



The Superior Court

111 NORTH HILL STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
CHAMBERS OF
SAMANTHA P. JESSNER
ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGE

TELEPHONE
(213) 633-0300

February 14, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman, Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter in support of Judge Sherilyn Peace Garnett's Nomination to the United States District Court for the Central District of California

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am writing in support of Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Sherilyn Peace Garnett's nomination to the United States District Court for the Central District of California. I recommend her appointment to the district court without reservation and, indeed, with great enthusiasm.

I am currently the Assistant Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, where I have had the opportunity to work closely with Judge Garnett since she joined the Court in 2014. My experience with Judge Garnett goes much farther back, however, as I have known her since she joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California in 2001.

Even a cursory review of Judge Garnett's resume and judicial application reveals that she has the credentials and experience to excel as a district court judge. It is no accident that she excelled both in private practice and as a federal prosecutor, and she has excelled as a Los Angeles Superior Court judge. She would bring her breadth of experience and intellectual fortitude to the work of a district court judge.

As her resume shows, Judge Garnett has a fierce intellect. She is a scholar of the law, for which she has great reverence. She approaches the law and her decisions without being beholden to a particular ideology or outcome. Not only has she managed a very heavy docket fairly and efficiently, she was asked by the justices in Division Seven of the Second District Court of Appeal to serve as a justice pro tem. This request was a result of her judicial skills and her strength in writing and legal reasoning. She was a standout as a justice pro tem, working effectively and diligently to issue appellate opinions firmly based on the trial court record and applicable legal principles in different areas of the law.

In addition to Judge Garnett's work as a judge and lawyer, she has devoted herself to teaching law students, lawyers, and judges. Judge Garnett served as a supervisor in the General Crimes

Unit at the United States Attorney's Office, first as the Deputy Chief then the Chief of that section. In practice, that position means devoting oneself to training and mentoring new attorneys. It is a job that requires patience, approachability, knowledge of the law, knowledge of operations and office procedure, and dedication to teaching young prosecutors the ethical obligations associated with a powerful position and challenging role. She provided consistent, clear, and decisive leadership in that role, guiding many young lawyers who had the privilege of learning how to be a federal prosecutor under her leadership.

During her tenure with the United States Attorney's Office, she also taught legal writing and oral advocacy to law students at the University of Southern California, Gould School of Law. Her dedication to teaching has been consistent since she joined the bench. She now teaches judges on criminal matters and has authored a portion of a benchbook on domestic violence issues.

Judge Garnett is unfailingly diligent, and she is unflappable. Further, she is consistently pleasant, measured, and professional. Not only have I never seen her lose her composure, I cannot imagine what that would look like.

Judge Garnett's writing style is equally impressive and clear. She analyzes complicated subjects and explains them in a way that is understandable and concise. Any reader of Judge Garnett's writing is easily able to understand the issues presented, the applicable law, the analysis of legal issues, and the reasons for the eventual decision.

I was an Assistant United States Attorney for more than 11 years before I was appointed to the bench. I also worked for a district court judge in Los Angeles, and I know many district court judges. As a result of those experiences, I am familiar with the work of a district court judge and in particular with the workload of the district court judges in Los Angeles, which is substantial. Judge Garnett's experience as an attorney and judge would ensure a smooth transition to the district court.

One of the many benefits of appointing sitting judges to the district court is that they do not have to spend time learning how to be a judge. I firmly believe that mastering unfamiliar subjects is not the difficult part of being a new judge. Rather, the difficult part is learning how to be a judge, including when to make a ruling, how to articulate a ruling to a litigant in an understandable way while making a sufficient record, how to work with court staff, how to maintain a proper judicial demeanor when faced with difficult litigants and heavy caseloads, and how to communicate effectively with jurors. Judge Garnett has been doing all these things every day, all day, for the last eight years. She has an impeccable judicial demeanor. She is held in high esteem by litigants, the bar, court staff, and court administration, both on our court and statewide. She epitomizes what it means to be a judge in terms of both demeanor and intellectual acumen.

Finally, Judge Garnett brings much-needed diversity to the federal judiciary. I have no doubt that you are keenly aware of the dearth of women and women of color on the federal bench. Judge Garnett is deeply connected to her heritage and she is unstinting in her efforts to support women and people of color. She is a role model, mentor, and supporter of students, attorneys, and judges from traditionally underrepresented constituencies. She represents everything that I understand President Biden believes a federal judge should be.

I could continue to lavish praise on Judge Garnett, but I fear that I would still fail to do justice to her, given how deeply I respect her and how strongly I believe in her ability to excel as a district court judge. I hope I have brought dimension to the portrayal of Judge Garnett found in her judicial application and resume. She is truly an exceptional person and jurist.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 633-0300. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Samantha P. Jessner", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Hon. Samantha P. Jessner
Assistant Presiding Judge
Los Angeles Superior Court