

October 30, 2023

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Committee on Judiciary
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Attorney Sarah Russell, Nominee for the United States District Court, Connecticut

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

I have the pleasure of providing this letter of support for Professor Sarah Russell of Quinnipiac University's School of Law for an appointment to the United States District Court. I currently serve as the senior assistant state's attorney at the Hartford Connecticut Community Court and have previously served as the State's Undersecretary of Criminal Justice Policy and Planning in the Office of Policy and Management under Governor M. Jodi Rell and as an executive assistant state's attorney to Chief State's Attorney Kevin T. Kane (retired). This letter is provided not in my official capacity with the Connecticut Division of Criminal Justice, but as a professional colleague who has worked with Professor Russell on a variety of projects.

Over several years, Professor Russell and I served on multiple working groups for the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. In these diverse groups, we reviewed important, yet complicated and controversial, subjects such as sexual offender sentencing and registration and bail reform. While I may not have always agreed with her positions, I found that she takes a very thoughtful approach to all of her professional duties and was always very knowledgeable on the subject matters studied. Our work on the Commission frequently required us to hold public meetings and interact with many different constituencies including all stakeholders in the criminal justice system. She was always carefully listening to all individuals, discussing every side to an issue and doing her own legal research before taking a position. She consistently respected the rule of law and demonstrated the qualities that are necessary for a member of the judiciary.

Further, on many occasions I had the opportunity to see Professor Russell work with her students on Commission projects. I was particularly impressed with her work ethic and ability to work well with all of the students that she taught and supervised in her clinical settings. She was always very approachable and respectful of their opinions.

In conclusion, I believe Sarah Russell has demonstrated the intellect and temperament that would make her an excellent addition to the United States District Court. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any additional information or if I may be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Brian Austin, Jr.