

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

U.S. Senate Floor Speech on the Confirmation of Judge Mendoza to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

September 12, 2022

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

CANTWELL: I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote to confirm Judge Mendoza to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

This is a historic moment. If confirmed, Judge Mendoza would be the first Hispanic judge to serve on the Ninth Circuit from Washington.

Judge Mendoza, who I met before nominating him to the White House Counsel Office as a candidate for U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington, has been somebody who, when you think about his childhood, growing up in Yakima Valley, an agricultural area in eastern Washington, he comes from a family of farmworkers and has worked in the fields himself.

As a young student at Prosser High School, it was not uncommon for him to wake up before dawn to work in the fields before rushing home to change and head to school. His hard work earned him admission to the University of Washington. And after graduating from the University of Washington, he left the state to get his law degree from UCLA.

After earning his degree, he returned home to Washington where he worked as Assistant Attorney General in the Washington state AG's office. He went on to serve the community he grew up in. First, as a Deputy Prosecutor for Franklin County, and then as a judge in the Benton Franklin Superior Court.

He has been an outstanding judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington where he has served since 2014. Clearly, my colleagues here in the Senate saw his potential since he was confirmed to the Eastern District 92-4.

And Judge Mendoza is not just an outstanding jurist — he is a community leader as well. He's served on the Board of Directors for numerous organizations in Central Washington, including the Benton-Franklin Legal Aid Society, the Benton & Franklin Counties Circle of Hope Foundation for Drug Courts, and the United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties.

I know Judge Mendoza will make an excellent addition to the Ninth Circuit Court and I urge my colleagues to support his nomination to the Court of Appeals.