

Senator Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 5, 2011

Re: July 13, 2011 Senate Judiciary Hearing

Dear Senator Leahy:

I am writing regarding the nomination of Alaska Supreme Court Justice Morgan Christen to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. I have known Justice Christen for almost 20 years and know of no more qualified individual for that position. I am aware that others have concerns regarding Justice Christen's past service on the board of Planned Parenthood of Alaska. I would like to share a personal experience that speaks to that concern and affirms why she is exactly the right person to serve on the Ninth Circuit.

When I moved to Alaska in 1992 to become the Executive Director of United Way of Anchorage, Morgan was on a United Way Agency review panel. She also served on the board of Planned Parenthood of Alaska, a member agency of United Way. In 1992, Planned Parenthood of Alaska did not provide abortions. It did provide reproductive health services including birth control and education to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Had that organization managed a clinic that provided abortions, I do not think the United Way would have maintained its relationship.

In 1994, Crisis Pregnancy Center, a pro-life organization, approached the United Way to determine if it could also become a member agency of United Way. The mission of United Way is to connect people with diverse views through their desire to work together for the community. It was in that knowledge that I felt that United Way could maintain its relationship with Planned Parenthood as well as embrace Crisis Pregnancy Center as a member organization. However, as the Executive Director, I understood that the United Way board would need to approve such an association. To be successful, that effort would need a volunteer champion.

Morgan Christen was that champion. When I called Morgan to discuss this opportunity, she immediately saw how having Crisis Pregnancy Center join the United Way would better serve the community by bridging diverse viewpoints. Since Morgan served on the board of Planned Parenthood, her voice was the most effective to promote such a radical idea. Through her persuasion, Crisis Pregnancy was admitted as a member agency in 1994. The United Way of Anchorage was the first in the nation to successfully admit an organization based on pro-life values while maintaining an association with Planned Parenthood.

I frankly do not know Justice Christen's view on abortion, but what I do know is that she is an advocate for justice for all. I applaud her for being one of the most significant attorneys, judges, community leaders, philanthropists, friends, wives and mothers in Alaska and I strongly urge your support of her appointment to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dennis G. McMillian".

Dennis G. McMillian