NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
Justice for Her. Justice for All.

1350 I STREET NW
SUITE 700
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
202-588-5180
NWLC.ORG

January 30, 2026

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: **Nomination of Ms. Anna St. John to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana**

Dear Senators Grassley and Durbin,

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center, an organization that has advocated on behalf of women and girls for over fifty years, I write in strong opposition to the nomination of Ms. Anna St. John for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Ms. St. John's record of undermining the rights of survivors of sexual assault, people of color, and LGBTQ people raises serious concern about her commitment to equal justice. Ms. St. John has dedicated her legal career to advancing corporate interests, without regard to the harm it may cause to consumers, employees, or the public. Moreover, she has portrayed herself as a consumer advocate while attacking the very legal infrastructure that has protected consumers. Specifically, she has worked to undermine class action settlements, legislation invalidating forced arbitration agreements for sexual harassment and assault, anti-discrimination protections in education and the workplace, and equal opportunity in school athletics.[1] Ms. St. John is not an advocate for

[1] Anna W. St. John, Of Counsel, St. John LLC, https://www.stjohnlaw.com/anna-st-john; Anna St. John, *Lawyers and Big Tech Spend Your Money on Left-Wing Causes*, *Independent Women* (May 15, 2024), https://www.independentwomen.com/2024/05/15/lawyers-and-big-tech-spend-your-money-on-left-wing-causes/ (claiming that the "legal system is funding the Left" through class actions.); Anna St. John, *Written Testimony of Anna St. John*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 117th Cong., 1st Sess. (Nov. 16, 2021), https://www.congress.gov/117/meeting/house/114227/witnesses/HHRG-117-JU00-Wstate-StJohnA-20211116.pdf; *Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act of 2021*, H.R. 4445, 117th Cong. (2021–2022), Pub. L. No. 11790 (enacted Mar. 3, 2022), https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4445; 9 U.S.C. §§ 401–402 (Supp. V 2022),

consumers, students or workers. Just the opposite, she has taken every opportunity to create legal barriers and remove remedies for those who face harm or discrimination.

1. **Ms. St. John sought to delegitimize class actions as a legal tool by falsely portraying them as anti-consumer and leveling partisan attacks against attorneys and organizations who represent workers and consumers.**

Throughout her work at the Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute (HLLI), Ms. St. John has claimed to advance consumer protection by defending people against what she calls "class action abuse" through delegitimizing and stigmatizing class actions as a legal tool.

Class action lawsuits are an essential tool for consumers, workers, and others who have experienced harm through corporate or governmental malfeasance. These lawsuits allow harmed individuals, who often lack the resources to bring suit by themselves, to file suit together and seek justice from powerful actors.[2] Moreover, they enable corporations to be held accountable when they cause a small-scale but meaningful harm to a large number of people, especially when the cost of the harm does not justify bringing suit as individuals—but is extremely profitable to the company. The mere possibility of class actions is known to also deter corporations from

---

https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title9/chapter4&edition=prelim; Amicus Brief of Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute in Support of Certiorari, *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, No. 201199 (U.S. Sup. Ct. Mar. 31, 2021) [hereafter, "HLLI Harvard Brief 1"], https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/20/20-1199/173488/20210331125456187_SFFA%20v%20Harvard%20amicus%20final.pdf; Brief of Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute and Ilya Shapiro as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina*, Nos. 201199 & 21707 (U.S. Sup. Ct. May 9, 2022) [hereafter, "HLLI Harvard Brief 2"], https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/20/20-1199/222774/20220509124941553_SFFA%20v%20Harvard%20HLLI-Shapiro%20amicus.pdf; Brief of Amici Curiae Cato Institute and Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute in Support of Petitioners, *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis*, No. 21-476 (U.S. filed Oct. 27, 2021) [hereafter, "HLLI 303 Creative Brief 1"], https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/21/21-476/197814/20211027144118907_303%20Creative%20cert-stage.pdf; Brief of Amici Curiae Prof. Dale Carpenter, Prof. Eugene Volokh, Ilya Shapiro, American Unity Fund, and Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute in Support of Petitioners, *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis*, No. 21-476 (U.S. filed May 31, 2022) [hereafter, "HLLI 303 Creative Brief 2"], https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/21/21-476/226637/20220531142739104_21-476%20tsac%20Professor%20Carpenter%20et%20al.pdf; Brief of 35 Athletic Officials and Coaches of Female Athletes as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Little v. Hecox*, No. 24-38, and West Virginia v. B.P.J., No. 24-39 (U.S. filed Aug. 14, 2024) [hereafter, "Coaches Little Brief"], https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/24/24-38/322288/20240812164337076_Hecox%20BPJ%20-%20amicus%20final.pdf; *See* HLLI 303 Creative Brief 1; HLLI 303 Creative Brief 2; Coaches Little Brief.

