



Durbin Questions Nominee For The Northern District Of Illinois And Other District Court Nominees At Latest Judiciary Committee Nominations Hearing

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WASHINGTON – During today’s Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, questioned Amir Ali, nominated to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia; Judge Sunil Harjani, nominated to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois; and Jasmine Yoon, nominated to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Virginia.

Durbin began his questions by asking Mr. Ali about his work that bridges organizations with opposing ideologies.

“You submitted numerous amicus briefs over the course of your career as a litigator. In some of those briefs, you’ve been joined by organizations across the political spectrum, including the Cato Institute. Speak about some of the issues that you worked on, bringing together unusual political allies, as well as why you think these issues are so important,” Durbin said.

Mr. Ali first noted that the work Durbin referred to was done in his capacity as an advocate, which he understands is a fundamentally different role than the position he has been nominated to. Mr. Ali further explained that his work centered on building coalitions of groups to support efforts to improve government accountability.

Durbin turned his next question to Judge Harjani, inquiring about the nominee’s experience in prosecuting commodities spoofing.

“Judge Harjani, you were one of the lead trial counsels in *U.S. v. Coscia*, which was the first case in this country to prosecute a trader for commodities spoofing and flash trading. It is not uncommon for members of the committee to query nominees about points of law and areas of law. I would hate to be tested on the issue of commodities spoofing. Since this was a case in your background, could you describe this to the committee?” Durbin asked.

In response, Judge Harjani explained commodities spoofing as a fraud scheme driven by individual traders placing trades that they intend to be canceled in an effort to trick other traders

into buying a stock. As a result, the schemer is able to manipulate the market and take advantage of the fluctuating stock values. As a trial lawyer in *U.S. v. Coscia*, Judge Harjani successfully prosecuted the case, seeking justice for victims of investment fraud.

Finally, Durbin asked Ms. Yoon how her experience as both a prosecutor and defense attorney would shape her approach as a U.S. District Judge.

“Ms. Yoon, members [of the committee] often question nominees based on their background, as to whether they come with a bias – bias toward defense, a bias toward prosecution. In the course of your practice, you have worked on both sides. Tell me a little bit about the issue of bias and why those who appear before you, should you become district court judge... can feel that they have a chance?” Durbin asked.

Ms. Yoon spoke about her experience both as a federal prosecutor and as a defense attorney in addition to practicing both civil and criminal law. Pointing to her record, Ms. Yoon noted that she has approached each case individually and with an impartial eye. Ms. Yoon reiterated that she understands that judges have a responsibility to be fair and impartial and to make decisions without fear or favor.