



**MAUREEN F. HALLAHAN**  
Assistant Presiding Judge

**The Superior Court**  
OF THE  
**State of California**  
SAN DIEGO

Mailing Address  
Post Office Box 122724  
San Diego, California 92112-2724

November 23, 2022

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

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

**Re: Letter of Support for the Honorable James E. Simmons, Jr.,  
Nominee for the United States District Court for the Southern  
District of California**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

It is an honor for me to write this letter in support of the nomination of Judge James E. Simmons Jr. to the United States District Court, Southern District of California. I am the Assistant Presiding Judge of the San Diego Superior Court, and I have had the privilege of serving with Judge Simmons on the San Diego Superior Court for the past five years.

As you evaluate his qualifications as a judge on the United States District Court, Southern District of California, you can be confident that Judge Simmons possesses the attributes necessary to excel in this position. He has a record of excellence, integrity, and a strong commitment to the justice system.

Judge Simmons' background shaped the remarkable person he is today. He grew up in South Central Los Angeles and was raised by a single mother. As a cafeteria worker at a local elementary school, his mother made minimum wage and struggled to provide food, shelter, and utilities for Judge Simmons and his three older sisters. Despite these struggles, his mother instilled in him the importance of education, a respect for learning, a desire to succeed, and the confidence to believe he could accomplish anything he wanted. At a young age Judge Simmons took on the role of the "man of the house" helping support and care for his mother and sisters. He also navigated the gangs of South Central Los Angeles, and the multiple moves the family was required to make through the years. He attended college then law school and inspired his sisters to pursue their education. He decided to become a prosecutor and by reputation he was a fair, ethical and diligent Deputy City Attorney and Deputy District Attorney.

The Honorable Dick Durbin, Chairman  
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member  
November 23, 2022  
Page Two

Judge Simmons has a deep and broad knowledge of the law and a calm and thoughtful judicial demeanor. He instills confidence in those with whom he interacts, on and off the bench. He manages a heavy criminal master calendar, not only assigning cases but conducting hearings, including preliminary hearings and motions as well as civil and restraining order trials. He is trusted and well respected by both the prosecution and the defense bar and thus is effective in not only managing cases but settling those cases that can be settled without the necessity of a trial. His leadership of the North County branch and his willingness to do whatever is necessary has earned him the reputation of an extraordinary person and great judge.

Judge Simmons has strong proven organizational, administrative and management skills. He distinguished himself as a leader on our court and was selected to be the supervising judge of San Diego's largest branch court, the North County Branch. During his tenure he helped guide the North County Branch through the reopening after the COVID 19 court closures and difficulties that followed. Additionally, in November 2021, there was a partial collapse of the ceiling in a courtroom in the North County Branch, which led to the discovery of multiple safety and construction issues that are still being resolved. Judges shared chambers and courtrooms, portions of the building, including the family law courtrooms and chambers, were off limits for some time and paper files were difficult to access. Judge Simmons was a steady hand that gave everyone, judges, staff, and the public the confidence that matters would be handled efficiently and effectively despite these setbacks.

Judge Simmons serves the people of the State of California with dignity and humility. He is dedicated to the judicial process and to equal access to justice for all. We will miss him on the San Diego Superior Court but know he will make remarkable contributions and be a wonderful colleague on the United States District Court, Southern District of California.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter of support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 619-844-5925 or by email at [Maureen.Hallahan@sdcourt.ca.gov](mailto:Maureen.Hallahan@sdcourt.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



MAUREEN F. HALLAHAN  
Assistant Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

cc: Mr. Phillip Brest (*via email only*)  
Mr. Brendan Chestnut (*via email only*)