[2] *See* Bryan L. Adkins, *Class Action Lawsuits: An Introduction*, Cong. Research Serv. In Focus No. IF12763 (Sept. 13, 2024), https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12763; *Amchem Prods., Inc. v. Windsor*, 521 U.S. 591, 617 (1997), https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=10149606034909104692&q=521+U.S.+591&hl=en&as_sdt=20006#:~:text=While%20the%20text,344%20(1997).

engaging in harmful anti-worker activities, such as wage theft, discrimination, and retaliation.[3] After the U.S. Supreme Court's *Trump v. CASA* decision, class action lawsuits against the federal government play an even greater role in preventing lawless abuses of power and the protection of civil rights.[4]

Ms. St. John has used numerous tactics to undermine class actions. For example, she works to villainize attorneys and advocacy organizations representing those harmed or receiving *cy pres* awards, in an attempt to shift public scrutiny from corporate wrongdoers.[5] The *cy pres* doctrine is a legal principle allowing courts to redirect unused, unclaimed, or impossible-to-fulfill trust funds or class action settlement money to a closely related charitable purpose.[6] Ms. St. John has also employed bias, stigma, and partisan attacks against attorneys and organizations who fight for the rights of individuals, consumers, and workers facing harm. For example, she works to curtail class actions and deter individuals from joining such actions by claiming the money will go to fund "left wing causes."[7]

Portraying herself as a consumer advocate, Ms. St. John paints attorney fees and *cy pres* awards paid out of class action settlements as harmful for consumers and the public – reasoning that it violates class members' First Amendment rights for settlements to be designated to organizations engaged in "contentious advocacy,"[8] meaning groups she disagrees with ideologically.[9] Ms. St. John has sought to dissuade consumers and workers from joining classes actions, by disparaging attorneys and nonprofits. Ultimately, these efforts disempower consumers and workers by stigmatizing the class action process and dissuading them from seeking justice in court on a level playing field.

2. Ms. St. John opposed federal legislation that prevents corporations from using forced arbitration in cases involving sexual harassment and assault.

---

[3] *See* Adkins (2024); *Hughes v. Kore of Indiana Enterprise, Inc.*, 731 F.3d 672 (7th Cir. 2013), https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=6029250328117393390&q=795+F.3d+654&hl=en&as_sdt=20006#:~:text=A%20class%20action%2C%20like%20litigation%20in%20general%2C%20has%20a%20deterrent%20as%20well%20as%20a%20compensatory%20objective.

[4] *See Trump v. CASA, Inc.*, 606 U.S. ___ (No. 24A884) (U.S. June 27, 2025), https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/24a884_8n59.pdf.

[5] *See, e.g.,* Petition for a Writ of Certiorari, *St. John v. Jones*, No. 22-554 (U.S. Dec. 14, 2022) [hereafter, "St. John Petition"], https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/22/22-554/249924/20221214123544662_St.%20John%20cert%20petition.pdf (In a petition for writ of certiorari, Ms. St. John asked the Supreme Court to review the ability of the lower courts to designate settlements when it awards substantial *cy pres* to a third party. The Supreme Court declined to hear this case. The *cy pres* in this case went to nonprofits.).

