

Statement of Senator John Cornyn

Confirmation Hearing for Catharina Haynes to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to support the nomination of Catharina Haynes of Dallas to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

I am proud to concur with the American Bar Association's unanimous opinion that Ms. Haynes is "well qualified" for a seat on the federal appellate bench. Her record as both a state judge and a member of the civil bar amply demonstrates the legal acumen, the commitment to justice, and the dedication to public service required for those nominated to serve on our nation's appellate courts.

It is truly a pleasure to recommend confirmation of a Texas lawyer with a career-long record of dedication to public service and equality before the law. Ms. Haynes has served as a volunteer for pro bono legal aid clinics, providing legal assistance to people who otherwise would be unable to afford to have a will probated or resolve family law issues. Ms. Haynes helped develop a brochure for pro se litigants, opening the doors of justice in what can be a daunting and intimidating system for disadvantaged litigants. This pattern of helping the less fortunate navigate the legal system bespeaks a commitment to the ideal of equal justice for all. This is but one aspect of Ms. Haynes's service to her community.

Since 2005, Ms. Haynes has been a Director of the Vickery Meadow Learning Center, a non-profit organization that promotes literacy among the residents of a low-income Dallas neighborhood. Ms. Haynes teaches pre-GED classes at the Learning Center. Ms. Haynes's direct involvement in her community demonstrates that her dedication to the rule of law is matched by her passion for public service.

Ms. Haynes demonstrated this commitment to public service in 1998, when she gave up a prestigious and lucrative partnership at the Baker Botts law firm to take the bench as a state district court judge on the 191st District Court in Dallas. As a former district court and appellate judge, I can attest that the district judge's experience seeing actual litigants and the real-world consequences of their legal disputes is invaluable for later service on the appellate bench. The fundamentals of judging—analyzing the arguments presented to the court in light of the facts and the law—are similar at the district and appellate level. But Ms. Haynes's experience as a district court judge will undoubtedly remind her each day that the consequences of a judge's decisions always have a human face.

As a state court judge, Ms. Haynes gained deep experience in many areas of substantive law including commercial litigation, personal injury, employment, insurance bad faith litigation, and intellectual property. State court judges interpret and apply federal statutory and constitutional law, which are, of course, the

supreme law of the land, binding on judges in every state. In presiding over nearly 300 trials, Judge Haynes distinguished herself for her work ethic and commitment to the rule of law.

Ms. Haynes's intellect and diligence have been evident throughout her legal career, starting with her extraordinary academic record. After graduating first in her class from Florida Institute of Technology at the age of 19, Judge Haynes went on to graduate, with distinction, second in her class at Emory University School of Law at the age of 22. In her 21-year legal career, she has been involved in a wide variety of complex civil cases in both state and federal courts.

Ms. Haynes's professional excellence has been repeatedly recognized and honored by her peers in the legal community. Her many awards include the State Bar of Texas Presidential Commendation, the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers Foundation Award of Excellence, and the Dallas Women Lawyers Association Louise B. Raggio Award, which is awarded annually to a Dallas-area attorney who has worked to advance women in the legal profession, shown outstanding legal proficiency and the highest level of ethics, and made a significant contribution to the profession.

It is fitting that Ms. Haynes has received awards for her contributions to the legal profession, given that she has dedicated significant energy to promoting the professionalism and ethics that are central to the rule of law. She has written and

spoken extensively on issues of civil trial litigation, professionalism, and ethics. Among her many professional leadership positions, she has served on the board of the Dallas Bar Association and the Professional Ethics Committee of the State Bar of Texas. Her life's work speaks to a belief in the high calling of a career in law, and a steadfast and accomplished pursuit of the profession's highest ideals.

Let me say in closing how much I appreciate the chairman holding this hearing. I look forward to working with the chairman to give Ms. Haynes a prompt up-or-down vote in this Committee, and on the Senate floor.

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