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November 21, 2022

Chair Dick Durbin  
Committee on the Judiciary  
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-711  
Washington, D.C., 20510

Ranking Member Chuck Grassley  
Committee on the Judiciary  
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-135  
Washington, D.C., 20510

**Re: Letter in Support of Judge Charnelle Bjelkengren's Appointment To the U.S. District Court for The Eastern District of Washington**

Dear Chair Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

I write in my personal capacity to wholeheartedly support Judge Charnelle Bjelkengren for the position of United States District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Washington. Before retiring from the Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings as Division Chief Administrative Law Judge, I was privileged to interview, hire, supervise and work alongside Judge Bjelkengren during her tenure as Administrative Law Judge and subsequently as Senior Administrative Law Judge.

I've had many opportunities to observe Judge Bjelkengren's hearings and how she interacted with others. She always demonstrated the highest level of professionalism. Judge Bjelkengren has conducted thousands of hearings covering an array of legal issues. She has a command of the law. Her written orders were thoughtful, timely and well-crafted. When dealing with complex legal matters and emotionally charged hearing participants, Judge Bjelkengren showed the highest level of respect for those appearing before her and for the legal process. She was prepared. She was fair minded and impartial. By all measures, she was a standard-bearer with a truly gifted legal mind.

Chair Dick Durbin  
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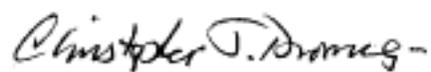
Judge Bjelkengren collaborated effectively with her coworkers and with state and federal agencies. Her intelligence, keen insights and willingness to put in countless hours to solve problems, to come up with innovative solutions underscore her genuine dedication to public service.

Judge Bjelkengren holds herself to the highest ethical standards. Her compass never deviated from true North. In her role as a Senior Administrative Law Judge, she enjoyed the respect and admiration from the judges she supervised, and from staff. Judge Bjelkengren proved that that she was caring, thoughtful, trustworthy and empathetic. Indeed, it is an honor to know Judge Bjelkengren and to have been her supervisor.

I believe that Judge Bjelkengren's even temperament and considerable legal skills will prove to be an indispensable asset to the judiciary. In addition, she has shown herself to be committed to the communities that she has lived and practiced in. She was active in various associations, educational forums, speaking/teaching in schools sharing her knowledge of and love for the law while encouraging others to consider legal-related careers.

With this letter, I enthusiastically recommend Judge Bjelkengren's appointment to the District Court Bench in the Eastern District of Washington. If you, or your colleagues, have any questions or would like additional information, I would be happy to talk with you. Thank you for considering this information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher J. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Christopher J. Thomas