



MICHAEL T. SMYTH
Presiding Judge

The Superior Court
OF THE
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SAN DIEGO

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November 23, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin, Chairman
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 Confirmation of Hon. James Simmons, Nominee
of the United States District Court for the Southern District of California**

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am writing in support of the confirmation of The Honorable James E. Simmons, Jr. as a Federal Judge for the Southern District of California. As a Superior Court Judge of twenty years, and as the current Presiding Judge of the San Diego Superior Court, I have known James personally and professionally for his entire career as an attorney and judge, and therefore feel confident in my assessment of his qualifications for the Federal Bench.

Judge Simmons joined our court in 2017, just over five years ago. Most judges at this stage in their judicial careers would find themselves finally feeling comfortable in the unique role they have in our justice system, their feet finally wet. James is not "most judges." Judge Simmons' experience, both growing up and as a criminal prosecutor, prepared him well for the bench. When he began his first assignment, in Criminal Arraignments, Judge Simmons immediately demonstrated the temperament, judgment, and collaborative spirit that we as judges aspire to.

Judge Simmons is one of those very few people whom I describe as "hyper-competent." Indeed, I selected Judge Simmons to serve as the Supervising Judge at our North County Courthouse, the largest branch court in San Diego County, just four years into his judicial career. This would normally be considered extraordinary, but my decision was welcomed by all, including his more tenured colleagues – Judge Simmons was considered to be an obvious choice, and I certainly agreed with that. He is firm but fair, respected by attorneys on both sides of the aisle, and has proven to be highly effective in all of his judicial assignments.

Judge Simmons is known to his colleagues on the bench as one of the kindest, hardest working, and most competent judges we have here in San Diego County. I have frequently said that everyone has their detractors, including me unfortunately, but over these almost two decades of knowing and then working with Judge Simmons, I have never heard a single negative thing said about him – not from colleagues, not from staff, and not from attorneys. He is, I like to say, the real deal.

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Judge Simmons confirmation to the District Court will leave a gaping void on our bench, but one that I welcome – Judge Simmons has earned this opportunity, and I will be happy for him, but the Southern District of California and the community it serves will be the real beneficiaries. I therefore give my highest recommendation to the confirmation of Judge James Simmons to the Federal Court for the Southern District of California.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL T. SMYTH
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court