

Statement of

The Honorable Sam Brownback

United States Senator

Kansas

September 23, 2008

Introductory Statement of Senator Sam Brownback

Hearing on the Nomination of Eric F. Melgren to be U.S. District Judge, D. Kan.

I am pleased and proud to introduce my friend Eric Melgren, who has been nominated to be a district judge in the District of Kansas. First of all, though, I would like to express my appreciation to Chairman Leahy for scheduling this hearing. He and I have frequently discussed the situation we're facing in Kansas on our district court, and I'm thankful for his gracious consideration in including Eric's nomination in today's hearing.

Eric is a Kansas native. He was born in 1956 in the tiny town of Minneola, in southwestern Kansas. He has been married for nearly 30 years to his wife Denise, and he and Denise are the proud parents of four children. He served as student body president as an undergraduate at Wichita State University and graduated magna cum laude. He went on to study at Washburn Law School, where he earned a spot on the Washburn Law Journal and graduated in the top five percent of his class. After graduation in 1985, he served for two years as a law clerk to Judge Frank Theis, who sat on the district court to which Eric has now been nominated.

Eric took a job as an associate at the law firm of Foulston Sietkin in Wichita, Kansas, where he specialized in tax law and business litigation. He was admitted to the partnership at Foulston Siefkin in 1992. In 1995, he briefly left the practice of law to help a certain freshman congressman from Kansas transition to his new position in Washington, and I'm tremendously grateful for his assistance.

Even during his time in private practice, Eric devoted considerable effort to charitable and community work. He served on the board and as chairman of the Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas; on the board and as chairman of Leadership Wichita; on the board and as secretary of the Rotary Club of West Wichita; on the board and as chairman of the United Way of the Plains; as director of Wichita Christian Legal Aid, as a Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteer; and on the board and as chairman of the board at his church.

In 2002, Eric answered the call to full-time public service, when he became the United States Attorney for the District of Kansas. Eric has already served our state and our nation with distinction as U.S. Attorney over the past six years, and I am confident that he will continue to serve with distinction as a judge on the federal district bench. The American Bar Association evaluated Eric's fitness and qualifications to serve on the District of Kansas and granted him its highest rating: unanimously well-qualified.

Mr. Chairman and fellow members of the Committee, it is my distinct honor and great pleasure to know Eric Melgren, to call him my friend, and to give him my highest recommendation for the position of District Judge for the District of Kansas. Kansas is blessed to have such a wonderful person and outstanding attorney willing to serve as a federal judge. I hope my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee will act swiftly to approve his nomination, and that the full Senate will confirm him as the newest District Judge for the District of Kansas before the 11 oth Congress adjourns. Thank you.

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