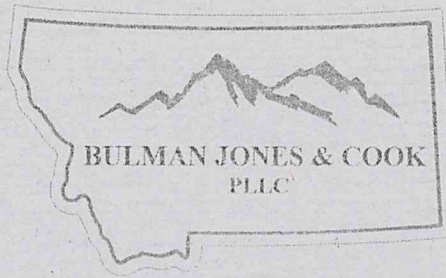


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Thomas C. Bulman, Esq.  
Bradley J. Jones, Esq.  
R. Spencer Bradford, Esq.

June 23, 2021

Office of Governor Greg Gianforte  
ATTN: Hannah Slusser  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620-0801

**Re: Support for Traci Labin Rhodes**

Dear Governor Gianforte:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District candidate Traci Labin Rhodes. I am familiar with Ms. Rhodes reputation in the legal community and have had the opportunity to work opposite her over the past ten years.

Ms. Rhodes' experience in both the public and private sector uniquely qualify her to address the needs of our community as a District Court Judge. Ms. Rhodes is a fierce advocate for Montana's constitutional rights. She has fought vigilantly to protect Montanan's rights in cases where previous administrations, less willing to embrace our citizen's God-given autonomy, have over-stepped their administrative authority to meddle in Montanan's lives. Nonetheless, our laws also must protect our citizenry from those who fail to appreciate that our rights to freedom come with a duty to others.

Ms. Rhodes has extensive exposure to both family law and criminal law, which, as you know, are the majority of the District Court's docket. I believe that Ms. Rhodes is objective, fair minded, and embodies the average Montanan's sense of morality.

It is with great confidence that I recommend Ms. Rhodes for nomination to the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court.

Sincerely,

Bradley J. Jones  
Attorney at Law

BJJ/cn

From the Office Of  
Elizabeth Weaver, Attorney at Law

June 28, 2021

Hannah Slusser  
Governor's Office  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620

RE: TRACY LABIN RHODES, JUDICIAL CANDIDATE

Governor Gianforte,

I have known Tracy as both a colleague and now a friend for over 9 years. She is an excellent candidate dedicated to serving her community. It is with great pleasure that I highlight and enumerate the many qualities that qualify Tracy Rhodes to serve as a judge in the Eighth District.

As you may know, Tracy has served as a substitute Justice of the Peace. I had the opportunity to stand before her professionally. It was the hour before and after, however, that made the greatest impression on me.

As I watched her patiently and practically move through the motions and appearances of the morning, I learned a lot about her. I had always known her as a first-rate attorney, playful mother, and good friend. On the bench, I saw another extraordinary side of her. She displayed the natural qualities of a good judge: calm authority, deliberate fairness, and intellectual humility. As an attorney, I greatly respect her. As a friend, I am honored to learn from her.

Few attorneys will make a great judge. It takes charisma, humility, diligence, patience, and intellectual autonomy, all character that Tracy possesses. She has the dedication and temperament befitting a judge that will serve to do right of those before her. I hope you appoint Tracy Rhodes as a District Court Judge.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Weaver, Attorney at Law

Keith Fichtner  
5233 Cattle Dr.  
Missoula, MT 59808  
406-360-6149  
[Keith.fichtner@edwardjones.com](mailto:Keith.fichtner@edwardjones.com)

June 18, 2021

Judicial Nomination Commission, c/o Hannah Slusser  
Governor's Office  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

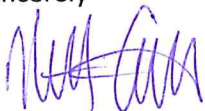
To Whom it May Concern,

It is my pleasure to recommend Tracy Labin Rhodes for District Court Judge for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. I am a financial advisor at Edward Jones. I came to know Tracy over the last 15 years both personally and professionally. Prior to Edward Jones, I worked in the insurance industry – specializing in malpractice insurance for lawyers. Tracy has over 20 years' experience as an attorney and I feel compelled to mention that I personally believe she is the best person for the job.

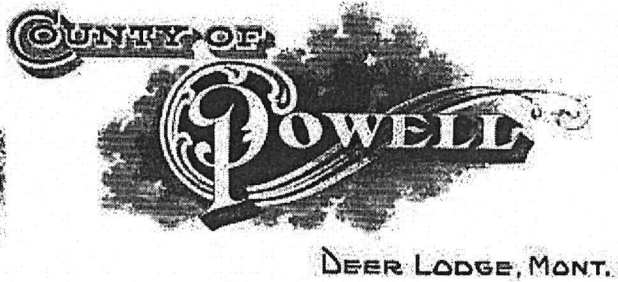
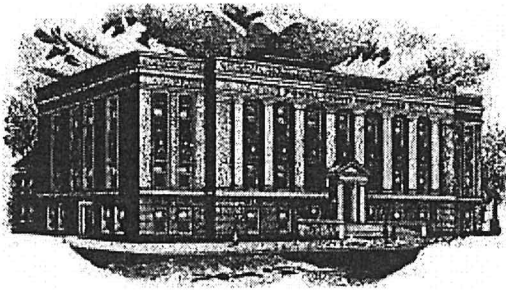
Overall, Tracy is highly intelligent and has good analytical skills. While working with Tracy, I was able to witness firsthand her passion for the rights of victims and clients, as well as her ability to keep a contemplative, open mind while judiciously weighing all the facts. She has an objective point of view, which will come in handy while on the bench.

