

November 28, 2022

Senator Richard Durbin, Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for Charnelle Bjelkengren as a United States District Court Judge

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I knew Charnelle Bjelkengren when she was an Assistant Attorney with the State of Washington assigned to the Spokane Division. The Division was responsible for nearly all legal matters in Eastern Washington. We had a case load of thousands spread out over 39 attorneys and a total staff of just over 110. Not only did I hire Charnelle, but I was also assigned to conduct the statewide Attorney General Academy for all new AAGs where Charnelle started her legal career. In all, I trained over 950 new hires over a three-day sequestered period in how to represent the State of Washington (boards, commissions, and agencies). It is easy to discover the diamonds in a group of 35 to 50 new hires. She was an outstanding participant, and I was lucky to have her in Spokane until I retired in 2009.

Her intellect is beyond reproach as is her honesty and work ethic. I recall her working her cases on weekends to keep up with her caseload which could be a daunting task. Just to be hired by the Office of the Attorney General meant that she needed to beat out hundreds of others. She always had a smile on her face and was well inculcated with her associate attorneys as well as her direct supervisor Maureen McGuire, me, and other professional staff. She had no hesitancy in contacting me for guidance or support when necessary. I found her to be an outstanding AAG and a delight to work with. Everyone loved her. Unfortunately, I have had little contact with her since retirement and living in Arizona part of the year, but others with whom I maintain contact also hold her in high regard.

Finally, the District Bench requires a person with wide litigation experience which Charnelle possess. I support her whole heartedly. Picking her for the bench should be an easy decision that will be widely respected. This is the kind of judicial officer that everyone will like with a warm personality and respect for all.

Laurence D. Briney
Senior Assistant Attorney General
Spokane Division Chief
Retired