

Governor Phil Murphy

REMARKS: Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver on Announcement of Intention to Nominate Rachel Wainer Apter As Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court

03/15/2021

March 15, 2020

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Governor Murphy.

Congratulations to you, Rachel, and to your family, on this historic day.

I am reminded of the words not of Justice Ginsburg, but of one of her pioneering predecessors and one of my fellow alumnus of Lincoln University, the late Justice Thurgood Marshall, "History teaches that grave threats to liberty often come in times of urgency, when constitutional rights seem too extravagant to endure."

Rachel has dedicated her professional life to protecting others from those grave threats to their liberties. Whether it be our immigrant communities, our LGBTQ+ community, our Black and Brown communities, or our many and varied communities of faith, she has been a champion for all New Jerseyans.

What has set our state's Supreme Court apart throughout the past 74 years and counting is that it has never viewed constitutional rights as too extravagant. Our Court has stood, time and again, as the last best protector of the rights of residents, even when it was not politically popular or expedient to do so.

While our Court has certainly leveled decisions that we, at times, may not agree with, we cannot argue with the independence through which these decisions have been reached.

This court has stood strong against outside political interference and pressure. This is not just a testament to our Constitution, but to the women and men who have been entrusted with sitting on our highest court.

Rachel will undoubtedly continue and strengthen this storied tradition.

Under her capable direction, the Division of Civil Rights has fulfilled its commitments under our laws to ensure that every New Jerseyan is provided equal protection under the law, and an equal right of address for those for whom those protections have been threatened or fallen short.

Justices Marshall and Ginsburg never served together on the United States Supreme Court, but their individual efforts to create the elusive "more perfect Union" of our federal Constitution ran on parallel tracks. We must ensure these tracks run throughout the state of New Jersey.

And with Rachel Wainer Apter on our highest court, we can ensure they will.

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