WOMEN of MUJERES de
EL BARRIO
Founded / Fundado 2000

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May 8, 2009

Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Fax (202) 224-3479

Re: United States Supreme Court Nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor

Dear Mr. Leahy:

Women of El Barrio (WOEB) proudly and respectfully urge you to make Judge Sonia Sotomayor your first appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States of America. Our appeal is consistent with WOEB's mission to develop the leadership and promote the contributions of Puerto Rican grandmothers and young women from our community, through efforts that extend from preserving a block, to honoring the gifts of our precious Planet! Sonia Sotomayor, is a star whose light shows working class boys and girls that they can become men and women who achieve in order to serve.

As a Latina, Judge Sotomayor's appointment addresses two glaring deficiencies in the court's lack of diversity and will bring our court system closer to real equality of opportunity.

In their appeal New York Senators Schumer and Gillibrand recognize that "Latinos are a large and growing segment of our society that have gone grossly underrepresented in our legal system. Indeed, while Latinos comprise around 15 percent of the population, only about 7 percent of federal judges are Latino. Moreover, not a single Latino has served on the United States Supreme Court in the history of our country."

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While more than half the U.S. population is female, nearly one-third of all U.S. lawyers are women. Approximately 30 percent of the judges serving on the lower federal courts are women. It is truly shameful that the retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Conner should have resulted in the reduction of the paltry number of women from two to one. Most recently the lone remaining female, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, has battled serious health problems.

In Judge Sotomayor you have a nominee of unquestioned legal prowess and excellent academic credentials. She's a Princeton University graduate, summa cum laude; a Juris Doctor from Yale Law School, including Editor of the Yale Law Journal. As a practicing attorney, she was a litigator in an international law firm and served as Manhattan Assistant District Attorney under Robert Morgenthauy 17 years on the federal bench as trial judge in the Southern District of New York and her current position on the 2nd Circuit

In its October 2008 issue of Esquire magazine found that "In her rulings, Sotomayor has often shown suspicion of bloated government and corporate power. She's offered a reinterpretation of copyright law, ruled in favor of public access to private information, and in her most famous decision, sided with labor in the Major League Baseball strike of 1995. More than anything else, she is seen as a realist. With a likely 20 years ahead on the bench, she'll have plenty of time to impart her realist philosophy."

Just as importantly, we, the people want a Supreme Court of men and women who uphold the Constitution of the United States and the laws flowing from it; a court that is balanced when it is called upon to scrutinize preemptive war, torture, black prisons, warrantless surveillance, erosion of the common wealth, and deemed the true arbiter of social, economic and electoral justice for all.

Sincerely,

Sandra Talavera

Sandra Talavera, Chair

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