributions Ms. Butler will make in the U.S. Senate on behalf of the communities she has long served but who have never been fully represented in the halls of Congress.”

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