



# State of Connecticut

## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

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October 25, 2023

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Judiciary  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I write to express my support for the nomination of Sarah Russell to the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

From 1993 to 2021, I served as a Connecticut state court judge. Most of that time, I worked as a criminal judge in the trial court. During the last few years of my judicial career, I served on the Connecticut Appellate Court. Prior to being appointed a judge, I worked as an Assistant United States Attorney. As a federal prosecutor, I appeared before many federal judges.

In 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly established the Connecticut Sentencing Commission that was composed of twenty-three members representing the full spectrum of stakeholders in Connecticut's criminal justice system. As the Chief Administrative Judge for the Criminal Division of the Superior Court, I was named to the Sentencing Commission. I served as a Commission member and later its chair from 2011 to 2019. It was through the Sentencing Commission that I met Sarah Russell.

I worked with Sarah Russell on several Sentencing Commission projects including, (1) consideration of bail reform, (2) evaluation of Connecticut's Sex Offender Registry, (3) efforts to

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reduce barriers to employment for ex-offenders, and (4) overview and revision of Connecticut's narcotics statutes. The methodology of the Sentencing Commission was to examine controversial subjects using the various perspectives of its members. The members included judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers, police, corrections, probation, and other members appointed by the leaders of the General Assembly. It was a varied group.

Sarah Russell was an effective and hard-working member of the Sentencing Commission. She was open to views of others and respectfully considered their positions. While her position as a law professor might suggest that she would automatically adopt a "left wing" position on every issue, that was not the case. Often, she advocated a middle ground. Per its by-laws the Sentencing Commission strived for consensus on its policy recommendations. Sarah Russell understood that the Commission's proposals would be more influential to legislators, if all members were in agreement. In this regard, her leadership was very valuable.

I always found Sarah Russell to be even-handed in her approach to issues. It goes without saying that she is a person of towering intellect and unquestioned integrity. As a judge, I have no doubt that she would demonstrate great fidelity to the rule of law. She is also unpretentious and quite likeable. She would make an excellent federal judge. I recommend favorable consideration of Sarah Russell's nomination to the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert J. Devlin, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

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ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.  
INSPECTOR GENERAL