

April 21, 2017

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Amul R. Thapar to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:

The 23 lawyers who have signed this letter are different in many ways. We come from different parts of the country. We attended different law schools. We have different politics. And we work in different areas of the law, including state and federal government, private practice, and in-house counsel positions. But we all share two things in common. Each of us began our legal career by serving as a law clerk to Judge Amul R. Thapar of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and each of us enthusiastically supports Judge Thapar's nomination to the Sixth Circuit.

Judge Thapar's unparalleled record of public service makes him highly qualified for a seat on the Sixth Circuit. Judge Thapar served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Columbia and later in the Southern District of Ohio. As an Assistant U.S. Attorney, Judge Thapar led the Southern Ohio Mortgage Fraud Task Force, which successfully prosecuted nearly 40 perpetrators of mortgage fraud. Judge Thapar was also appointed to the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, chairing the Controlled Substances and Asset Forfeiture subcommittee and serving on the Violent Crime and the Terrorism and National Security subcommittees. In 2006, Judge Thapar became the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Judge Thapar served in that role until December 2007, when the Senate unanimously confirmed his nomination to serve as a judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

Each of us spent a year working closely with Judge Thapar in his chambers, and we can each attest that he is an exemplary judge, a devoted mentor, and a great person. First, and most importantly, Judge Thapar is an exceptional jurist. There is only one rule in his chambers: get the law right. Judge Thapar works diligently with his law clerks to ensure that every decision he makes is in accordance with what the law requires. Judge Thapar gives equal attention and a fair hearing to every litigant in every case that comes before him. From individual social security

disability claimants, to incarcerated inmates, to large multinational corporations, every party gets a fair hearing from Judge Thapar.

Judge Thapar emphasizes the importance of clear and precise writing. He believes that even the most complicated and arcane legal principles can and should be expressed in a straightforward way that anyone can understand. Judge Thapar works tirelessly with his law clerks to produce opinions that are lucid, logical, and even entertaining when appropriate. Various legal publications have honored Judge Thapar's opinions as among the best in the entire federal judiciary. Each of us is a better writer for having worked in Judge Thapar's chambers.

Judge Thapar is also dedicated to serving and supporting the broader judicial system. Although he has a very busy docket in the Eastern District of Kentucky, Judge Thapar frequently volunteers to handle cases in other courts. He has handled cases, trials, and sentencings in other judicial districts. And he has sat by designation on courts of appeals on several occasions, including the Sixth and Eleventh Circuits.

In addition to being an exemplary judge, Judge Thapar is also a dedicated and inspirational mentor to his law clerks. Judge Thapar hires law clerks from across the ideological and socioeconomic spectrum. His clerks have gone on to clerk for both liberal and conservative Supreme Court Justices, from Justice Sotomayor to Justice Scalia. During our respective clerkships, Judge Thapar had stratospheric expectations for each of us. He challenged us every day to improve our analytical skills, our research abilities, and our legal writing. And Judge Thapar inspired us daily with his integrity, his brilliance, and his work ethic.

But we were not just employees. Judge Thapar welcomes his law clerks into his family. He often invited us over for family dinners and barbecues. Judge Thapar frequently hears cases in different parts of the Eastern District of Kentucky, including Pikeville (a 3.5-hour drive from Judge Thapar's chambers in Covington), Ashland (a 2.5-hour drive), and London (also a 2.5-hour drive). We have fond memories of long car trips with Judge Thapar during which we would discuss cases, family, our careers, and life in general. We have all remained a part of Judge Thapar's family after leaving the clerkship. Judge Thapar makes a concerted effort to stay in touch with his law clerks, following our careers closely and offering his advice and support at any time.

Finally, Judge Thapar is a great person. He is a dedicated husband to his wife Kim and a loving father to his three kids Zach, Carmen, and Nick. Judge Thapar is the kind of dad who makes a point to attend every basketball game, volleyball practice, and school play. He even coaches his son's high school mock trial team. And while Judge Thapar has undoubtedly achieved a great deal in his legal career, he remains humble and down-to-earth. Judge Thapar is adored by the entire courthouse staff, from employees in the clerk's office to security guards to U.S. marshals to janitors. That is because Judge Thapar treats every person he meets with kindness and respect.

We firmly believe there is no one better than Judge Thapar to fill the open seat on the Sixth Circuit. If confirmed, we are confident that Judge Thapar will approach his job on the appellate court the same way he has approached his job on the district court—with dedication to the law, with a prodigious work ethic, and with respect for all parties who appear before him. We hope the Senate will confirm Judge Thapar quickly.

Sincerely,

MacKenzie Walter
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Clerk to Judge Thapar 2008

Adam McNeely
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Clerk to Judge Thapar 2008

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