

# United States Senate

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Graham:

We understand that you intend to hold a nominations hearing on Wednesday, May 6. Given the importance of focusing the Committee's work on responding to the public health and economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, we ask you to delay this hearing until the Committee has had the opportunity to address COVID-related issues.

First, as the pandemic continues to take thousands of American lives and cause enormous economic losses, the Committee should limit its focus, time, and resources to matters directly related to COVID-19. The Committee has broad jurisdiction over many issues tied to the public health and economic fallout from this virus. To name just a few:

- The needs of state and local law enforcement who are on the frontlines responding to the pandemic;
- The health and safety of corrections staff and incarcerated and detained populations as prisons and other congregate settings have become COVID-19 hotspots;
- Changes in immigration policy premised on the pandemic, especially in light of the critical role of immigrants as essential workers on the frontlines of the pandemic;
- The spike in hate crimes against the Asian-American community; and
- Law enforcement needs in response to increased firearm sales.

The Committee would best serve the American public by focusing on those issues most salient to the nation's ongoing response to — and eventual recovery from — COVID-19. In fact, we are eager to work with you to discuss a path forward on coronavirus-related hearings. With bipartisan cooperation, we believe we can reach a consensus on the topics and logistics of hearings essential to addressing the pandemic that avoid in-person meetings, which pose significant health risks for Members, staff, and witnesses. But whether in-person or remote,

hearings to consider lifetime appointments to the federal bench fall well outside these bounds.

Second, holding a nominations hearing at this point in time is simply unnecessary. Given the Senate's proposed schedule for the remainder of the 116th Congress, there is ample time to hold a nominations hearing at a later date. Moreover, there is no urgency to moving lifetime appointments at this juncture. There is, however, considerable urgency — and growing public demand — for oversight of the federal government's response to COVID-19.

Now is not the time to process routine judicial nominations. We therefore urge you to delay the May 6 nominations hearing and instead focus the Committee's efforts on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and protecting the lives and livelihoods of all Americans.

Sincerely,



DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
Ranking Member



PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN  
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE  
United States Senator



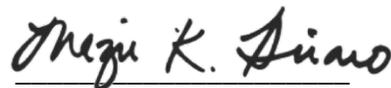
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