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November 13, 2017

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

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Justice Don R. Willett – Nominee for the United States Court of Appeals for
the Fifth Circuit

Dear Chairman Grassley and Senator Feinstein,

During my tenure as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, I had occasion to work with more than twenty fellow Justices. I was able to assess their judicial demeanor, professionalism, dedication to the law, and character.

Justice Willett was appointed to the Supreme Court of Texas in 2005. His arrival coincided with a challenging period for the Court, which had been subject to withering criticism for failing to dispose of cases in a timely manner. Justice Willett quickly earned a reputation for rapid, and well-researched, circulations of opinions and other matters assigned to his chambers. A short time after his accession, and to this very day, the Court is current on its docket. Justice Willett was instrumental in accomplishing that goal.

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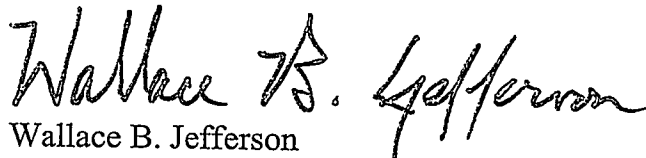
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Justice Willett brought unique perspectives to the Court's deliberations. Having served at the United States Justice Department, and the Office of the Texas Attorney General, Justice Willett understood the interplay among the branches of government, and the judiciary's role in adjudicating disputes without imposing a judge's or court's personal preferences. He appreciated the Court's obligation to remain within its constitutional sphere, faithfully adjudicating live controversies in each case.

Justice Willett is a scholar. He constantly studied the law, earning high praise from universities, foundations, and legal organizations for his astute exploration, in opinions for the Court and commentary for the country, of legal principles that shape our democracy. As a testament to his extraordinary legal acumen, Justice Willett recently obtained his Masters in Judicial Studies from Duke University School of Law.

I am confident that Justice Willett will be a thoughtful, hardworking, diligent, and influential member of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. I am honored to recommend his confirmation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wallace B. Jefferson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wallace B. Jefferson
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Texas (ret.)

cc: Senator John Cornyn
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Ted Cruz
Russell Senate Office Building 404
Washington, DC 20510

Mr. Michael Davis, Chief Counsel for Nominations
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Grassley and Senator Feinstein
November 13, 2017
Page 3

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