

November 7, 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 Willett, nomination for US Circuit of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

Dear Senator Grassley and Senator Feinstein,

I am writing on behalf of Texas Supreme Court Judge Don Willett and in consideration of his nomination to the US Court of Appeals.

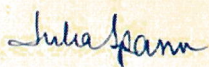
I first met Justice Willett when he had been recommended as a member of the Board of Directors for SafePlace, Travis County Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survival Center, a well-respected community based nonprofit organization in Austin, Texas. I was the Executive Director of SafePlace at time. SafePlace has since merged with the Austin Children's Shelter to become The SAFE Alliance. I am President of SAFE. It was clear to me that Justice Willett had a heart for our mission and a desire to ensure a safer Austin/Travis County community for women and children. He was offered, and he accepted, a position on our Board of Directors.

Unfortunately Justice Willett's time on the board was limited to a few months because of court rules, but during that short time he engaged quickly and heartily. He quickly saw the importance of our efforts to educate community members about abuse and its prevention, and he lent his time to these efforts. He was a spokesperson for a couple of small donor events, and he authored an Op-Ed for our local newspaper. All along, I found him to be open-minded, questioning, interested and responsive. I was certainly sad to lose his care, concern, and involvement on our Board. However, we have stayed in touch, and on at least one occasion he has reached out to me to help a person in need.

Although our agency does not endorse individuals, I am happy to share my good experience with and high opinion of Justice Willett with you.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at jspann@safeaustin.org or (512)927-4741.

Sincerely,



Julia Spann, President, The SAFE Alliance