



SPOKANE COUNTY COURT HOUSE

SPOKANE COUNTY

TIMOTHY W. FITZGERALD

County Clerk

Clerk of the Superior Court

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

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

RE: Support for Superior Court Judge Charnelle Bjelkengren's Appointment to United States District Court
Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

I am honored to write this letter of support for the confirmation of Judge Charnelle Bjelkengren. In my capacity as the elected County Clerk and Clerk of the Superior Court of Spokane County I have immensely enjoyed working with Judge Bjelkengren. Although we serve in different branches of government, County Clerk is part of the local government executive branch, Judge Bjelkengren has always partnered with my office to ensure smooth and complete access to justice for the citizens of Spokane County. The legal system is comprehensive and intimidating. Judge Bjelkengren has repeatedly demonstrated respect, patience and fairness to all participants entering her courtroom.

Her knowledge of the Judicial process and steady temperament was essential in the trial courts. The trial court is the heartbeat of the legal system. It is in these courts where our true freedoms in the criminal justice system are protected. Jury trial, witnesses, due process, speedy and public trial, double jeopardy and right to counsel are fundamental constitutional rights that our trial court Judges uphold. Judge Bjelkengren takes this fundamental responsibility very seriously and she has established a solid reputation as a fair, knowledgeable, and impartial Judicial Officer. The simple fact that she is considered a trusted and fair judge by the public she serves is a testimonial to her qualifications for the Federal Bench.

In her capacity as a Superior Court Judge she handles felony level cases in eight different case types: criminal, civil, domestic (family law), guardianship/probate, adoption/paternity, civil commitment, dependency/truancy, and juvenile. Doing both jury trials and bench trials involving Pro Se (self-represented litigants) is a serious challenge. A challenge she efficiently and compassionately handles. Her

ability to rule on the law presented yet ensure the rights of the defendant and public safety concerns are equally addressed is the hallmark of a well prepared, thoughtful Judge.

From my position as the County Clerk running the day to day legal system, I get the pleasure to observe a truly ethical and dedicated Judicial Officer execute her oath of office and Judicial responsibilities with fairness and transparency. I fully endorse her confirmation to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Timothy W. Fitzgerald", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honorable Timothy W. Fitzgerald
Spokane County Clerk