U.S. Department of Justice

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November 13, 2026

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

RE: Letter of Support for the Nomination of James Cody Hiland to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

I write to express my emphatic support for the nomination of James Cody Hiland to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Cody is extraordinarily qualified and will serve our country in excellence as a United States Circuit Court Judge.

In 2017, after Cody was appointed as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, he asked me to help him lead the office as his First Assistant. Although we had met several times through professional circumstances, and I had gathered a pretty good sense of the kind of man he is, I didn't know him that well. But his call to action – to focus the office's efforts squarely on reducing violent crime across the district was compelling. So, when it was clear that he was serious about working together, I began to pray about whether this was the right choice. For me. For him. For my family. For the office. After it became convincing that I should, I stepped out in faith to leave my job as an assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Texas to join him and return to my hometown in Little Rock.

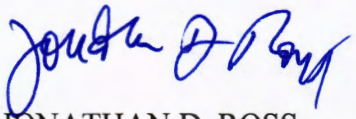
I'm so glad that I did. Through Cody's aggressive strategy to use the Department of Justice's renewed commitment to the Project Safe Neighborhoods and Project Safe Childhood programs, the office was able to make the impact that he asked us to accomplish. After his first year on the job, the office increased our caseload by 83%, and we saw an immediate measurable decrease in the homicide rates and violent crime rates in Little Rock, West Memphis, Pine Bluff and Helena-West Helena.

Cody often said to me that his measure of success would be whether he left the office "better than he found it, no matter how great it already was". Well, he did exactly that. During his time as the United States Attorney and continuing now even six years after his departure, our office has consistently been measured to have a "top five" caseload of "cases pending per AUSA" from across the 94 U.S. Attorney's Offices. Which means that he led our office to be both effective in our mission and accountable to the taxpayers not just while he was here, but continuing even after he left.

I've watched Cody up close and personal under the most intense pressure and witnessed firsthand that he knows his weaknesses and limitations but that most importantly, he knows where his help comes from. (Psalm 121:2) And because he does, he has a humility and grace about the way that he leads that makes working with him a special privilege. While I can only speculate on how his work ethic and leadership will translate into his service at the Eighth Circuit, what I can say with confidence is that he will bring his same diligence, integrity, and effectiveness to the job each and every day. And not only to the core duties of drafting opinions, but also in the diplomatic way that he will work with his colleagues across the Circuit, the professional staff of the Court, and the parties that appear before him.

As Cody's former colleague, I am confident that he possesses the legal acumen, grit, and commitment to the rule of law to serve as a Circuit Judge with distinction. I strongly urge the Senate to confirm Cody without delay.

Warmest regards,



JONATHAN D. ROSS
United States Attorney