

DICKERT MEDIATION

August 27, 2024

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

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member, Committee on the
Judiciary
United State Senate
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Senators Durbin and Graham:

It is my pleasure to write in support of the nomination of Tiffany Johnson for the position of United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

I am fortunate to have been a member of the legal profession since 1974. I practiced law in the federal and state courts of Georgia and South Carolina for many years. Included as part of my career was an eleven-year period in which I served as a sitting Superior Court Judge in the State of Georgia. Superior Court is Georgia's court of general jurisdiction, handling felony criminal, unlimited civil, as well as family disputes. I presided over more than 100 jury trials during that time. After a period in which I returned to law practice following my retirement from the bench, I now serve as a mediator as well as a Senior Superior Judge, having been appointed to this position four years ago. In this role, I have continued to preside over civil and criminal cases including jury trials, motions hearings, and other such similar disputes. I believe my experience places me in a unique position to gauge a person's potential for the trial bench. Tiffany passes that test with flying colors.

I have known Tiffany since she was in high school and have followed her development personally and professionally. After graduating from Davidson Fine Arts High School in Augusta, Tiffany had an exemplary record at Princeton. I would frequently see Tiffany when she came home to Augusta for school breaks. At an early age, I noticed a unique set of skills that portended what an exceptional adult she would become. She and I talked on many occasions about her pursuing a legal career. I encouraged her in that direction, knowing what an asset she would become to the legal profession, as a lawyer and potentially a judge.

After my retirement from the bench, I worked for a number of years with the firm of Hull Barrett, practicing in Georgia and South Carolina. I had the good fortune to have Tiffany work as a summer associate with this firm during the summers of 2010 and 2011. She assisted me on a many matters and performed exceptional work during those summers. I knew then that she had developed the kind of skills necessary to be an exceptional member of the legal profession. After she graduated from law school and started private practice, I asked her to assist me in a continuing education program I chaired on an evidence book I have written since 2003. She did an exceptional job on one or more occasions making this presentation.

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In my experience working with Tiffany , she has shown incredible maturity, intelligence ,and judgment. She is a keen listener and has demonstrated commitment to fairness, justice, and integrity. Tiffany possesses all the qualities necessary to make an excellent trial judge.

While she has compassion, she balances that with a toughness and strength of character necessary to make the tough calls judges are called upon to make every day. As I have noticed as a lawyer and judge, few lawyers these days have actual courtroom experience. Many cases in the criminal arena are pled, civil cases are mediated, and many practitioners spend their careers taking depositions, responding to discovery, and drafting pleadings and briefs. Not to belittle those skills but being a trial judge in our federal system involves presiding in court and frequently making decisions in life altering situations. During Tiffany's career, she has been as we say "in the trenches" both in private practice and at the US Attorney's office. I know her former law firm well and have several professional colleagues who practice with that firm. They are not paper generating factories, but real lawyers representing real clients in court. Tiffany fit well with that firm. Her experience with the US Attorney's office has been similar. She spent several years in the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's office, dividing her time there between civil rights enforcement cases and handling a general civil calendar of cases where the U.S. government is a defendant. She was recognized by her peers as "Attorney of the Year" for the year 2019. Since moving to the Criminal Division in 2020, she has prosecuted criminal cases with an emphasis on white collar crimes and public corruption. She would come to the bench well versed in the type of litigation the federal courts handle on a daily basis.

Tiffany is well prepared and qualified "on day one" to assume the duties of a federal district court judge. While I served as a trial judge in the state system, I devoted a large amount of my time as a practitioner trying cases in the federal district courts of Georgia and South Carolina. While I am not in active practice at this time, I do mediate cases involving federal issues, to include one as recently as last week. The Federal bench will be enhanced by her joining the court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Please let me know if I can provide additional information on this exceptional judicial candidate. I am quite willing to personally come in support of her nomination should that be helpful or needed.

Sincerely,



Neal W. Dickert

Mediator and Senior Superior Court Judge