Circuit Court for Milwaukee County
Branch 5
Milwaukee County Courthouse

901 N. 9th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233
414-278-4596

MARY M. KUHNMUENCH
Judge, Branch 5

MR. TOMARA A. PULLIAM
Deputy Court Clerk -
Judicial Assistant

October 12, 2017

Senator Ron Johnson
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Senator Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Michael B. Brennan, Nomination to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Dear Senators Johnson and Baldwin:

I am a long standing friend and judicial colleague of Michael Brennan, and believe that I am uniquely qualified to share with you some of my thoughts concerning his nomination to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judge Michael Brennan has the mind, heart and soul of a great jurist. He has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the fundamental constitutional principle of applying the rule of law "without respect to persons." That isn't just some abstract legal concept to Judge Brennan; rather it has been the shining lodestar of his entire legal career. What distinguishes Judge Brennan from others, who share that same commitment to the rule of law, is his humanity. He understands that real people, whether they are rich or poor, faith-filled or agnostic, well spoken or shy, look to the courts to help them solve their problems within the context of the rule of law.

His judicial service in Milwaukee County, the largest, busiest and most diverse in the great state of Wisconsin, included serving as the Presiding Judge in the Civil Division, where he handled both large and small claims calendars. Mike Brennan served with distinction on the civil bench and earned the respect of the Bar with his keen understanding of the legal issues in sophisticated and complex civil litigation. Equally important was his deft and pragmatic approach to problem solving with small claims litigants in matters ranging from evictions to consumer protection. He

not only had the respect of the Bar and self represented litigants, it is very note-worthy that the Court of Appeals consistently affirmed Judge Brennan's decisions.

Judge Brennan also served in the criminal division handling domestic violence cases, misdemeanors and felonies. Judge Brennan and I served together on the Homicide and Sexual Assault Docket in Milwaukee County. During that time, the third judge on our homicide team became very ill and had to take a medical leave of absence, leaving Mike and I to manage not only our own calendars, but that of our sick colleague. Mike never complained about the situation; instead he just rolled up his sleeves and did the work. He is a consummate team player with an incredible work ethic.

Most importantly to the litigants who appeared before him, Judge Brennan was a wonderfully kind and patient judge with a humble demeanor. He didn't use the bench to showboat or tell everyone how smart he was. I was amazed at his patience in dealing with any number of difficult people or cases before him.

Graduating with honors in philosophy and government from the University of Notre Dame, Judge Brennan studied law at Northwestern University Law School, where he served as the coordinating note and comment editor of the Northwestern University Law Review. A brilliant legal scholar, with more than 50 published articles on various legal topics including sentencing and federal jurisdiction, Mike is an outstanding writer and communicator. He is also a natural teacher, having developed and presented several judicial education programs to fellow judges. He is intellectually curious and thoughtful without being haughty. His incredible legal acumen was developed and honed through his broad and diverse experiences as a former state prosecutor, circuit court judge, mediator, and distinguished civil litigator.

Finally and significantly, Mike is not an ideologue, and he has never worn his politics on his sleeve. You could ask any number of lawyers who appeared before him, or his colleagues who worked along side of him, and they will confirm that Judge Mike Brennan never let his personal, religious or political views influence his legal decision in any case. He is brilliant, experienced, hard working and fair minded.

Rest assured that they don't come any better than Mike Brennan. He will be an outstanding Judge, and a wonderful addition to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. I am authorized to tell you that the following Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judges and Milwaukee County Court of Appeals Judges are also endorsing Mike Brennan's Nomination to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Respectfully Submitted,

Honorable Mary M. Kuhnmuench
Branch 5, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
414-278-5024 Chambers
Mary.Kuhnmuench@wicourts.gov
Immediate Past President of the Wisconsin Trial Judges Association

Endorsing Hon. Mike Brennen's Nomination to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals

Hon. Kitty K. Brennan, District 1, Court of Appeals
Hon. Timothy Dugan, District 1, Court of Appeals
Hon. William Brash, District 1, Court of Appeals
Hon. Mary Triggiano, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. M. Joseph Donald, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. David Hansher, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. David Borowski, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Paul Van Grunsven, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Jane Carroll, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Stephanie Rothstein, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Lindsey Grady, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Michelle Havas, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Ellen Brostrom, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Cynthia Davis, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Jeffrey Conen, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Jeffrey Wagner, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Christopher Dee, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Dennis Cimpl, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Tim Witkowiak, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. William Sosnay, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Glenn Yamahiro, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Michael Hanrahan, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Mark Sanders, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Marshall Murray, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Joseph Wall, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Tom McAdams, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. David Swanson, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Clare Fiorenza, Milwaukee County Circuit Court
Hon. Michael Sullivan, Retired Chief Judge of Milwaukee County Circuit Court

And

Hon. Thomas Hruz, District 3 Court of Appeals
Hon. Gregory Gill, Jr., Outagamie County Circuit Court