

National Organization for Women



Kim Gandy
President

Olga Vives
Executive Vice President

March 25, 2008

Melody Drnach
Action Vice President

Latifa Lyles
Membership Vice President

Senator Patrick Leahy, Committee Chair
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Pending Nomination of Gustavus Adolphus Puryear IV

Dear Senator Leahy and Senator Specter:

On behalf of the National Organization of Women (NOW), I am contacting you regarding Gustavus A. Puryear IV, who has been nominated by President Bush to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee. More specifically, we are contacting you concerning Mr. Puryear's membership in the Belle Meade Country Club, Nashville, TN, and his defense of that membership.

The National Organization of Women (NOW) is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States, with more than 500,000 contributing members and 500 local and campus affiliates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since our founding in 1966, NOW's goal has been to take action to bring about full equality for all women.

According to news reports, the Belle Meade Country Club only allows members in the Resident Member category to vote or hold office. All of the Club's approximately 600 Resident Members are reportedly male; women occupy a different membership class without voting privileges. The only way in which a woman can become a Resident Member with voting privileges is to be sponsored by one of the existing all-male Resident Members. No woman has been so sponsored, which implies intentional gender-based discrimination. Further, the Belle Meade Country Club's membership handbook, Constitution and By-laws do not contain any non-discrimination policy.

Despite this history, Mr. Puryear has denied any knowledge of gender-based discrimination at the Club while he has been a member.

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Canon 2C of the Code of Conduct for United States Judges prohibits judges from membership in organizations that practice invidious discrimination on the basis of sex. Mr. Puryear's membership in a private club in which no women members are afforded voting privileges, while only all-male Resident Members can vote or hold office, raises significant concerns about the fitness of this nominee to hold judicial office.

We therefore oppose Mr. Puryear's nomination for a federal judicial appointment.

Sincerely,



Kim Gandy
President