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July 13, 2023

The Hon. Richard Durbin
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Hon. Sheldon Whitehouse
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on
Federal Courts, Oversight, Agency Action,
Federal Rights
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 2051

Dear Chairman Durbin and Senator Whitehouse:

Public Citizen writes strongly in support of the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act (S. 359) to strengthen accountability at the highest court.

Currently, the Supreme Court is the only federal court not bound by a code of ethics. Given the increasing politicization of the nomination process and recurring instances of large but unreported gifts to individual justices, it is imperative to take steps to restore public respect for the Supreme Court. This legislation would be an important step to that end, creating an enforceable and transparent code of conduct.

The Court, and the judiciary as a whole, historically have been regarded as trustworthy and above politics. Studies show, however, that public regard for the Supreme Court has declined, and significantly so. A majority of the public now lacks confidence in the Supreme Court, instead viewing it as a political branch of government.

For this reason, Public Citizen strongly advocates for transparency and accountability for the Supreme Court. We support the Committee's effort to enact a transparent code of conduct for the Court, and thereby to set a path toward renewal of public confidence in the decisions of the highest court in the land.

Sincerely,

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