



Federal Bar Association - Eastern District of Washington

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January 20, 2023

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Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-711
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-135
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter of Support for the Honorable Charnelle Bjelkengren as United States District Court Judge

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the Federal Bar Association of the Eastern District of Washington ("FBA-EDWA"), this letter supports Judge Charnelle Bjelkengren's appointment as District Court judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington.

The FBA-EDWA is a nonprofit membership organization comprised primarily of enrolled licensed attorneys in the District. The FBA-EDWA Board of Directors has several primary functions, including acting as the main liaison between attorneys and the federal bench in the District, coordinating the District's civil legal aid pro bono program, administering donated funds for the District's Sobriety Treatment and Education Program, and hosting the annual District-wide conference. Various Board members also support the District and its bench in many other ways, not limited to assisting with the vetting and selection of magistrate and Article III judges.

We support Judge Bjelkengren's nomination to a District Court judgeship. Owing partly to her relatively recent appointment to the bench for Spokane County Superior Court in 2019, the majority of our Trustees do not have substantial experience practicing before Judge Bjelkengren. However, one of our Trustees, Asti Gallina of Riverside Law Group, recently tried a civil employment and partnership dissolution case before Judge Bjelkengren. We offer Ms. Gallina's impressions to aid this Committee in its analysis and endorse her impressions and recommendation.

As a former judicial law clerk to the Honorable Salvador Mendoza, Jr. (whose seat Judge Bjelkengren has been nominated to fill) and current practitioner in the Eastern District of Washington, Ms. Gallina is familiar with the rigorous demands required of a federal trial judge. In her experience practicing before Judge Bjelkengren, Ms. Gallina found her to be well prepared, diligent, thoughtful, and fair. Judge Bjelkengren capably ruled on numerous complicated issues, including a summary judgment motion presenting an issue of first impression regarding the construction and operation of Washington's partnership statute. Judge Bjelkengren thoroughly prepared for hearings and all other matters before her and carefully considered the arguments of both parties.

Equally important, Judge Bjelkengren displayed an exceptional judicial temperament. She treated counsel, the jurors, the witnesses and the parties with dignity and respect throughout the pre-trial proceedings and trial while maintaining control of the courtroom at all times. Judge Bjelkengren ensured that the parties had an opportunity to be heard and that they understood the rationale for her decisions.

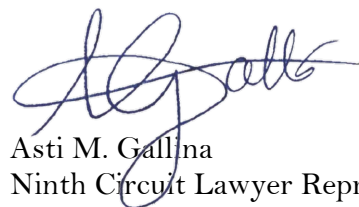
In sum, based on her experience trying a case before her, Ms. Gallina believes that Judge Bjelkengren's work ethic, legal savvy, and disposition will make her a fine addition to the judiciary for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington. Accordingly, the FBA-EDWA supports Judge Bjelkengren's confirmation without reservation.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact either one of us below.

Respectfully,



J. Stephen Roberts, Jr.
President
FBA-EDWA, 2022-2023
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Asti M. Gallina
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