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October 21, 2025

The Honorable Charles Grassley, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 240 national civil and human rights advocacy organizations, and the undersigned national organizations, we write in opposition to the nomination of William "Will" Jerrol Crain for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. His record as an Associate Justice on the Louisiana Supreme Court does not demonstrate the requisite commitment to being fair-minded and upholding the civil rights and liberties of all people. Instead, it raises serious concerns. We do not believe he should be entrusted with a lifetime appointment to our federal judiciary.

The civil rights community has long understood that for there to be equal justice in America, our federal courts must serve and vigorously protect the rights of everyone. All who are selected to serve in our judiciary must be fair-minded and ethical, reflect diverse demographic backgrounds and professional experiences, and have a track record of advancing the rights of all people. This is especially important in an era in which the President has effectively declared himself king, regularly attacking the judiciary and – with the acquiescence of this Congress – declared war on our system of checks and balances. For the future of the communities we represent and our country as a whole, any and all nominees must have a compelling record for being fair-minded, well-qualified, and committed to civil and human rights. Unfortunately, Justice Crain has not met this standard.

As a candidate, Justice Crain made no effort to hide his extremely conservative views, branding himself as "the conservative choice," and running on his anti-abortion and pro-gun positions. He was not running to serve in the legislature, however – he was running to serve on the state's highest court – yet his campaign showed a willingness to let his ideology shape how he would rule, instead of striving to impartially apply the law in every case. His own campaign ads said that he would use his position on the court "to protect our beliefs." This willingness has been borne out by his record to date.

Justice Crain routinely sides with prosecutors and against the rights of criminal defendants, often in dissent from his colleagues in key rulings. For example, in *State v. Thomas* (2024) and *State v. Allen* (2022), he dissented from his colleagues to oppose giving relief to defendants who established that they received ineffective assistance of counsel, in violation of Sixth Amendment protections. In *State v. K.B.* (2024), he dissented from his

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colleagues to defend police stopping and searching a juvenile with no reasonable suspicion that he had committed (or was about to commit) a crime, in a case with major implications for Fourth Amendment protections, particularly for communities of color. In *State v. Pierce* (2023), he argued in defense of an extreme mandatory minimum of 66 years, three times longer than the sentence his colleagues upheld.

Justice Crain has sided against access to reproductive care. In *June Medical Services, LLC v. Landry* (2022), a lower court had issued a temporary restraining order on the state's abortion "trigger" law, which banned abortion upon the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. The Louisiana Supreme Court allowed this order to stand, so abortion clinics in the state could temporarily continue operating. Justice Crain dissented, however, arguing that "terminating alleged life during the period of the temporary restraining order is irreparable," indicating that he adheres to the extreme legal doctrine of fetal personhood. His dissent completely ignored the medical needs and interests of the pregnant patients who would be impacted by this outcome.

Justice Crain has shown he would side with corporations over citizens in environmental justice cases. In *State ex rel. Tureau v. BEPCO, L.P.* (2021), the Louisiana Supreme Court held that landowners have standing to sue oil and gas companies when they violate environmental regulations and the government fails to act. Justin Tureau owned two parcels of land that were contaminated by previous oil and gas exploration and production activities, activities which he argued released toxic substances that caused extensive environmental damage and harmed Tureau's interests. Yet Justice Crain dissented, rejecting the ability of communities to seek remedies when government enforcement fails, which strongly suggests he would place corporate interests over environmental health and public accountability.

Even on a body as conservative as the Louisiana Supreme Court, Justice Crain has repeatedly shown himself to be an outlier. His record to date raises serious doubts that he would be a fair-minded judge committed to equal justice for all. We urge you to oppose his nomination.

If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, at randhava@civilrights.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Alliance for Justice
League of Conservation Voters
National Council of Jewish Women
National Women's Law Center
People For the American Way
Reproductive Freedom for All