November 4, 2026

Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

We are former law clerks of Chief Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and we write to voice our wholehearted support for Philip Axt, who has been nominated to serve on the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota.[1] Several of us clerked alongside Phil from 2018 to 2019 and worked with him closely during this foundational period of his legal career. Others of us have come to know Phil and his sterling reputation—as a law clerk, as a lawyer, and as a person—through our close-knit community of former clerks. As Phil's colleagues, we have seen firsthand his character, intellect, and commitment to the rule of law. Phil will be an outstanding federal judge.

From the moment he arrived in chambers as a newly minted Yale Law School graduate, it was clear that Phil was a bright legal mind, with a robust work ethic and collegial personality. The Fifth Circuit's docket has always spanned a wide range of case types—from challenges to governmental regulation to sentencing appeals, commercial disputes to immigration matters. Any case that Phil worked on received his full attention. He often stayed in chambers late into the night, working to ensure that the court gave careful consideration to each litigant's arguments. He was—and is—a gifted writer, skillful in communicating complex legal ideas in digestible terms. We are confident that Phil will bring these attributes to the federal bench.

Phil was well-liked not only by his co-clerks with whom he worked directly, but also by the many other judicial law clerks for other judges that worked in the Bob Casey United States Courthouse in Houston. Phil was a regular at law clerk social events and often organized those events himself. From the beginning of his legal career through today, Phil has been committed to active involvement in the legal community, frequently facilitating connections among lawyers and mentoring younger lawyers.

Finally, anyone who has ever met Phil will tell you of the deep love he has for the United States of America and for his native State of North Dakota in particular. One need look no further than

[1] Each of us signs this letter in a personal capacity, and not on behalf of any current or former employer or client.

his years of decorated service in the United States Army to see his devotion to our country. We are unsurprised that Phil has pursued a career in public service—and we are all grateful for it.

As a district court judge, Phil will faithfully apply the law, show fairness to all parties before him, and administer justice impartially. We strongly urge the Committee and the full Senate to confirm him without delay.

Sincerely,

Brenton H. Cooper

Frank H. Chang

Rachel Koehn Breland

Beau Carter

T. Zachary Horton

Michael J. Woodrum

Alexandra Harrison Gaiser

Andrew Bean

Corinne Snow

Andrew D. McCartney

Benjamin A. Fleshman

Jack B. DiSorbo

Alice Shih LaCour

Kurtis Michael

Savannah S. Hundt

Nicole Bronnimann

John D. Greil

Brandon Sharp