LDF Commends the Biden-Harris Administration’s Critical Reforms to the Supreme Court of the United States

President Joseph Biden has proposed a series of reforms to increase ethics, accountability, and public trust in the Supreme Court of the United States. His proposal follows recommendations made by the Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States, in which former Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill participated and to which LDF submitted testimony.

In response to President Biden’s proposal, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement:

“We commend President Biden for proposing vital reforms to the Supreme Court of the United States to ensure judicial ethics and accountability and inspire trust in our country’s highest court. The Biden-Harris administration has demonstrated a staunch commitment to ethics and equity in the federal judiciary. Through his 202 judicial confirmations, President Biden has undertaken concerted work to diversify the federal judiciary. He has also brought experts together to have critical conversations about court reforms through the Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States.

“The president’s proposal builds on these experts’ recommendations that the Supreme Court operate with integrity and transparency to ensure that our democracy realizes its fullest potential. We also call on Congress to pass legislation for greater transparency, consistent neutrality, and a continued commitment to increasing diversity in the federal judiciary overall. Our democracy cannot operate effectively amid a public crisis of confidence in the integrity of our judiciary.

“The Supreme Court has played a central role in protecting and advancing civil rights. As the country’s highest judicial institution, it frequently delivers the last word on matters of fairness and justice and makes far-reaching decisions that affect the lives of all Americans, including Black communities and those who are most marginalized. President Biden undoubtedly recognizes this critical throughline connecting the Court and the advancement of civil rights, as he outlined his plan for Court reform at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library – an ode to the president who 60 years ago signed the trailblazing Civil Rights Act of 1964.
“LDF has long championed ethical standards and protocols that the Court should embody – including through repeated requests to Congress to address the public crisis in confidence in the judiciary. We will continue our advocacy to reform the judiciary until these reforms are in place. We must be ever vigilant in protecting our democracy, and this includes ensuring the integrity of the institution designed to be the ultimate arbiter of the law, guardian of our civil and human rights, and interpreter of our Constitution.”

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*Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF 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.*