

October 2, 2021

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin, Chair
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Samantha D. Elliott to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are writing in enthusiastic support of Samantha Elliott's nomination to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire. Both of us have worked closely with Ms. Elliott over the past ten years to achieve the goal of equal access to justice for all in New Hampshire.

Deborah, a legal aid lawyer in Tennessee and New Hampshire in her early career, served as a judicial officer in New Hampshire's Superior Court and Family Division for 25 years. In 2013, following her retirement from the bench, Deborah joined the overlapping Boards of New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA) and the Legal Advice & Referral Center (LARC) serving as Co-Chair of the Joint Board and then Chair of the LARC Board. Beginning in 2018, Deborah spearheaded the Statewide Planning Committee, created to improve the delivery of quality legal services to low income and disadvantaged residents of New Hampshire. This three-year effort resulted in the merger of LARC and the NH Bar Association's Pro Bono Program into 603 Legal Aid, collaborating in partnership with NHLA. Ms. Elliott and Deborah have worked closely over the past five years, as Co-Chairs of the overlapping Boards, and during this intense three-year Statewide Planning commitment. Deborah is now a founding member of the 603 Legal Aid Board, of which Ms. Elliott is the founding Co-Chair.

John is currently a legal aid consultant and NH school funding advocate. He worked for 38 years at NHLA New Hampshire Legal Assistance as a staff attorney and managing attorney before serving for 18 years as the program's Executive Director until his retirement in 2014. During his time at NHLA he played a leadership role in advocacy for equal justice in New Hampshire, in the New England region, and nationally. He was Executive Director of NHLA during the beginning of Ms. Elliott's term on the overlapping Boards of NHLA and the Legal Advice and Referral Center (LARC).

We have observed Ms. Elliott's superior intellect and communication skills, and we have seen how others respond to her measured and perceptive analysis of difficult problems. We know how respected she is among her fellow Board members and the staff of NHLA, LARC, and now 603 Legal Aid, who have relied on her good and ethical judgment in the governance of these organizations. And we have been impressed with her work ethic, her focus, her humanity, and her integrity. She possesses in great abundance the intelligence, ethical grounding, and temperament that are vital to being a fair and effective judge.

While we admire her intellect and her character, from our perspective as legal aid leaders we want to emphasize Ms. Elliott's extraordinary fidelity to the concept of equal justice and her commitment to seeing that everyone has the opportunity to access this basic American value, no matter their position in society. The amount of time and energy that Ms. Elliott has devoted to the cause of equal justice is immeasurable. Despite the demands of a busy law practice, Ms. Elliott has unsparingly committed herself to assuring that New Hampshire's legal aid organizations are well-managed and highly collaborative, so that they can deliver quality legal services to the poor. She has used her stellar reputation in the legal community to recruit prominent lawyers to support access to justice efforts, whether in leadership positions, as advocates, or as donors. She has volunteered her own legal services by assisting the Boards in understanding their fiduciary responsibilities and providing advice on other legal matters. She has developed relationships with the executive leadership of NHLA, LARC, and 603 Legal Aid, nurturing mutual trust and mutual commitment to mission. And she has advocated in multiple forums, including at the NH Supreme Court and in the NH Legislature, in support of everyone's right to justice and dignity in our legal system.

We hope that you will consider this nomination favorably. We are confident that, as a judge, Ms. Elliott will be highly competent and deeply compassionate. We know that she will treat everyone who appears before her with the respect they deserve from our judicial system, regardless of their social status or identity. And, as a member of the federal bench, she will have the opportunity to bring our court system closer to the goal of equal access to justice for all.

Sincerely,



Deborah Kane Rein, Esq.
Lake Worth, FL (formerly Concord, NH)



John E. Tobin, Jr., Esq.
Concord, NH