OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DONALD D. LANDRY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

ACADIA PARISH COURTHOUSE
500 N. PARKERSON AVENUE
P. O. BOX 288
CROWLEY, LA 70527-0288
(337) 788-8831 p
(337) 783-9471 f

LAFAYETTE PARISH COURTHOUSE
800 S. BUCHANAN STREET
P. O. BOX 3306
LAFAYETTE, LA 70502-3306
(337) 232-5170 p
(337) 235-1354 f

VERMILION PARISH COURTHOUSE
100 N. STATE STREET
SUITE 215
ABBEVILLE, LA 70510
(337) 898-4320 p
(337) 893-0103 f

September 25, 2026

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

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

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

I write in enthusiastic and unreserved support of the nomination of Bradford J. Kelley to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. I am an Assistant District Attorney handling narcotics matters and a business law professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. I have known Brad since 2010, when we began law school together at LSU, and I have known him as a classmate, colleague, attorney, co-author, and friend for over sixteen years. Throughout that time, he has distinguished himself by his intellect, discipline, and professionalism, and by the respect he shows others. At LSU Law, he was widely respected by his classmates and professors and was known both for his academic rigor and for the collegial manner in which he treated those around him. He graduated *magna cum laude*, was elected to the Order of the Coif, and served as an editor of the *Louisiana Law Review*.

My assessment of Brad is not limited to our time in law school. We have since co-authored several academic articles, giving me the opportunity to work closely with him on demanding intellectual and professional projects. In that setting, I have seen firsthand his willingness to consider competing perspectives, engage seriously with disagreement, and approach difficult questions with an open mind. He is thoughtful, collaborative, and unfailingly professional. His military service has also shaped the calmness, discipline, and sense of responsibility that he brings to his work. Even in stressful circumstances, Brad demonstrates sound judgment and an even temperament. Those qualities are especially important in a judge. Based on the many years I have known and worked with Brad, I believe he would approach the judicial role with seriousness, impartiality, humility, and respect for every person who appears before him.

As an Assistant District Attorney, I also appreciate the importance of meaningful experience with criminal law and procedure. Brad has such experience, including familiarity with the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, and 18 U.S.C. § 3553. One experience in particular illustrates not only his familiarity with the federal criminal justice system, but also his character and commitment to those affected by it: his years of pro bono work on behalf of Gold Star families in connection with the federal prosecution in *United States v. Isa*, Criminal Docket No. 11-819 (E.D.N.Y. filed Nov. 1, 2011). That prosecution arose from an attack that Brad experienced personally. On April 10, 2009, a suicide bomber driving a truck packed with explosives breached a security perimeter in Iraq and rammed into vehicles belonging to Brad's unit. The explosion left a roughly 60-foot crater and killed five American soldiers, making it one of the deadliest attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq that year.

In the aftermath, Brad remained close to the families of the five fallen soldiers. He supported them as they confronted an unimaginable loss and worked to ensure that the lives and service of their loved ones were remembered. He also wrote publicly about their sacrifice and resilience, including in an *Indianapolis Star* commentary recounting a Gold Star mother's effort to preserve her son's legacy. *See* Bradford Kelley, *The Costs of War*, THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR (Feb. 26, 2012).

Years later, the attack became the subject of a complex federal terrorism prosecution. In 2011, Faruq Khalil Muhammad Isa, an Iraqi-Canadian dual national, was arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and, following protracted extradition proceedings culminating in review by the Supreme Court of Canada, was extradited to the United States in 2015 to face federal terrorism charges.[1] The government alleged that Isa had communicated with members of a terrorist network in Syria and Iraq, including individuals connected to the April 10 attack, and had facilitated efforts by individuals seeking to travel to Iraq to conduct suicide operations. He ultimately pleaded guilty in March 2018 to conspiring to murder Americans abroad.

The prosecution involved substantial national security and international dimensions. At the time of the defendant's extradition, Loretta Lynch was serving as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York and had been nominated to succeed Eric Holder as Attorney General.[2] Both publicly underscored the importance of the case. In announcing the extradition, then-U.S. Attorney Lynch stated: "Today's extradition demonstrates to those who orchestrate violence against our citizens and our soldiers that there is no corner of the globe from which they can hide from the long reach of the law." The matter was later identified by the Department of Justice among the significant accomplishments of Attorney General Eric Holder's tenure.[3] Prosecutors characterized the matter as "extraordinarily complex," involving foreign wiretap

---

[1] *Alleged Terrorist, Charged with Murder of Five American Soldiers, Extradited to United States*, FBI (Jan. 23, 2015), https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/newyork/news/press-releases/alleged-terrorist-charged-with-murder-of-five-american-soldiers-extradited-to-united-states. *See also* Michael Doyle, *U.S. soldier's death a tale of war, terrorism hatched from afar*, CHARLOTTE OBSERVER (Jan. 30, 2015), https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/nation-world/national/article9498869.html.

