

January 22, 2013

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

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter of Support for Derrick Kahala Watson, Nominee
for the United States District Court for the District Court of Hawaii

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (“NAPABA”), we proudly endorse and urge the prompt confirmation of Derrick Kahala Watson to the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii. Mr. Watson possesses the requisite qualities—experience, intellect, and judicial temperament—to be an excellent United States District Court Judge.

NAPABA is the national bar association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students. Now in its 24th year, NAPABA represents the interests of over 60 affiliate organizations and over 40,000 Asian Pacific American attorneys. NAPABA is deeply committed to supporting the appointment of qualified Asian Pacific Americans to the federal bench, where Asian Pacific Americans are significantly underrepresented. Of the approximately 875 active Article III judges, only 17 are Asian Pacific American.

Pacific Islanders and Native Americans in particular remain essentially unrepresented in the federal judiciary. No Native Hawaiian or Native Americans currently serve on the federal bench. If confirmed, Mr. Watson would become the only Native Hawaiian serving in the federal judiciary, and only the fourth person of Native Hawaiian ancestry ever to serve as an Article III judge.

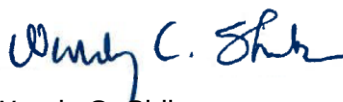
Mr. Watson possesses the qualities and depth of experience necessary to be an excellent federal district court judge. He has experience in both the private sector and in public service, and could easily make the transition to the bench. He has been a member of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Hawaii since 2007, and has served as chief of the Civil Division since January 2009. Prior to government service in Hawaii, he was in private practice at two firms in San Francisco and served for several years in the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California, during which time he served as a Deputy Chief in the Civil Division. Mr. Watson was also a member of the United States Army Reserve, where he served as a Captain in the JAG Corps from 1998-2006. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1991 and graduated *cum laude* from Harvard College in 1988.

Both for his military and legal service to the country, Mr. Watson has received numerous awards and recognitions. These have included: Bronze Medal, United States Environmental Protection Agency (2010); Certificate and Coin of Commendation, United States Customs & Border Protection, Field Operations (2010); National Defense Service Ribbon (2004); Army Commendation Ribbon (2000); Army Achievement Ribbon (2000); Army Service Ribbon (1999); Director's Award for Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney, United States Department of Justice (1999); Award of Excellence, United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General (1998); Commendation, United States Army Litigation Division (1996).

Mr. Watson has deep Hawaiian roots and would bring much needed diversity to the federal courts. He attended the Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu from 4th grade until graduating from high school, and he is the first person in his family to attend college. Mr. Watson's family upbringing was modest. As is common in Hawaii, he was raised in a multi-generational household on Oahu that included his mother, who worked at a local bank until her retirement several years ago, his father, who retired from the Honolulu Police Department, and his maternal grandparents, who were frequently the primary caregivers. Mr. Watson continues to stay involved in the Hawaiian community. Among other things, he has served since 2010 on the Board of Directors for the Prince Kuhio Child Care Center/Rainbow School. He also is active in several community and civic clubs.

Based on his qualifications, intellect, and commitment to service NAPABA proudly endorses Mr. Derrick Kahala Watson to serve as a District Judge for the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendy C. Shiba".

Wendy C. Shiba
2012-2013 President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tina R. Matsuoka".

Tina R. Matsuoka
Executive Director