

April 23, 2024

Chair Dick Durbin  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC

Ranking Member Lindsey Graham  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC

VIA EMAIL

Dear Senators Durbin and Graham:

I am an Associate Teaching Professor of Law at the highest ranked law school in the Pacific Northwest. I am writing, however, in my personal capacity. I am most pleased to provide this recommendation from Judge Rebecca Pennell to the Federal bench. I have never appeared before Judge Pennell, so therefore I cannot speak to judicial temperament. But I certainly can speak to her competence and integrity.

I met Judge Pennell in 2019 at the Access to Justice statewide conference in Spokane, WA. I believe I saw her once after that in 2019 when she came to my law school to recruit for law clerks. Then Covid hit, and obviously lots of things were disrupted. Unbeknownst to me, she became a member of the Office of Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee, a group that oversees a \$130M judicial branch agency.

Last year (2023), I was the co-chair of a search committee to find a new director for the Office of Civil Legal Aid, after 17 years of having the same director. We had three members of the Office of Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee, including Judge Pennell. We also had community members, civil legal aid service providers, and members of the Access to Justice Board (where I was chair). It was an extremely contentious process. The search committee had unfortunately little guidance, either from the statutes forming the agency or from the Supreme Court. But through it all Judge Pennell was the "voice of reason." She was prepared for every meeting, every search firm interview, every candidate interview, every debrief. She kept us on track. There were times that the members wanted to disregard the scant statutory guidance (we needed to supply three names to the Supreme Court) and she refocused the group, kindly but firmly, on our legal obligations. I truly believe her competence and integrity were essential to the search committee's success.

I strongly believe Judge Rebecca Pennell would be an excellent addition to the Federal judiciary.



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