[2] *See* Doyle, *supra* note 1.

[3] Accomplishments Under the Leadership of Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Dep't of Justice (archived), https://www.justice.gov/archives/doj/accomplishments-under-leadership-attorney-general-eric-holder.

intercepts, classified intelligence, international extradition proceedings, and evidence collected in a combat zone in Iraq.[4] The case required coordination across multiple federal agencies and international partners.

Throughout the prosecution, Brad advocated for and represented the Gold Star families on a *pro bono* basis from the very beginning. He devoted countless hours to guiding them through the federal criminal justice process, including explaining complex procedural steps and court filings, preparing them for hearings, and assisting family members in preparing written and oral victim-impact statements for sentencing. As the sole attorney advocating directly for the Gold Star families, he ensured their voices were heard and their losses honored in a process often dominated by legal technicalities and formal procedure.

The Gold Star families specifically asked Brad to speak on their behalf, and on behalf of the fallen soldiers, at the sentencing hearing. On June 18, 2019, in federal court in Brooklyn, Brad addressed the court. It was one of the most difficult moments of his professional life. As he stood before the court, he could hear the families quietly weeping behind him while he described the extraordinary character of the men who were killed, including their courage, their integrity, and the deep bond they shared as brothers in arms. He spoke about the devastating and enduring impact of the defendant's actions not only on the families, but also on his unit and the broader military community. Later that same day, the federal district judge sentenced Isa to 26 years' imprisonment, followed by lifetime supervised release. In imposing that sentence, the district court sentenced Isa below the advisory range calculated under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. The Department of Justice issued two separate press releases regarding the sentence.[5]

What happened after the sentencing is equally revealing of Brad's character. The families were disappointed by a sentence they believed did not fully reflect the magnitude of their losses. Brad stayed with them. He hosted them for lunch, where they shared stories about the men they had lost and remembered them not simply as names in a criminal case, but as soldiers, sons, husbands, fathers, brothers, and friends. Several of the Gold Star family members then traveled to Washington, D.C. Brad's wife, who was serving at the White House at the time, arranged and personally conducted a private tour of the White House complex for them. No gesture could diminish the permanence of their loss, but the visit provided an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary sacrifice these families had borne in service to our country. Brad's relationship with the Gold Star families did not end with the sentencing or with the conclusion of the case. He remains in regular contact with them to this day. Years later, when Brad and his wife welcomed their daughter, some of the first gifts they received came from the Gold Star families, including a handwoven blanket from one of the Gold Star mothers—a cherished gift that their daughter still sleeps with today.

---

[4] *See* Doyle, *supra* note 1.

[5] U.S. Dep't of Justice, Office of Pub. Affairs, *Defendant Who Conspired to Murder U.S. Soldiers Sentenced to 26 Years Imprisonment* (June 18, 2019), https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/defendant-who-conspired-murder-us-soldiers-sentenced-26-years-imprisonment; U.S. Dep't of Justice, Eastern District of New York, *Defendant Sentenced to 26 Years' Imprisonment for Conspiring to Murder Five U.S. Soldiers* (June 18, 2019), https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/defendant-sentenced-26-years-imprisonment-conspiring-murder-five-us-soldiers.

I recount these events because they reveal qualities in Brad that cannot be captured by a résumé. He experienced the underlying attack himself and served alongside the men who were killed, yet he devoted years to helping their families navigate a complicated and deeply painful legal process. In doing so, he drew upon his experiences as both a soldier and a lawyer while never losing sight of the people most directly affected by the crime. In my view, that experience speaks powerfully of Brad's composure, perseverance, and profound respect for the role of law in addressing even the most difficult circumstances.

Having known Brad for more than sixteen years, studied alongside him, published with him, and observed his professional development, I have had an unusually broad opportunity to assess his character and judgment. Across those different settings, the qualities I first observed at LSU Law have remained constant: intellectual rigor, discipline, humility, collegiality, sound judgment, and respect for others. Based on those many years of firsthand experience, I offer my highest recommendation for Brad's nomination to serve as a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Very sincerely,

/s/ Chase Edwards
Chase Edwards