[6] Legal Information Institute, *Cy Pres Doctrine*, Cornell Law School (Sep. 2025), https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/cy_pres_doctrine.

[7] St. John (2024).

[8] St. John Petition at 7.

[9] *See* St. John (2024) (claiming that the "legal system is funding the Left" through class actions).

Ms. St. John has also advocated for wealthy corporations over consumers and workers in the context of forced arbitration in cases involving sexual harassment and assault. She testified against bipartisan federal legislation that invalidates forced arbitration agreements in such disputes.[10] Forced arbitration is a harmful practice where corporations include a clause in everyday contracts that strips individuals of their right to challenge wrongdoing in court and instead requires them to bring complaints through private arbitration, often where the arbitrator is already selected by corporation.[11] This practice often takes place in the workplace, where new hires are required to sign a forced arbitration contract as a condition of employment, and it can impact workers' ability to bring suit on matters such as workplace discrimination, retaliation, and wage theft.[12] Decisions made by arbitrators are legally binding, but individuals required to participate in arbitration lose important rights and protections that they would receive in a court of law.[13] For example, individuals can be prohibited from coming together as a class in arbitration proceedings.

Before federal legislation was passed to prevent this practice, forced arbitration clauses applied even in cases involving sexual harassment and assault.[14] Arbitration is frequently confidential, unlike court decisions, meaning that even with a good outcome, the claimant may be unable to speak about their case. This is especially concerning in the context of sexual harassment and assault, where prior to the passage of this law, survivors were frequently barred from speaking out about their experiences, shielding corporate wrongdoing from public accountability. During the hearing on this legislation, multiple survivors of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace testified about their painful experiences of being forced into silence through the forced arbitration agreements they signed.[15] They were only able to testify and break their silence regarding the sexual assault and harassment they faced due to the federal subpoenas they were under.[16]

Portraying herself as a consumer advocate, Ms. St. John testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that forced arbitration provided "an advantageous dispute resolution process" for

---

[10] Anna St. John, *Written Testimony of Anna St. John*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 117th Cong., 1st Sess. (Nov. 16, 2021), https://www.congress.gov/117/meeting/house/114227/witnesses/HHRG-117-JU00-Wstate-StJohnA-20211116.pdf; *Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act of 2021*, H.R. 4445, 117th Cong. (2021–2022), Pub. L. No. 117-90 (enacted Mar. 3, 2022), https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4445 (codified at 9 U.S.C. §§ 401–402).
[11] *See Forced Arbitration Clauses in the #MeToo Era*, National Women's Law Center (Dec. 19, 2018), https://nwlc.org/resource/forced-arbitration-clauses-in-the-metoo-era/.
[12] *Id.*
[13] *Id*.
[14] *See Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act of 2021*, H.R. 4445, 117th Cong. (2021–2022), Pub. L. No. 117-90 (enacted Mar. 3, 2022) (codified at 9 U.S.C. §§ 401–402).
[15] Silenced: How Forced Arbitration Keeps Victims of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in the Shadows: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 117th Cong. (Nov. 16, 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkUMca39dFc.
[16] *Id*.

both consumers and employees.[17] She claimed that forced arbitration leads to higher rewards and is more efficient for workers and consumers. But nothing in the legislation prohibited individuals from choosing arbitration in cases involving sexual harassment or assault – it merely prevented corporations from mandating it by contract. The public has an interest in exposing sexual harassment and assault and not allowing companies to cover up these occurrences or shield perpetrators through forced arbitration.

Despite Ms. St. John's valiant attempt to portray expensive, silencing, and unfair legal tactics imposed on consumers and workers in a positive light, this important measure was passed into law. However, Ms. St. John's stance that consumers and workers should be required to submit to forced arbitration for their own good, even in cases involving sexual harassment and assault, is concerning, and raises questions about how she would weigh the interests of workers and other litigants who appear before her.

