

July 13, 2021

Senator Dick Durbin
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Chuck Grassley
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

The undersigned are lawyers who have spent decades appearing in federal courts throughout the country, including in Connecticut where we maintain law offices. We are also former advisors and appointees of Republican officials and have been involved in the selection and vetting of judges. Today we write in unqualified support of the nomination of Magistrate Judge Sarah Merriam to serve as a judge on the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

We have had the opportunity to observe Judge Merriam since she was a young lawyer clerking for a district judge in Connecticut and then working at a prominent boutique law firm in Hartford. From early in her career she displayed a distinctive diligence and aptitude. She quickly distinguished herself as serious and very smart, but also curious and collegial.

While she excelled in private practice, Sarah often spoke about her interest in a career in public service, which she realized as a lawyer in the federal Public Defender's office. There Sarah developed a reputation for representing her clients zealously, diligently, and effectively. She also became a go-to resource for those of us in private practice when we faced nuanced procedural and sentencing issues. Although there were lawyers in the District with more years of experience than Sarah, few shared her depth of knowledge about federal criminal practice or her responsiveness and generosity.

For the past six years, Judge Merriam has served as a United States Magistrate Judge in Connecticut. Not surprisingly, she has continued to distinguish herself. Judge Merriam displays not a hint of arrogance. She treats the lawyers and litigants who appear before her with courtesy and respect. She is collegial and maintains a sense of humor. Notably, she easily relinquished her role as an advocate and became an impartial arbiter who approaches each case and every issue with dispassionate fairness.

All of the foregoing is by way saying that we encourage the Senate to quickly confirm Judge Merriam. As a law clerk, a private practitioner, a public defender, and now a magistrate judge, Judge Merriam has been a significant and valuable part of the life of the District Court in Connecticut. As a United States District Judge she will be a rare asset to the District and the judiciary as a whole.

/s/

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cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee