



March 24, 2017

Senator Charles Grassley, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for Confirmation of Judge Neil Gorsuch

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:

We write on behalf of the National Congress of American Indians and the Native American Rights Fund to offer our support for the confirmation of Judge Neil Gorsuch to become Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. Judge Gorsuch hails from the West, with the Tenth Circuit encompassing the territory of 76 federally-recognized Indian tribes. Our organizations, and the Indian tribal governments we represent, have long sought the nomination of Justices with knowledge of federal Indian law, and more generally with experience on western issues such as federal lands and natural resources.

As noted repeatedly during the hearing, Judge Gorsuch has significant experience with cases involving the interests of Indian tribes and Indian people. His opinions recognize Tribes as sovereign governments, and address issues of significance to Tribes, including state police incursion onto tribal lands, sovereign immunity, religious freedom, accounting for trust funds, exhaustion of tribal remedies, and Indian country criminal jurisdiction. Judge Gorsuch appears to be both attentive to the details and respectful to the fundamental principles of tribal sovereignty and the federal trust responsibility.

Judge Gorsuch was one of the Tenth Circuit Judges who accepted NCAI's invitation to our 2007 Annual Meeting in Denver, CO, and engaged in an insightful dialogue with tribal leaders regarding the status of federal Indian law in the courts. Tribal leaders greatly appreciate the outreach and communication with judges, like Judge Gorsuch, who are willing to take time out of their busy schedules to learn more about Indian country.

Based on this experience and his record, we have confidence that Judge Gorsuch will be open-minded to all perspectives. It is our hope that his confirmation will help to preserve bi-partisan cooperation on the judicial selection process. Please contact NCAI General Counsel John Dossett, jdossett@ncai.org, or NARF Staff Attorney Richard Guest, richardg@narf.org, if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Cladoosby".

Brian Cladoosby, NCAI President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John E. Echohawk".

John Echohawk, NARF Executive Director