3. **Ms. St. John argued to even further to restrict affirmative action than the Supreme Court, framing race-neutral efforts to encourage diversity and inclusion in higher education as themselves discriminatory in amicus briefs.**

In the *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* case, Ms. St. John authored amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court opposing affirmative action in higher education.[18] Ignoring that "many minority students encounter markedly inadequate and unequal educational opportunities,"[19] Ms. St. John argued that discrimination has been adequately remedied,[20] and therefore a governmental interest in diversity in education does not justify affirmative action in admissions. However, Ms. St. John went beyond the Court's holding to criticize race-neutral efforts to encourage diversity and inclusion in education and the workplace. For example, she was particularly concerned that the Court allowing a diversity exception for admissions had "metastasized" to encourage efforts to increase diversity in other educational contexts and in the workplace.[21] One such cancerous growth she points to is the Yale Law Journal, which considers diversity statements as part of its acceptance process. Ms. St. John asserts that this results in a disproportionate rate of acceptance by race, and this "suggests that journal membership is intentionally discriminating on the basis of race."[22] However, in neither

[17] Anna St. John, *Written Testimony of Anna St. John*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 117th Cong., 1st Sess. at 1 (Nov. 16, 2021), https://www.congress.gov/117/meeting/house/114227/witnesses/HHRG-117-JU00-Wstate-StJohnA-20211116.pdf.
[18] HLLI Harvard Brief 1; HLLI Harvard Brief 2.
[19] *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539. U.S. 306, 347 (2003).
[20] HLLI Harvard Brief 2 at 18.
[21] *Id.* at 2-3.
[22] *Id.* at 7-8. It is interesting that Ms. St. John considers a disparate racial impact to imply intentional discrimination in this instance (to argue that minority students are being unfairly favored), when she has been an ardent critic of disparate impact analysis when used to protect people of color under Title VI. See e.g., Amicus Brief of the American Civil Rights Project and the Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute in Opposition

the *Grutter v. Bollinger* nor the *Students for Fair Admission v. Harvard* decision did the Supreme Court hold that the *mere consideration* of a diversity statement is discriminatory. In fact, the Court made clear that "nothing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant's discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise."[23] Ms. St. John's inclination to see diversity and inclusion as a veil for discrimination does not befit a federal judge in our pluralistic society, and it calls into question her ability to treat all litigants equally.

4. In amicus briefs, Ms. St. John sought to undermine anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ people and perpetuated outdated sex and gender stereotypes to demean trans girls.

President Trump was very clear about the reason he nominated Ms. St. John – she was specifically chosen to enable discrimination against trans athletes. As he framed it, she would "champion Religious Liberty and keep men out of women's sports."[24] Of course, we fully expect that in speaking before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Ms. St. John will demur on that issue, saying it may come before her a judge, and she must maintain impartiality. That is the very problem; President Trump explicitly chose her because she is not impartial. And the Senate should reject her for the same reason.

Ms. St. John submitted an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Little v. Hecox* and *West Virginia v. B.P.J.* cases, which challenges discriminatory state bans on trans girls participating in school sports.[25] This brief is replete with harmful and outdated stereotypes on sex and gender, which she uses to argue that cis women and girls cannot meaningfully compete if trans women and girls are allowed to participate in sports.[26] Further, Ms. St. John's writing exudes contempt for trans people, dismissing their experiences and identities, and describing them as "strident activists [who] have sought to silence any discussion of the harm to women from basing sports categories on gender identity…."[27] Her blatant disregard for the rights of trans girls makes it clear that Ms. St. John cannot serve as an unbiased federal judge.

