

March 22, 2024

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

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
211 Russell Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510,

Re: Judge Rebecca L. Pennell, Nominee for the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Washington

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

I am writing in support of Judge Rebecca L. Pennell. It was my pleasure to preside over two Sobriety, Treatment and Education Program Courts (STEP) during my tenure as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the Eastern District of Washington from 2008-2016. Judge Pennell was a valuable member of our Court programs during that time. She attended our regular meetings with other members of our team and was always prepared, thoughtful and helpful to our program participants. She invested great amounts of time and study into the issues of addiction and treatment and brought a fresh perspective to our journey in search of the best methods and practices to assist our participants in gaining a useful place in society after their release from the Bureau of Prisons.

Judge Pennell also appeared regularly in my courtroom as a member of the Federal Defenders Office. She was unfailingly prepared, thorough and courteous in representing her clients. I was impressed with her broad knowledge of the law as well as her professional demeanor.

I have followed her career as a judge on the Washington State Court of Appeals. I believe she has demonstrated all of the attributes of a fine jurist. She is patient, knowledgeable, and follows legal precedents. I know she will make a wonderful Federal District Court Judge and she has my complete support in seeking this appointment. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (509) 910-1956.

Sincerely yours,

James P. Hutton
U.S. Magistrate Judge (ret.)

