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Contact:
Natalia Garzon, LDF
(212) 965-2786 / ngarzon@naacpldf.org

Laurie Kinney, Alliance for Justice
(202) 464-7367 / Laurie.Kinney@afj.org

Olympia Feil, National Women's Law Center
(202) 588-5180 / OFeil@nwlc.org

**Shin Inouye, Leadership Conference on Civil
and Human Rights**
(202) 869-0398 / inouye@civilrights.org

**Kaylie Hanson Long, NARAL Pro-Choice
America**
(202) 973-3032 / media@prochoiceamerica.org

**Jesse Lee, Center for American Progress Action
Fund**
(202) 741-6350 / jlee@americanprogress.org

Drew Courtney, People For the American Way
(202) 467-2307 / dcourtney@pfaw.org

**Lauren Gray, National Center for Lesbian
Rights**
LGray@NCLRights.org

**Beth Lynk, Planned Parenthood Federation of
America**
(202) 656-5139 / beth.lynk@ppfa.org

Advocates for Civil and Reproductive Rights Call for Vitter's Withdrawal

A coalition of leaders in the reproductive rights and civil rights fields called today for the withdrawal of Wendy Vitter's nomination for a seat on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. The groups note that Vitter's repeated demonstrations of poor judgment and questionable integrity, including her refusal to clearly answer a question about a landmark civil rights ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, at her confirmation hearing; her omission of numerous controversial items from her initial responses to her Senate Judiciary Questionnaire; and her demonstrably false public testimony about her promulgation of misleading information about women's health, disqualify her for a lifetime seat on the federal bench.

“Wendy Vitter’s appalling failure to endorse the Supreme Court’s momentous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* should be disqualifying for any nominee – judicial or otherwise – seeking a public position in our country,” said [Todd A. Cox](#), Policy Director at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. “A lifetime appointment to the federal bench requires adjudicating complex legal disputes, and deciding to voice support for equality, desegregated schools and the rule of law should never be a tough call. The *Brown* ruling laid the groundwork for integration in all aspects of American life, and opposition to it is an affront to civil rights and the rule of law. Support for the *Brown* decision must remain a red line among judicial nominees, and we demand Ms. Vitter’s nomination be withdrawn immediately.”

“Ms. Vitter has demonstrated extreme hostility to reproductive health care, particularly contraception and abortion. She has praised abortion restrictions struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court and repeatedly espoused widely discredited medical arguments used by extreme advocacy organizations to advance restrictions on reproductive health care. Ms. Vitter’s record raises concerns as to whether she would uphold core constitutional rights and protections, including the rights to decide to use contraception or have an abortion, if confirmed to a lifetime position on the federal bench,” said Fatima Goss Graves, National Women’s Law Center President and CEO.

“There are hundreds of lawyers in Louisiana more qualified to be a federal district court judge than Wendy Vitter,” said Jake Faleschini, Director of Courts Programs at the Center for American Progress Action Fund. “Her offensive performance before the Senate Judiciary Committee shows how unprepared she is for the bench. She is the perfect example of a nominee chosen not to uphold the law fairly for every American who comes before her, but to placate extreme special interests.”

“Like many of Trump’s nominees, Wendy Vitter is dangerously biased and unqualified to serve on the bench. She has a long record of extreme comments targeting women and our access to healthcare, and has spent her career peddling the myth that abortion is dangerous. Her beliefs are rooted in junk science, far from the standards of evidence we rely on judges to uphold. Vitter’s record leaves no doubt that she’ll impose her extreme, anti-choice beliefs instead of protecting the fundamental freedoms of all women and families. Her nomination should be withdrawn,” said Adrienne Kimmell, NARAL Pro-Choice America Vice President.

“Wendy Vitter is unfit to serve as a judge. During her confirmation hearing, she was unwilling to acknowledge that the U.S. Supreme Court correctly decided *Brown v. Board of Education*. It’s shocking that Ms. Vitter refused to say whether the Supreme Court did the right thing when it struck down segregation and legalized apartheid in America’s schools. She also misrepresented her views on women’s health and her promotion of junk science that was caught on video. That’s why we are leading a petition to call for the withdrawal of her nomination. Our federal judges must be honest and fair-minded – and Wendy Vitter is not,” said Kristine Lucius, Executive Vice President for Policy, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

“Wendy Vitter simply isn’t fit for a lifetime seat on the federal bench,” said [Paul Gordon](#), senior legislative counsel at People For the American Way. “She’s made clear, over the course of her career and in her testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee that she can’t separate junk science from reliable fact. That’s precisely the kind of thing we need to be able to expect of federal judges. Especially now, given the chaos in Washington and in the White House, Congress shouldn’t be pressing forward to confirm yet another narrow-minded elitist to the courts. Senators should stand up for our rights and demand this nominee be withdrawn.”

“Junk science has long been a tool used by opponents of civil rights – from women’s equal employment opportunity to LGBT equality to reproductive rights. When animus hides behind the supposedly objective veneer of ‘scientific’ claims, we must be able to rely on our courts to look behind the curtain,” said National Center for Lesbian Rights Policy Director Julie Gonen. “Wendy Vitter showed profoundly poor judgment in promoting absurd propaganda about contraception and then claimed she lacked the capacity to assess its credibility. She is unqualified to serve as a federal judge, a role that requires an even-handed review of evidence and the ability to determine the reliability and credibility of expert witnesses and testimony. We do not need judges who are willing to sacrifice the truth in furtherance of an ideological agenda.”

“Wendy Vitter made it crystal clear at her Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that she is unfit for a lifetime federal judgeship,” said Dana Singiser, Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs for Planned Parenthood. “Whether it is promoting fake science or omitting information from her Senate questionnaire, Vitter has proven time and time again that she doesn’t have the judgment needed for a lifetime seat on the federal bench. Vitter is dangerous, untrustworthy, and unfit and Planned Parenthood calls for her nomination to be immediately withdrawn.”

“Wendy Vitter, who infamously would not even say she thought *Brown v. Board of Education* was rightly decided, made glaring efforts to misrepresent her record to the Senate Judiciary Committee,” said Nan Aron, President of Alliance for Justice. “First, she omitted controversial materials from her original answers to her Senate Judiciary Questionnaire. Then she went before the committee and, under oath, gave a misleading account of her actions in urging women to get their doctors to distribute untruthful information about contraception and abortion. That is unacceptable behavior for a potential federal judge and we believe Vitter’s nomination should be immediately withdrawn.”

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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.