

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chair
Committee on the Judiciary
United State Senate
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 2051

Re: Nomination of Julie Rikelman to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

We write with our enthusiastic and strong support of Julie Rikelman's nomination to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. We are a group of appellate practitioners familiar with Julie's work. Some of us have worked with Julie as co-counsel on trial or appellate matters. Others came to know Julie advising on litigation that Julie was spearheading. Others have served on moot court panels with Julie, or on panels mooted by Julie. And still others have observed her litigate some of the most high-profile and important matters of the past decade. We are partners, counsel, and associates; private practitioners and attorneys who have spent considerable time in government practice. And we all agree that Julie would be an excellent First Circuit judge, and a credit to that Court.

First and foremost, Julie is a top-notch legal thinker and writer. Her analysis is sharp and insightful. She has an uncanny ability to cut through complexity to get to the right answer and present it in a way that reflects common sense. Her writing is straightforward, elegant, and compelling. As an advocate, she is forthright about what the cases say and what the facts are, never overstating her position. She has a passion for the law, and it shows in the care with which she talks about it and applies it. As appellate advocates, we have litigated with and against some of the most highly skilled attorneys in the nation, who performed their roles with utmost integrity and candor. We can say without hesitation that Julie is one of them.

Julie's extraordinary legal acumen was honed during an uncommonly broad and varied legal career. After graduating with a B.A., magna cum laude, from Harvard College, and a J.D., cum laude, from Harvard Law School, Julie clerked for two highly respected judges: Justice Dana A. Fabe on the Alaska Supreme Court—that Court's first female Justice and longest serving Chief Justice—and Judge Morton I. Greenberg on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Julie then began practicing law, spending half her career in the private sector and half in public interest litigation. She worked for two private law firms: Feldman & Orlansky in Anchorage, Alaska, and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP in New York. She then served as Vice President of Litigation at NBC Universal, Inc., where she acted as lead litigation counsel in federal and state courts nationwide. And for the last decade, Julie has been the U.S. Litigation Director at the Center for Reproductive Rights, where she has led complex litigation at every level of the federal and state judiciaries.

That Julie has excelled in so many different legal environments—as a law clerk at the state and federal appellate levels, at a small firm and Big Law, in-house, and in the public interest arena—speaks to her versatility and confirms her ability to adapt to a new role as a judge. She has litigated in state court and federal court. She has tried cases and argued appeals, including twice in the U.S. Supreme Court. She has handled criminal and civil cases. She has been advocate

and representative of an institutional client. She has personally litigated cases and managed a team of litigators. It is rare to find a judicial nominee whose litigation experience is so well rounded.

Julie's personal history also makes her an ideal candidate for the federal appellate bench. Julie's family lived the American Dream. They fled the discrimination and repression of the Soviet Union to arrive here with nothing. From that experience, Julie learned the value of hard work and grit, two attributes that describe Julie and her career. And all this instilled in her a sense of the importance of the rule of law. It is no surprise, then, that Julie has devoted so much of her career to public service. Even when courts ruled against her in important cases, her belief in the rule of law and her own sense of obligation to make the world a better place through public service has always kept her positive and focused.

Julie also has the ideal temperament for an appellate judge. Despite often litigating in hostile forums, she has never lost her composure. She maintains the same even keel regardless of the difficulty of the questioning. She listens to the views of others and adapts her positions in light of those views. One could not ask for more in a court of appeals judge.

All of these qualities endear Julie to everyone she encounters, especially those who have worked closely with her over the years. Julie will be a great colleague to fellow judges. She will be a caring mentor to the next generation of top lawyers. She will treat all litigants with respect. But most important of all, she will bring her characteristic brilliance, sober judgment, and fair-mindedness to every case she decides.

In short, we strongly endorse Julie's nomination to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and are confident that she will be an outstanding judge on that Court.

Sincerely,

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