---

to the Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment and Support of Summary Judgment for Plaintiff, Louisiana v. U.S. E.P.A., CASE NO. 2:23-cv-00692-JDC-KK (W.D. La. Oct. 3, 2023), https://hlli.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/EPA.38-2.Ex_.-1-proposed-amicus-brief.pdf.

[23] *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc.*, slip op. at 39.

[24] Donald Trump [@realDonaldTrump], "It is my Great Honor to nominate Anna St. John to serve as Judge on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana…," Truth Social (Jan. 6, 2026), https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115850518579436668.

[25] Coaches Little Brief.

[26] For example, biological males "have an innate competitive advantage in strength, agility, body size, muscle mass, bone density, body fat percentages, explosive power, etc." *Id.* at 5. "[W]omen generally shy away from certain sports where training facilities are located in remote spaces and are usually all- or heavily-male environments." *Id.* at 12. "No matter how dedicated a woman is, how hard or smartly she trains, men and women are biologically different in ways that matter in sports competitions." *Id.* at 14.

[27] *Id.* at 3.

Additionally, as the leader of HLLI, Ms. St. John authored amicus briefs opposing anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people.[28] For example, in *303 Creative v. Elenis*, she argued in part that state laws that prohibit discrimination in places of public accommodation should be limited if those facing discrimination are still able to access equivalent services from some source.[29] This argument fundamentally misunderstands a primary purpose of anti-discrimination laws, and it would place an untenable burden on any person who experiences discrimination to prove they could not receive the services from another source.[30]

The Tenth Circuit explained there is a compelling governmental interest in a uniform application of anti-discrimination laws to prevent restrictions on services that favor certain groups of people.[31] Outside the bounds of the Supreme Court's subsequent decision, Ms. St. John dismissed the Tenth Circuit's approach as "hypothetical" and "imagined" harm and asserted that people *generally* having access to goods and services regardless of their identities was the more compelling interest.[32] Ms. St. John's advocacy to undermine critical principles of civil rights law is concerning coming from a potential judge who would be responsible for weighing these legal issues.

5. Conclusion

Ms. St. John's efforts to undermine the rights of consumers, workers, survivors of sexual harassment and assault, people of color, and LGBTQ people demonstrates that she would not be a fair minded and impartial judge. Ms. St. John has dedicated her legal career to protecting the wealthy and powerful at the expense of consumers and workers. She uses an array of manipulative tactics, from pretending to speak for consumers, to sowing division against vulnerable communities, to spreading misinformation to undermine class actions, to politicizing consumer advocacy and impugning lawyers who hold corporations accountable.

St. John's clear bias in support of wealthy corporations above the laws and legal protections critical to workers, students, and the public is worrying and particularly inappropriate for a federal judge charged with upholding equal justice under law. Ms. St. John hides her dedicated advocacy behind a carefully crafted façade of so-called consumer protection and support for

[28] HLLI 303 Creative Brief 1; HLLI 303 Creative Brief 2.
[29] HLLI 303 Creative Brief 2 at 5, 15-19.
[30] *See 303 Creative v. Elenis*, No. 19-1413 at 28-29 (10th Cir. July 26, 2021), https://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/sites/ca10/files/opinions/010110553596.pdf. (Another purpose of anti-discrimination laws is to help ensure a free and open economy by removing discriminatory barriers to economic and social equality.)
[31] *Id.* at 28-31.
[32] *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis*, 600 U.S. 570, 584 (2023). "The Supreme Court decided this case based on the expressive nature of the particular service."; HLLI 303 Creative Brief 2 at 15-18.

workers. As the Senate considers this nomination, it must not allow Ms. St. John to easily avoid her troubling record.

For these reasons, the National Women's Law Center strongly opposes the confirmation of Ms. Anna St. John to the U.S District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana and urges the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary to reject this nomination. If you have questions about the Law Center's opposition to Ms. St. John's nomination, please contact me, or Alison Gill, Director of Nominations & Democracy, at agill@nwlc.org.

Sincerely,

Fatima Goss Graves
President and CEO