

October 18, 2021

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin, Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Jennifer L. Thurston for United States District Court, Eastern District of California

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am writing in support of Judge Jennifer L. Thurston's nomination to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California and to ask for her speedy confirmation. I am currently the Levi Family Professor of Law at Duke Law School. I also direct the Bolch Judicial Institute at Duke Law. Prior to my coming to Duke in 2007 to serve as Dean of the Law School, I was the Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, the court on which Magistrate Judge Thurston will serve if she is confirmed.

Judge Thurston is a 2018 graduate of Duke Law School's Master of Judicial Studies (MJS) Program, administered by the Bolch Judicial Institute. Each MJS class enrolls approximately 22 federal, state, and international judges who sit on courts of general jurisdiction. Judges learn the analytical skills and research approaches necessary for studying judicial institutions and apply those skills to studies of domestic and international judicial institutions, emerging legal issues, general judicial practices, and judicial reform efforts. Through an intensive and challenging two-year curriculum, judges study an array of issues relating to judicial institutions, judicial behavior, and decision-making.

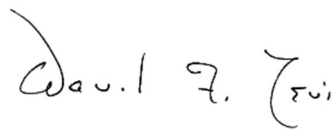
The program attracts judges who are interested in deepening their understanding of the rule of law and the administration of justice, who appreciate the opportunity to learn from scholars and peers, and who are willing to contribute their own experiences and perspectives to develop the craft of judging. It is a serious and demanding program that requires focus, hard work, and a willingness to sacrifice precious time and energy to studying, writing, and learning. All of the judges who attend have a deep commitment to understanding and furthering the rule of law and to becoming even better judges and judicial administrators. Throughout her time at Duke, Judge Thurston demonstrated deep commitment to these ideals; she was an engaged, thoughtful, and

serious student. She also was a kind, humble, and collegial student and collaborator, traits that are particularly evident and important when working in a small group.

Judge Thurston also proved to be an excellent scholar. Her master's thesis was selected for publication in 2019 in the journal *Law & Contemporary Problems*, an honor that underscores the quality and value of her academic work. She also served as editor for an edition of *Judicature*, our scholarly journal for judges, and has been a strong supporter of and participant in our programs since her graduation. I have very much appreciated her continuing engagement.

Through her participation in the MJS program, Judge Thurston has demonstrated deep commitment to the rule of law, a desire to continually expand her own skills and knowledge, and an interest in working to improve the administration of justice in our federal courts. Because I was Chief Judge of the Eastern District of California, I know of the high regard in which Judge Thurston is held by other judges on the court as well as members of the community in which she serves. As you know, the Eastern District has had one of the highest weighted caseloads in the country for the past 20 years or more. The District desperately needs additional judges, and Judge Thurston's speedy confirmation would be an important positive step. I am confident she will make an excellent judge, and I am pleased to support her confirmation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David F. Levi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and a stylized "L".

David F. Levi