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May 23, 2023

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 States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: *The Hon. Julia Kathleen Munley,
Judicial Nominee to the United States District Court for the Middle District of
Pennsylvania***

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham:

I write in strong and enthusiastic support of Judge Julia Kathleen Munley's nomination to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

I have known Judge Munley all of her life. We share the same, small hometown of Archbald, Pa. Her family and mine were neighbors for decades. She developed a distinguished academic record in college and law school. Prior to ascending the state court bench, she was a highly accomplished and skilled civil litigator in the state and federal courts of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Representing countless grievously injured and innocent victims of wrongdoing, her recovery of substantial economic justice for her clients is well documented.

However, it has been in my capacity as the Chief Public Defender for Lackawanna County, based in Scranton, Pa, from which I have had the opportunity to witness, firsthand, Judge Munley's exemplary professional competence, integrity, and judicial temperament. Her reputation for fairness, balance and equity is beyond reproach. As public defenders we represent our most vulnerable population— poor people accused of crimes and facing loss of liberty.

The primary but limited exposure the public defenders have to Judge Munley is in criminal contempt of court proceedings. Typically, these arise from situations in which child custody determinations must be made. Often, they also involve matters in which folks have sought the court's protection from a severely abusive or dangerous environment enveloping a

family. Tensions are high among the parties. Circumstances are fraught emotionally. People trapped in such conflicts face a judicial fiat which implicates the loss of a child, loss of a safe home, or loss of liberty itself for the litigant. Such participants are often poor, vulnerable, marginalized, frustrated, and confused. Unfortunately, a party, on rare occasions, can overreact with anger and defiance when receiving an adverse ruling from the court. Such behavior sparks a finding of criminal contempt forcing the court to consider a period of incarceration or hefty fines for the outburst.

However, it is in the midst of such isolated but perilous circumstances, even after Judge Munley perhaps endured the hurling of disrespectful words and gestures, that the brilliance of Judge Munley's mind and temperament pierces the darkness. Here the judge employs equanimity to dispel the bedlam. Scrupulous in her conviction that the rule of law is preserved and respected, she responds not out of retribution but, rather, often in displays of compassion and humanity. First, she ensures the boisterous individual has legal counsel for the contempt hearing to safeguard one's constitutional rights of due process. She calls me and I dispatch an assistant public defender to counsel the defendant in lock up awaiting a prompt hearing on the contempt charge.

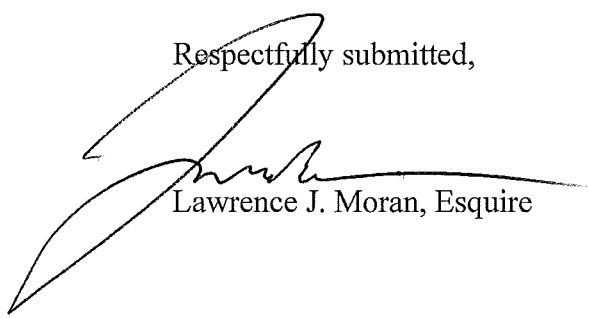
At this point, as the judge would insist, the individual is counseled to reflect on their aberrational conduct and to demonstrate remorse for it and genuine respect for the law, at that moment personified by the judge. Assuming a proper display is made the person finds reciprocity in a calm, logical and compassionate judicial demeanor, and the contempt sanction is invariably lifted. Lesson learned. The sanctity of the law and the person's liberty rights are guaranteed.

Judge Munley presides thoughtfully, respectfully, and with utmost care over matters which impact people's lives. Our cases are about real people. Judge Munley brings sensitivity and grace to her courtroom. She treats everyone with civility and decorum— lawyers, victims, defendants, law enforcement officers, and witnesses alike. Judge Munley understands that each human being has intrinsic value and deserves respect.

What makes Judge Julia Munley extraordinary is this. In the exercise of the awesome power of her judicial duties she brings a humanity and humility which personifies fairness and decency. These qualities would make Judge Munley an excellent United States District Court Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

I am confident Judge Munley will approach each case which comes before her fairly, without bias, and with deepest respect for the rule of law. Judge Munley's patience, compassion, integrity, and dedication to fairness indisputably demonstrates she possesses the requisite judicial temperament. She will be an outstanding addition to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. I wholeheartedly and without reservation endorse her nomination and confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,



Lawrence J. Moran, Esquire