



# Hope Manor Sober Living

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[Director@HopeManor.org](mailto:Director@HopeManor.org)

The Honorable Charles Grassley, Chairman  
United States Senator

May 26, 2026

Honorable Richard Durbin, Ranking Member  
United States Senator

United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

## **Re: Nomination of the Honorable Daniel M. Traynor to the Eighth Circuit of Appeals**

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin:

I write to express my strong and enthusiastic support for the nomination of Judge Daniel M. Traynor to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. I offer this letter not as a legal scholar or political advocate, but as a citizen whose life and work have been directly shaped by Judge Traynor's courtroom. I am the Executive Director of Hope Manor Foundation, a social model sober living nonprofit based in Bismarck, North Dakota. Founded in 2014, we are the longest continuously operating organization of its kind in our state. I hold a master's degree in clinical psychology and hold doctoral training in forensic psychology. I am also an alumnus of Hope Manor's program. I entered recovery in 2014 and have since dedicated my career to helping others do the same. It is from this vantage point standing at the intersection of the criminal justice system, psychology, and the recovery community that I can speak to Judge Traynor's character, judicial temperament, and fitness for the federal appellate bench.

Over the course of Judge Traynor's tenure on the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota, he has presided over at least a dozen cases involving current or former residents of Hope Manor. Many of these cases involved federal drug conspiracy charges or crimes committed on tribal land. These are cases in which the stakes for the individuals before the court, for the victims of their conduct, and for the broader community could not have been higher. In each instance, I have found Judge Traynor to be thoughtful, fair, just, thoroughly prepared, and deeply knowledgeable in the law. He approaches every case with the seriousness it deserves, paying careful attention to the full record: the testimony of victims, the statements of the defendant, character reference letters, and the particular circumstances that brought each person before the court.

What distinguishes Judge Traynor, in my experience, is his ability to discern. He is able to recognize when an individual's criminal conduct was directly related to drug abuse and dependence and, critically, he can distinguish those who sincerely want and need to change their lives from those who are merely going through the motions. For individuals who have used their encounter with the justice system as a turning point, Judge Traynor has demonstrated a clear understanding that rehabilitation can serve society more effectively than incarceration alone. He has been supportive of addiction services and recovery programming for those who are genuinely committed to transforming their lives, and that support has made a material difference for people I know and work with every day.

At the same time, Judge Traynor's record demonstrates an equally firm commitment to accountability. His rulings reflect the reality that no matter how sincere an individual's rehabilitation may be, there are cases in which a debt to society must still be paid. He does not shy away from imposing significant sentences when the facts, the law, and the impact on victims require it. This balance between mercy grounded in evidence and justice grounded in law is the hallmark of a judge who takes both the human dimensions and the legal dimensions of every case seriously. It is precisely this kind of measured, principled judgment that the Eighth Circuit needs.

I also want to note that Judge Traynor holds the rule of law and due process in the highest regard. He has publicly spoken about concerns where rulings have drifted from nonpartisan missions, a perspective he has offered not as an outsider critic but as someone who has served within the leadership structure. That willingness to speak candidly about institutional integrity, even within organizations to which he belongs, reflects the kind of intellectual honesty



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and independence that the appellate bench demands. His rulings consistently demonstrate a textualist approach to statutory interpretation, a respect for precedent, and a refusal to substitute personal preference for the requirements of the law.

I am confident that Judge Traynor will bring the same thoughtful application and interpretation of the law to the Eighth Circuit that he has brought to the District of North Dakota. His elevation will leave a significant void in our district court a testament to how valued he is here. But the work of the Eighth Circuit carries consequences that extend far beyond any single case; its decisions become binding precedent across seven states. I can think of no one better suited to that responsibility. Judge Traynor's combination of deep legal knowledge, real-world experience, judicial temperament, and unwavering commitment to the fair administration of justice make him an exceptional candidate for this appointment.

I have seen what happens when the justice system works seamlessly when a judge takes the time to weigh the evidence, consider the whole person, apply the law faithfully, and arrive at a just outcome. I have also seen what happens when it does not. Judge Traynor represents the best of what our federal judiciary can be. I urge the Committee to advance his nomination with confidence.

Respectfully submitted,

*Megan Frankl-Mann*

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**Megan Frankl-Mann, MS**

Executive Director

Hope Manor Foundation

Bismarck, North Dakota