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November 5, 2026

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman
The Honorable Richard Durbin, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Re: Nomination of Philip Axt to the United States District Court

Dear Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

North Dakota Solicitor General Philip Axt is a brilliant and gifted attorney who possesses the ideal temperament, exceptional legal ability, unwavering ethical standards, and exemplary character to serve our nation as a United States District Court Judge. I write to offer my strongest possible support of his nomination, and to urge your vote in favor of his confirmation by the United States Senate.

My assessment of Mr. Axt is informed by my perspective gained over more than three decades in the legal profession. I have twice had the high privilege of serving as North Dakota's presidentially appointed United States Attorney, devoted five years of service as an Assistant District Attorney in Philadelphia, and have now served for five years as Attorney General of North Dakota.

Across these years, I have personally prosecuted thousands of serious criminal cases, ranging from street-level drug dealing and weapons offenses to sophisticated white-collar crimes, large-scale international drug trafficking organizations, sexual assaults of every description, and North Dakota's first and only federal death penalty case. Beyond the cases I have personally tried, I have supervised and directed the investigation, litigation, and handling of many hundreds of significant federal and state criminal and civil matters. I offer this background to emphasize the depth of perspective from which I assess Mr. Axt's extraordinary qualifications for the federal bench.

Mr. Axt's remarkable combination of intellectual depth, disciplined judgment, tireless work ethic, and principled devotion to the law, mark him as a generational talent and professional. His research and writing abilities are second to none among the many outstanding lawyers with whom I have worked throughout my career. He combines formidable intellect with a seemingly boundless capacity for diligent, demanding, and consequential legal work. Mr. Axt's command of civil and criminal procedure, the rules of evidence, and courtroom protocols will combine with his extraordinary abilities and respectful demeanor to make him a truly outstanding trial court judge.

As Solicitor General of North Dakota, Mr. Axt has managed a multimillion-dollar litigation budget while assembling and leading complex, multistate and multistakeholder coalitions in defense of North Dakota's sovereign interests and the rule of law. His written advocacy and courtroom presentations before the North Dakota Supreme Court, North Dakota's trial courts, the United States District Courts, the federal Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court of the United States have been exceptional. He possesses the rare ability to simplify extraordinarily complex legal questions, by identifying the principles at their core, exhaustively researching the matter fully and presenting persuasive arguments with clarity, precision, and intellectual honesty.

Equally impressive is the breadth of Mr. Axt's experience and leadership that have resulted in this nomination. After graduating ninth in his class from the United States Military Academy at West Point, he served our nation for six years as an Army intelligence officer. In that demanding environment, he developed and exercised discipline, sound judgment, personal courage, and leadership abilities that have distinguished his subsequent legal career. His military service reflects a longstanding commitment to something greater than himself - a commitment to duty, country, and the institutions upon which our constitutional republic is founded.

Mr. Axt's subsequent professional accomplishments have reinforced the qualities that were foundational to his military service. He always demonstrates intellectual independence, personal integrity, professional maturity, and the sound judgment essential to the proper exercise of federal judicial authority.

Of particular importance, Mr. Axt understands that the role of a federal judge is not to advance personal preferences or policy objectives, but to faithfully interpret and apply the law. He possesses a profound respect for the constitutional separation of powers, the proper limits of judicial authority, and the indispensable principle that ours is a government of laws, not of men.

I am supremely confident that Mr. Axt will discharge the solemn responsibilities of a federal judge with the highest standards of legal excellence and ethical conduct. He will be guided by his exceptional ability and sound judgment, but also by the humility of a genuine public servant—one who understands that every person appearing before a federal court is entitled to respect, dignity, fairness, impartiality, and the faithful application of the law.

I offer my strongest possible recommendation for Philip Axt's confirmation, without any reservation. Philip Axt will distinguish himself as an outstanding United States District Court Judge and bring lasting honor to the federal judiciary and to the nation he has already served so faithfully.

Respectfully,

Drew H. Wrigley
Attorney General
State of North Dakota

cc: United States Senate Judiciary Committee Members