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September 24, 2023

Via email

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Judge Shanlyn A.S. Park
Judicial Nominee for U.S. District Judge, District of Hawaii

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

The Honorable Shanlyn A.S. Park has been nominated to be a U.S. District Judge in the District of Hawaii, and this letter lays out reasons why I wholeheartedly support her nomination. Please note that the opinion expressed is my own, in the capacity in which I have known Judge Park as a former colleague in this office.

As someone who has practiced in federal court almost exclusively for 14 years, I am keenly aware of the qualities that make an excellent federal judge, and Judge Park possesses these qualities.

I was lucky enough to work alongside Judge Park (of course, Shanlyn, then) from 2009 to 2017. I was a brand-new federal practitioner, and Shanlyn had been at the office for many years. She took me under her professional wing and became my unofficial mentor for the time I was in the office and beyond. Several things about her as an attorney were striking and, I believe, speak to

pertinent qualities that make a sound federal judge. I say this having done several jury trials with her, not to mention working daily with her for nearly eight years.

Integrity and Honesty: Shanlyn possesses integrity in spades. Reputation for honesty is almost everything in a small legal community. While she fought hard for her clients, being honest and forthcoming in her dealings with the Court, with prosecutors and with her clients, was of utmost importance to her. Judges and attorneys on the other side of the aisle respected her and were able to get along with her. This is not necessarily an easy thing to do in adversarial situations, but Shanlyn handled her practice, including working with the opposing side, with the utmost integrity.

Patience and Even-Temperament: In criminal defense work, particularly with indigent clients, it is easy to get frustrated and to lose patience. It is easy to become jaded and lazy. Shanlyn treated each case, each client and each issue that was assigned to her like it was the most important thing on her busy caseload – because it was. I have seen her in Court in high-pressure situations, under attack, and she has never lost her cool. I have seen her deal with extremely antagonistic attorneys, clients and witnesses, and she has always been professional while not bowing to pressure.

Humility and Sound Judgment: It is important for a judge to have some level of humility, and Shanlyn has that quality. She does not pretend to know everything, despite a rich career in both criminal and civil practice, as well as sitting as a judge. But she is unafraid of acknowledging that she does not have the answer, she works incredibly hard to gain knowledge to get to the right answer, and she is open to noting when she has made mistakes. It is critical that judges try and get things right without regard to their ego, and I have no doubt that Shanlyn does this as a state court judge.

Fairness: In this line of work, we often have extraordinarily difficult conversations with clients who can be cognitively impaired, mentally ill or otherwise very difficult to communicate with. While we are our clients' sole advocates in court, it is also our job to be clear-eyed about both sides of a case, so that we can advise our clients realistically. Shanlyn comes from a family of law enforcement, which I think helped her to be able to evaluate both sides of a case. I have no doubt that this skill was part of what made her a formidable trial attorney, particularly when it came to preparing for trial.

I can only directly speak to Shanlyn's skills when she and I were colleagues (and I should note that she was promoted to be our office's Senior Litigator while we were line attorneys, a testament to her skills), but I have reason to believe that as a Circuit Court Judge in state court, she exercises

these same qualities. Honolulu is a small town for lawyers and reputation counts for a lot. The reputation of Judge Park on the bench is consistent with my dealings with her as a colleague.

Shanlyn grew up in Hawaii, was educated here, both for undergraduate and law school, and has enriched our community. I cannot keep track of the different causes and boards she has committed to over the years, because she truly wants to make our state a better place overall, not just in the legal community. That she has been able to do all this while also raising two children is astonishing.

The diversity, breadth of experience, and commitment to the rule of law that Judge Park would bring to our bench would truly be an invaluable addition to the District of Hawaii and its citizens.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salina M. Kanai', written over a horizontal line.

Salina M. Kanai
Federal Public Defender
District of Hawaii