

BUTLER | SNOW

April 9, 2024

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Sarah_Bauer@judiciary-dem.senate.gov

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Ryan_Giles@judiciary-rep.senate.gov

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
United States Senate
357 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Kaytlin_Lane@blackburn.senate.gov

The Honorable Bill Hagerty
United States Senate
251 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Clark_Milner@hagerty.senate.gov

Dear Senators:

I am writing in support of the confirmation of Kevin Ritz to fill the vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Kevin is an ideal nominee for this position.

Kevin and I worked closely together when I served as United States Attorney in the Western District of Tennessee from 2010 to 2017. Kevin is a Memphis native and graduate of Memphis public schools who went to college, graduate school, and law school out of state. Almost two decades ago, Kevin chose to come home and start his legal career. He clerked for Judge Gibbons and then immediately started in the U.S. Attorney's Office, prosecuting drug, firearm, and violent crime cases. In the best tradition of public service, he has continued to choose government work over much more lucrative opportunities both in and outside of Memphis. In fact, the United States is the only client Kevin has ever had.

In 2010, I appointed Kevin to serve as the first-ever Appellate Chief for our office. And in 2011, I promoted him to Special Counsel. As a member of my management team, Kevin was a trusted advisor on all types of policy, litigation, personnel, and budget issues. Both I and the other managers had full confidence in Kevin's judgment and discretion.

Kevin served in these leadership roles until he became United States Attorney in 2022. I was thrilled when President Biden nominated Kevin to that position and even more pleased when the Senate unanimously confirmed him. He has proven to be a steady hand at the wheel despite significant challenges. He has put together a diverse and capable management team. He has built and strengthened relationships with law enforcement and community leaders. And he provided visible and effective leadership as the city of Memphis, the nation, and the world reacted to the tragic death of Tyre Nichols in January 2023.

*Post Office Box 171443
Memphis, TN 38187-1443*

EDWARD L. STANTON III
T 901.680.7369
F 901.680.7201
edward.stanton@butlersnow.com

*6075 Poplar Avenue, Suite 500
Memphis, TN 38119*

BUTLER SNOW LLP

That episode is just one example of the work that Kevin has been doing as U.S. Attorney to uphold the rule of law and protect civil rights in West Tennessee. What I would really like to highlight, though, is Kevin's background in appellate practice. Kevin is one of the most respected and experienced appellate advocates in the Memphis area—in either the public or private sector. He has written more than 200 appellate briefs and argued over 35 cases before the federal courts of appeals (most of which were in front of the Sixth Circuit). He is an exceptional legal writer and oral advocate.

Some of Kevin's cases have reached the Supreme Court, and many have resulted in published opinions in novel and rapidly developing areas of criminal law. For instance, he (successfully) argued an important Sixth Amendment case before all 16 judges of the en banc Sixth Circuit. And due to Kevin's hard work on *United States v. Castleman*, the Solicitor General invited Kevin to sit at counsel table for the Supreme Court argument. That case resulted in a unanimous decision making it easier for the government to keep firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers.

With Kevin at the helm of our appellate practice, I knew that the office's work product would always be first-rate. I also knew that—consistent with the best traditions of the Department—Kevin's objective in every case was not to win, but to do justice. Federal judges and defense attorneys in Memphis would agree.

Kevin's appellate expertise is not just recognized and appreciated locally. He is known and respected by Department of Justice practitioners throughout the country. He served twice on the Department's Appellate Chiefs Working Group, which provides advice to senior-level officials on legal and policy issues, including guidance to AUSAs around the country on developments in substantive criminal law. Additionally, for over a decade, Kevin taught appellate advocacy and brief-writing to Department of Justice attorneys from across the nation at the National Advocacy Center in South Carolina and elsewhere.

Finally, Kevin has the character, temperament, and humility necessary to be a judge. He is a career public servant with an unblemished track record of being fair, even-tempered, and committed to reaching the right and just answer. Kevin would fit seamlessly among the judges of the Sixth Circuit, many of whom already know and deeply respect him.

Kevin is eminently qualified to fill this vacancy on the Sixth Circuit, and I hope you and your distinguished colleagues will vote to confirm his nomination.

Very truly yours,



Edward L. Stanton III