

April 10, 2026

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The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Justin D. Smith for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

We write in the strongest support of the nomination of Justin Smith to serve as a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

The undersigned include current and former attorneys of Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP who worked closely with Justin during his time at the firm. In that capacity, Justin was widely regarded as one of the most talented and respected associates in our group. He consistently distinguished himself through exceptional intellectual ability, sound judgment, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. He approached every matter with rigor, preparation, and care, earning the trust and confidence of partners, colleagues, and clients alike.

Since leaving private practice at Shook, Justin has built an extraordinary record of public service that further confirms his fitness for judicial office. He has served in senior leadership roles within Missouri state government, including as First Assistant Attorney General, Chief of Staff to the Missouri Attorney General, and Deputy Attorney General for Special Litigation. In those roles, he exercised responsibility over both civil and criminal matters, managed complex litigation initiatives, and demonstrated sound institutional judgment. Earlier, he served as Deputy Counsel in the Missouri Governor's Office, where he played a significant role in regulatory reform efforts, reviewed clemency petitions, and participated in the evaluation and appointment of numerous Missouri judges. More recently, he continued his public service as a Senior Advisor to the United States Senate.

What distinguishes Justin, however, is not simply the breadth of his experience, but the manner in which he carries out his responsibilities. He

possesses the rare combination of intellectual rigor, integrity, initiative, and humility that defines the very best lawyers and leaders. He is extraordinarily hardworking, exercises consistently sound judgment, and brings a positive and steady temperament to even the most challenging matters. He treats others with respect and care and inspires confidence through both his professionalism and his character.

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We are confident that Justin would discharge the responsibilities of a federal appellate judge with diligence, compassion, and fidelity to the rule of law. He understands deeply the importance of judicial independence and would approach each case with fairness and an open mind, guided by the law and the record rather than by personal or political considerations. His temperament, work ethic, and demonstrated judgment are ideally suited to the demands of appellate service.

Based on our direct professional experience working with Justin Smith, we believe he reflects the very best of the legal profession. He would be an outstanding addition to the Eighth Circuit, and we offer our strongest recommendation without reservation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Co-Chair of General Liability
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