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The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington DC 20570

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

October 12, 2020

Dear Chairman Graham and Senator Feinstein,

It is my great pleasure to write you in support of the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Judge Barrett and I have been colleagues and office neighbors for a decade, professional and personal friends for much of that time. You will certainly hear much about Amy Barrett's academic and legal qualifications, her excellence in teaching and scholarship, and her insights as a Judge. Instead of adding a few more details regarding Amy's abundant and apparent legal or academic qualities, however, I would like to emphasize what an exceptional individual she is, from a perhaps less-familiar perspective of a colleague of very different background, ethnicity, personal history, culture, beliefs, and faith.

I first met Amy Barrett more than a decade ago and immediately recognized her for the marvelous person that she is. Only recently tenured, Amy already was the vice chair of the Appointments Committee at Notre Dame Law School when she reached out and invited me to interview for a faculty position. Such invitations are routine early steps in the dance of academic hiring, yet for me this was far from routine. As an identified Jew, whose legal education, practice, and teaching never veered west of the Acela corridor, I was inclined to view a flagship

Catholic university in South Bend, Indiana as a mysterious, vaguely ominous entity from those uncharted hinterlands well beyond my ken. To my delight and surprise, even through email Amy came across as kind, accommodating, and friendly well beyond the standard protocols I encountered in other elite law schools over the years. The same turned out to be true of the other committee members, most of whom are still my colleagues at Notre Dame Law School. Even within this terrific group, however, Amy's combination of intellectual incisiveness and engagement with genuine warmth stood out. I was sold, convinced that surrounded with colleagues like these I could thrive fully and naturally as both a scholar and a Jew.

The years that have since passed only strengthened and proved how true these initial impressions were. Upon arrival on campus I had the further fortune of landing a faculty office neighboring three committed Catholic colleagues whom I am honored to call friends, not least among them Amy—just two doors down our short hallway—who was always ready with a caring smile, interested not only in my recent research in antitrust or behavioral law and economics but also in the daily doings and well-being of my family. It was only natural that Amy and my wife Debbie—a medieval Islamic historian at Notre Dame—also developed a personal friendship. In real life, Amy's family is even more adorable than it appears in public pictures, a testament to the deep partnership of love, honor, and commitment she and her husband Jesse share in abundance. No person who knows them could imagine a better role model for what a truly equal companionship through life's journey can be.

You would not be surprised to learn that when Debbie began her struggle with cancer a few short years after our arrival in town, the support of Amy and other good friends meant the world to us. Seven years later, Debbie still takes her daily homebrewed cappuccino in the mug she received as part of an Amy-and-friends care package; we have no shortage of mugs, but she finds that merely holding the warm, earthy cup resonates with the comfort and value of real friendship.

When our younger son sought a welcoming but intellectually rigorous high-school experience, we closely examined the various educational options in the area and concluded that Trinity School—founded and run by People of Praise—is by far the best fit for his needs. Children of all stripes have attended Trinity over the years, and we heard wonderful things about its rigorous, more classical education. We also know other members of the Trinity community besides Amy and her family and hold all of them in the highest regard, always finding our interactions delightful despite any differences in our beliefs or worldviews. The school encourages a spirit of wonder and critical inquiry, challenging all of its students to study the sciences, humanities, and the arts at a very high level. Despite being a private religious school, moreover, Trinity takes pains to avoid indoctrination, seeking to open minds rather than close them. Indeed, our expectations of Trinity were not disappointed; our son—now a senior—flourished in all ways and his Jewish identity has been deeply and fully respected by his teachers and peers alike.

After more than a decade in South Bend, we find that our relationships with the Barretts and so many other friends—of all faiths or none, numerous races, ethnicities, and life histories—at Notre Dame, at Trinity, and beyond, transcend those differences in backgrounds and beliefs that so often today separate Americans instead of enriching their bonds of affection and offering an opportunity for mutual appreciation and meaningful understanding. This is how Amy Coney Barrett lives her exemplary life in our wider community; this is the spirit that undergirds her impressive intellect, elegant legal analysis, and manifest judicial temperament. From where I stand, as a legal scholar and a Jew who knows Amy well, it hard to imagine someone better suited for appointment as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Sincerely,



Dr. Avishalom Tor
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