

Women Lawyers Association of Michigan



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October 26, 2017

Senator Debbie Stabenow
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2204

Re: Diversity in the Federal Judiciary in Michigan

Dear Senator Stabenow:

The Women Lawyers Association of Michigan strongly encourages the President to consider qualified women lawyers for appointment to the federal bench in Michigan in order to promote diversity in the judiciary. Since 1992, women's representation in law school classes has approached 50%. Despite record numbers of federal judicial appointments¹, the percentage of female judges is still low.

Currently, in the Eastern District of Michigan there are only seven female District Court judges out of 22 total.² The number is much less in the Western District of Michigan where there is only one female District Court Judge out of four.³

The current administration has appointed 36 Article III - United States District Court judges since May of this year. Only seven of those appointments have been women.⁴ We encourage the President to appoint more female judges.

Recently there were interviews conducted for an open judicial appointment in the Western District. With only one female judge currently in the district, this is an opportunity for the President to create more diversity. We understand there are qualified female applicants who interviewed for the position.

The Women Lawyers Association of Michigan believes that a diverse judiciary in federal court in Michigan will better represent the interest of a diverse community. A more diverse judiciary can bring different perspectives to bear on the development of the law and to the concept of justice itself. A more diverse judiciary would not undermine the quality of our judges; it would increase public trust and confidence in the judiciary. Thank you for considering our comments and request.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Gafkay, President of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

cc: President Donald Trump

¹ As of September 27, 2017, there were 138 vacancies in the federal judiciary.
https://ballotpedia.org/The_Trump_administration_on_federal_courts

² <https://www.mied.uscourts.gov/>

³ <http://www.miwd.uscourts.gov/judicial-directory>

⁴ https://ballotpedia.org/The_Trump_administration_on_federal_courts