Again, based on Tracy's resume, character and flawless integrity, I believe this is the most enlightened choice and perfect fit for District Court Judge.

Sincerely



Keith Fichtner



June 18, 2021

Hannah Slusser  
Governor's Office  
PO Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620  
[nominatejudges@mt.gov](mailto:nominatejudges@mt.gov)

Re: Tracy Labin Rhodes

Dear Ms. Slusser,

I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Rhodes for appointment as a District Court Judge for the Montana Fourth Judicial District.

Prior to my election as Powell County Attorney, I had a private law practice in Sanders County. I had the pleasure of consulting with Ms. Rhodes on a very difficult DN case which became her successful Montana Supreme Court appeal in *In re A.J.C., 2018 MT 234*, and *Cromwell v. Schaeffer, 2018 MT 235*. In my representation of the appellant father, I had reached a point where I could not see a clear way forward. Ms. Rhodes took on the matter enthusiastically and was able to swiftly and compellingly identify the key issues for a successful appeal. The resulting opinion clarifies for practitioners an important principle for family law and child neglect cases.

Ms. Rhodes' insight into these kinds of issues will make her an excellent judge in the Eighth Judicial District.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn McEnery*

Kathryn McEnery, *electronically signed*  
Powell County Attorney

I write in support of the judicial nomination of Tracy Labin Rhodes. I first met Tracy shortly after I graduated from law school. She was working at the law school as acting director of the Indian Law Clinic and a visiting associate professor. My first impression of Tracy was that she was a marvelous combination of compassion and intelligence. In the 13 years that I've known her that impression has not changed.

When I first met Tracy, we were representing a mutual client. I was representing the client in connection with very serious criminal charges and uncharged involvement in a brutal homicide. Tracy was representing the client on a dependent neglect matter. As a young and full-of-himself lawyer, I was relatively aloof and callous about our client because the proof in the criminal case was very strong. Tracy reminded me that our client was both human and, because of the client's tragic circumstances, deserving of our best efforts.

That meeting had a significant effect on how I practiced law after that point. Whenever I find myself becoming jaded or callous, I recall that conversation and our mutual client. In short, Tracy made me a better lawyer and a better person.

Tracy is, and will be, an excellent judge. I have appeared before her when she was a *pro temp* justice of the peace. She treats everyone in her courtroom with equality and fairness. She balances her inherent empathy with a classical respect for the law, the rules of court, and the rules of society. I can't think of a better combination for a jurist.

Tracy is also an excellent teacher. During our first encounter, Tracy was able to convey a powerful lesson without lecturing or condescension. I believe this ability will be critical to a judge who presides over a very busy judicial district with a large number of *pro se* litigants. Tracy will treat each and every person that appears before her with dignity and respect. If she is able to guide them the way she guided me, the community of Missoula will be well served.

Finally, if appointed, I believe Tracy will be able to retain her seat. Tracy's network extends across a broad swath of the Missoula populace. For a long period of time the Rhodes children were enrolled in one of the poorest school districts in Missoula. Tracy actively participated in the school and the community. Although their children attend the Catholic School (Tracy is a strong Catholic), she still

maintains close ties to those she met in that district and provided *pro bono* legal work for them. I have little doubt that she will be able to convince the voters that she is perfect for the job.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,  
SMITH & STEPHENS, P.C.

/s/ Colin M. Stephens

Colin M. Stephens

Colin M. Stephens  
SMITH & STEPHENS, P.C.  
315 W. Pine  
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**Slusser, Hannah**

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**From:** jason stephenson <jasons8166@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 4, 2021 6:37 PM  
**To:** NominateJudges  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Judge nomination 8th district

After looking over each of the applicants, I believe non of them are what Montana needs in our judges. We don't need more criminal lawyers & specially don't need more prosecutors as judges. We need individuals that understand not just the law, but the state & federal constitution, & non of these have that. If we are to protect Montana's individual liberties & the great strides we have made towards that in the last 6 months, then these applicants should not be affirmed. Judges are expected to be impartial, but considering that these individuals have represented the government in it's defense or as it's lawyer representing it in prosecution of citizens, no reasonable person would expect them to be impartial. I believe because of their service in government that there would be a conflict of interest, leaning in favor of the government rather it be in criminal matters or civil matters. It would be more beneficial to the citizens to leave the set open, then to affirm any of these to this high position of power.

**Sincerely**  
**Jason Stephenson**