Turner Padget

November 11, 2026

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

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

RE: Nomination of William Grayson Lambert to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

I write in support of the nomination of William Grayson Lambert to the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina. The Committee will hear from many of Grayson's colleagues and friends. Although I would consider myself among those, I write to provide perspective from the other side of the courtroom, as his opposing counsel in a sensitive constitutional case.

I am a shareholder in the Charleston office of Turner Padget Graham & Laney, P.A., where my practice focuses on commercial and constitutional litigation. With the Liberty Justice Center, I represented the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston and South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities in *Bishop of Charleston v. Adams*, No. 2:21-cv-01093 (D.S.C.), No. 22-1175 (4th Cir.), a challenge under the Free Exercise and Equal Protection Clauses to Article XI, Section 4 of the South Carolina Constitution. Grayson represented Governor McMaster, one of the defendants, and he argued for the appellees before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

The case turned on contested questions under the South Carolina Constitution. It arose from the Supreme Court of South Carolina's decision invalidating the Governor's own tuition-grant program, and it proceeded on an expedited schedule driven by federal deadlines for spending COVID-19 relief funds. Throughout, Grayson was a formidable adversary. His briefs were thorough and well researched, his arguments were precise, and he never overstated the record or the law. Despite the fact that the case required them to defend a constitutional provision that the state supreme court had just interpreted while invalidating one of the Governor's initiatives, the Governor's counsel, Grayson included, nevertheless took seriously the duty to defend the challenged provision, even if that effectively required defending a decision with which they or their client, or perhaps both, disagreed. Grayson's ability to do so faithfully and without complaint speaks volumes about his understanding and appreciation of a lawyer's duty, and it suggests that he would similarly appreciate the legal and ethical obligations associated with a judicial position.

Just as important, Grayson was unfailingly professional throughout his involvement in the litigation. We disagreed sharply on the merits, but never about the record or the courtesies owed between or among counsel. He was candid, responsive, and reasonable in our interactions, and he treated all involved with respect at every turn.

My clients did not prevail. The district court upheld the challenged provision, and the Fourth Circuit later vacated that judgment as moot. But the outcome has not colored my view of Grayson; in fact, it only enhanced my assessment of him and his abilities. I came away from the case convinced that he has the intellect, preparation, temperament, and integrity that the District Court demands, and that he would give every litigant a fair hearing and decide each case on the facts and the law. I would be comfortable appearing before him on behalf of any client I represent.

I respectfully urge the Committee to report Grayson's nomination favorably and the Senate to confirm him.

Respectfully,

Richard S. Dukes, Jr.