

July 1, 2011

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy:

Alaska Supreme Court Justice Morgan Christen would be an excellent Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She has my strong endorsement, and I encourage the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee to look favorably upon her appointment.

I have worked with Justice Christen for several years on improving systems ranging from family services, to drug and alcohol abuse in Alaska, to looking at innovative methods to reintegrate incarcerated individuals into society once released from prison (through our Chanlyut program), and addressing other community issues related to Alaska Native people. She has always impressed me with her insight and balanced views. She is especially adept at evaluating complicated and complex situations, grasping the core matter at hand, and understanding what needs to be done in a fair and equitable manner. In her capacity as a state court judge, she led the Third District as Presiding Judge; there, she was not just a manager, but used her position to make real change in the Child in Need of Aid process for our vulnerable families and children. As a Supreme Court Justice, she has continued that drive toward court improvement by participating in a national effort to improve the child welfare process; I was honored to be part of a delegation with her in which we tackled these difficult issues and brought new ideas and solutions back to the state.

Justice Christen exemplifies the leadership and ability required for an Alaskan judge. As an officer of the court and as an individual Alaskan, she upholds her civic duty with humility and respect for those around her. She is a great public servant on both a professional or personal basis. She is an active and effective board member of the Rasmuson Foundation, and her contributions to our community have been recognized through many distinguished awards such as the Athena award, Philanthropist of the Year, Light of Hope Award, and Top 40 Under 40. She has earned the integrity and respect of her colleagues and those in the courtroom, consistently achieving top scores in the Alaska Bar survey for each of the judicial positions she has sought previously. Her reputation as an individual, attorney and then judge/justice is impeccable.

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Alaska and this nation need more judges like Justice Christen whose professional dedication, intelligence and skills and striving for justice and equal treatment for those involved with the judicial system. In sum, her excellent credentials, her high ethical standards, her outstanding community service and her devotion to the law assure that Justice Christen will be an asset to the federal bench and will serve Alaskans with integrity and fairness.

Please feel free to contact me if I can offer any further assistance or information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gloria O'Neill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "O".

Gloria O'Neill
President/CEO

cc: U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee members