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April 9, 2026

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Justin D. Smith for the U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

I am writing to support the nomination of Justin Smith for a seat on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. I support him based on my 40 years of experience as an attorney and 25 years as a law professor before retiring a few years ago.

I first met Justin when he was serving as Deputy Counsel for Missouri Governor Eric Greitens in 2017. In my position then as a faculty member in the Legal Clinic at Saint Louis University School of Law, I was part of a coalition advocating for clemency for women in prison. Justin communicated with us regularly about the status of our petitions for our clients. He was kind and generous in meeting with my law students who were working on the project, and took our calls and emails on a regular basis. He took time to meet with our team in Jefferson City, and then later, in St. Louis at the Law School. Through his patience and consideration, and Governor Greitens' trust in his recommendations, several of our clients received clemency and were released from prison. This includes Judy Henderson and Verdina Miller who had unfairly spent decades in prison.

Justin was also instrumental in helping us settle a major class action lawsuit against the state involving children in foster care in Missouri while he was working for Governor Greitens. That settlement has led to better health for thousands of children in the foster care system.

Justin has a calm, professional, and caring demeanor and always listens to the views of all sides of a matter. He is not afraid to make difficult decisions to serve the interests of justice. He has vast experience with many types of legal issues, including criminal matters and complex civil cases, which he will fact on the Court. He is sympathetic to the plight of the disadvantaged in our society and will work to ensure justice for them and all whose cases he will consider.

I am excited for him to bring the Court the views and experiences of a young man who can be a bridge to the future for this important judicial body.

Please let me know if you need additional information.

Thanks for considering my views about Justin.

Sincerely,



John J. Ammann

Professor Emeritus

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