



**National Council
Of Women's Organizations**
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March 18, 2008

Honorable Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Judicial Nomination of Gustavus A. Puryear IV

Dear Senator Leahy:

This correspondence is in reference to the federal judicial nomination of Mr. Gustavus A. Puryear IV. The National Council of Women's Organizations has serious concerns about Mr. Puryear as a candidate for a lifetime judicial appointment, based upon his membership in the Belle Meade Country Club.

As you may know, NCWO is a nonpartisan, nonprofit coalition of more than 230 women's organizations across the nation collectively representing over eleven million women. Since 1983, NCWO has convened the leadership of major women's organizations dedicated to focusing on national and international issues and public policy agendas affecting women and girls.

According to the Private Corrections Institute, Mr. Puryear stated, in reference to his country club membership, "To my knowledge, during my membership at the club, it has not discriminated on the basis of race, sex, or religion."

Only the Resident Members of the club are allowed to vote on club business or hold office. All of the Resident Members are male. Although there is no specific policy that prohibits women from being Resident Members, none are Resident Members. New members must be "proposed" (sponsored) by existing Resident Members. Therefore, if no women are proposed by the all-male Resident Members they can not become Resident Members with voting rights. Women members are called "Lady members" and have a separate non-voting membership class.

As we understand this, Mr. Puryear, an attorney and federal judicial nominee, is defending his membership in a private club where none of the women members can vote, and women can only achieve voting status by being sponsored by the all-male group of Resident Members, which has not done so. Despite this apparent disparity, Mr.

Puryear stated he isn't aware that the club has discriminated on the basis of sex (gender).

If Mr. Puryear is appointed to the federal bench, it is difficult for us to conceive how women defendants and plaintiffs, or indeed women attorneys, could appear before him and expect to receive impartial and equal consideration given Mr. Puryear's past membership in the Belle Meade Country Club and his defense of that membership.

The American people deserve better judicial nominees than those who embrace in their private lives membership in an organization that denigrates the equal rights and status of women.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Scanlan
Chair

cc: Senator Arlen Specter, Ranking Member