

July 8, 2011

Senator Patrick J. Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: 202-224-9516

Re: July 13, 2011 Confirmation Hearing for Justice Morgan Christen

Dear Senator Leahy:

My name is Walt Monegan, and I am writing to you in your capacity as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Alaska Supreme Court Justice Morgan Christen has been nominated for a position on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She is scheduled to come before the Senate Judiciary committee for hearing on July 13, 2011. I write to strongly endorse Justice Christen and ask that you give her your favorable consideration.

By way of background, currently I head the Alaska Native Justice Center, but I have served in law enforcement/public safety for over 35 years. I have held the position of the Anchorage Police Chief for five and half years, and Alaska Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety for a year and a half under former Governor Sarah Palin.

Serving as the head of Alaska's two largest police agencies, there were many opportunities and challenges in addressing law enforcement/public safety issues that required working with our district's presiding judge; this is where I first came to know then Judge Christen. She recommended monthly meetings to maintain a comfortable and open level of communication. At one meeting when we had no pressing issues to discuss, Judge Christen insisted we walk through the remodeling of the courthouse seeking my input on the new designs in regards to courtroom safety and prisoner transportation. Compare that with the fact that I had met her predecessor once in my first three years as the chief of police. My point is that Justice Christen is not one who sits back and waits, she is engaged, proactive, and always seeks improvement.

A little research on Justice Christen will show that she certainly has distinguished herself as a judge. Just four years after she was appointed to the superior court by Governor Tony Knowles in 2001, she was promoted to the position of Presiding Judge of the state's largest judicial district. In this capacity she oversaw nearly 70% of the state's trial court caseload - and 40 judicial officers - while also handling her own caseload. In 2009, Justice Christen was appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court by Governor Sarah Palin as just the second woman to sit on Alaska's Supreme Court. In every application/retention process, Justice Christen has received broad support from leaders in both major political parties, law enforcement, the Alaska Native community, private sector leaders, and the bar.

Regarding community service, Justice Christen is a pillar of the Alaska community and has a long history of community service. Among the awards she has received for her community service are the Chamber of Commerce Athena Award, Philanthropist of the Year, the YWCA Woman of

Senator Richard Blumenthal

July 7, 2011

Page 2

Achievement Award, and the Light of Hope Award for work on behalf of Alaska's children. She currently serves on the boards of the Rasmuson Foundation and the Alaska Community Foundation. Justice Christen has been a Rotarian since 1992, and is a former Big Sister. Some of her professional service includes: Chair of the Admiralty Rules Revision Committee, Chair of the Child in Need of Aid Committee, President of Anchorage Association of Women Lawyers, Member of the Gender Equality Task Force, and Lawyer Representative for the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference.

I could give additional and personal testimonials, such as: where she saw a problem outside of her branch of government that was about to cost the state in both time and money, she made a call that prevented it; or that she volunteered to join our city's task force on gangs to seek meaningful ways in which to address that issue. Or even when she took time out of her evening to speak to a class of young school teachers on how their efforts are vital to the success of the students they will someday teach; yet it is my intent to be somewhat brief in my request to you.

Given all this, it is my sincere wish that you now look upon her as I have for the past six years. Morgan Christen is not only our most qualified judge, she is also a remarkable and rare human being; gifted with intelligence and energy, guided by strong ethics and values, and has the grace to be professional and compassionate. I ask again for your favorable consideration in this important position; I ask it not only because of my obvious admiration of her abilities, but more from my belief that in this appointment, she will be given the opportunity to serve all of us to a greater extent.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,



Walt Monegan

Former Commissioner of Department of Public Safety, State of Alaska (2006-2008)

Chief of Police (ret.), Anchorage Police Department, Anchorage, Alaska (2001- 2006)

cc: Senator Begich
Senator Murkowski