

August 17, 2023

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chair
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am proud to support the nomination of Judge Jeffrey Bryan for federal judge in the District of Minnesota. I have known Judge Bryan since he became a federal prosecutor in 2007, when I served as the Section Chief of the Narcotics Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office. He was an extremely hard-working and fair prosecutor when we worked together there and continues to exhibit those characteristics as a judge.

When he started in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Judge Bryan had civil and white collar criminal defense experience. He faced a learning curve in our section. Instead of representing companies, working with damages experts, or deposing corporate executives, Judge Bryan met with police officers, presenting grand jury evidence, and interviewing potential cooperating witnesses. Judge Bryan wasted no time and embraced the challenge. Within a few months, he was already directing investigations like a seasoned prosecutor. One of the things that impressed me most was his incredible work ethic. Judge Bryan spent many nights and weekends writing search warrants, monitoring wiretap rooms, strategizing for upcoming trials, or finalizing an appellate brief. Few AUSAs worked as hard as Judge Bryan. To me, the reason was simple. Judge Bryan was completely committed to doing the very best that he could in his work.

One prosecution that we both worked on stands out to me. It began when agents from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and agents with the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives independently identified a large cocaine-trafficking organization operating from the Texas border to Minnesota. Rather than designate one primary investigating agency, I decided that Judge Bryan and I would work the case together with representative members of both agencies. Over the next two years, Judge Bryan worked tirelessly to build our case. Through multiple Title III wiretaps and a variety of other investigative tools, we gathered evidence to indict 27 defendants in this cocaine-trafficking conspiracy. In addition, we traced hundreds of financial transactions totaling millions of dollars. Several different teams of law enforcement agents assisted in the arrest of the defendants and the seizure of bank accounts, cash, real property, vehicles, and firearms from MacAllen, Texas, to Saint Cloud, Minnesota. In the end, all of the defendants pleaded guilty, and Judge Bryan handled the vast majority of the court appearances, including successfully arguing against the motions to suppress the Title III wiretaps and to lift the seizure of financial assets.

I became a state district court judge soon after that, and have been a judge in Scott County, Minnesota since 2012. As a judge in Minnesota, I can also speak to Judge Bryan's reputation after he left the U.S. Attorney's Office to be a judge himself. True to form, I believe that Judge Bryan is well-regarded because of his experience, preparedness, and analytical abilities. He is known as firm, yet compassionate. Judge Bryan is able to see cases from a variety of angles, but also writes with great

clarity, identifying and explaining applicable precedent. He understands the narrow limits of the district court judge's and the intermediate appellate judge's role, careful not to overstep. But, most of all, I think he has earned a reputation as an even-handed and fair judge. Litigants and lawyers appearing before him have confidence that Judge Bryan will guard their procedural rights and consider their arguments with an open mind. I know, if appointed, he will be an asset to the District of Minnesota.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to advance to the full Senate the nomination of Judge Jeff Bryan for District Court Judge on the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wilton', written in a cursive style.

Honorable Christian S. Wilton
Judge of District Court