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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 5, 2026

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Chairman
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: Nomination of Phil Axt to the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota**

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

We the undersigned State Attorneys General, write to support the nomination of Philip Axt to the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota. Since Phil became North Dakota's Solicitor General in 2023, our offices have worked with him in case after case.

He has led and joined multistate coalitions, drafted and edited briefs that our States signed, and argued cases in which our States had a direct stake. Our solicitors general and senior lawyers know him well, and many of us have seen his work firsthand. We are confident that he will serve the people of North Dakota well as a federal judge.

Phil's illustrious career started with a decision to serve his country. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 2009 and served as an Army officer, including in military intelligence, before turning to the law. He earned his law degree at Yale Law School and clerked for now Chief Judge Jennifer

Walker Elrod on the Fifth Circuit. He then spent several years as a litigator at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher.

In 2023 he came home to lead the North Dakota Attorney General's appellate practice. As Solicitor General he has argued the State's most significant cases before the North Dakota Supreme Court and the Eighth Circuit, among them disputes over the State's carbon dioxide storage law and its legislative redistricting plan. Phil has also played a key role in defending important interests that extend not only from North Dakota, but to all of America in guaranteeing American energy dominance.

Phil is very capable lawyer who is able to draft complex work on a short timeline. He masters a record quickly and does not let a weak argument through because it is convenient. His briefs are short where they can be and thorough where they must be. He answers the hard question first. When our States have litigated together, Phil has been the colleague who spots the jurisdictional problem everyone else missed, or who reworks a muddled section into something a court will actually follow. Our own lawyers respect his views and his work has earned him the respect of Attorneys General across the country.

As Solicitor General, Phil has represented his State vigorously. But the qualities we have seen in him are the ones a good judge needs. Many of us rely on a solicitor general to give candid advice and to chart a course in important legal cases. Phil has proven ample ability to do just that. He reads statutes and precedent for what they say, and he does not stretch them to reach a preferred result. He has never been shy about telling a colleague, or a client, that the law points the other way.

That discipline comes naturally to someone trained at West Point and in the chambers of a demanding appellate judge. We are confident that on the bench Phil will apply the law faithfully to every party, whatever its identity and whatever the outcome.

Phil's demeanor matches his ability. He is steady, patient, and respectful in every setting we have seen him in, including the tense ones. He listens closely, takes opposing arguments seriously, and engages them on the merits. He treats junior lawyers and staff with the same courtesy he shows senior officials, and he is generous with his time when a younger lawyer needs help. Lawyers and litigants who appear before Judge Axt, in North Dakota, can expect a fair hearing from a judge who has done the work.

Phil has served his country in uniform and his State as its chief appellate lawyer. He is ready to serve both again from the bench.

We respectfully urge the Committee to report Philip Axt's nomination favorably to the full Senate.

Respectfully,

Brenna Bird
Attorney General of Iowa

Steve Marshall
Attorney General of Alabama

James Uthmeier
Attorney General of Florida

Tim Griffin
Attorney General of Arkansas

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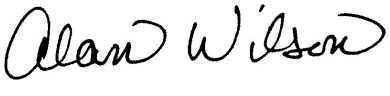
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