TALEFF & MURPHY, P.C.

ATTORNEYS:

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Connor J. Murphy

LEGAL ASSISTANT:

Kristin L. Van Every

300 River Drive North, Suite 5 • P. O. Box 609
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Phone: (406) 761-9400 • E-mail: mail@talefflaw.com

Our File: MI25-02

June 30, 2021

Via Email: nominatejudges@mt.gov

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

Re: Letter of support; David Joseph Grubich and Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing with regard to the judicial vacancy in the Eighth Judicial District. You have undoubtedly been inundated with letters extolling the virtues of the candidates who have submitted applications. While I confess I was personally appalled at the treatment of Ms. Levine by the legislative committee and was disappointed in its decision to not confirm her appointment, as an attorney I believe these two lawyers were the most qualified persons who were submitted to the former Governor. Both are deserving, based on their qualifications, demeanor and integrity, to fill this position. Mr. Grubich and Ms. Levine are justifiably held in respect by their peers for the qualities that will make each a good judge. I ask for your favorable consideration of them for this position.

Sincerely yours,

TALEFF & MURPHY, P.C.

Ward E. Taleff

Ward "Mick" Taleff
Direct Phone: (406) 761-9415

WET/klv

Slusser, Hannah

From: Sharon Stearns <catrionab90@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 2:41 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support for Michele Reinhart Levine

June 30, 2021

Dear Governor,

I am writing to express my support for judicial candidate Michele Levine for the Eighth Judicial District judgeship. I have known Michele for several years as she is a near neighbor. Since moving to the neighborhood, I have gotten to know Michele and her family due to having a child the same age as her children. She is always willing to help host neighborhood gatherings and have fun activities for the kids.

From my personal interactions with her, I believe she is a kind and thoughtful person. She is a very good listener and I feel like she would make a great judge. She wants to give back to her community in a significant way. I have heard her speak with passion about bettering our city and helping people who find themselves in the unfortunate position of dealing with the judicial system. She has the skills to do this job effectively and with compassion while balancing her family life. I personally support seeing more women in the role of judge and I think this is a step towards more inclusion and diversity into the judicial system so it can work better for all members of the community not just a select few.

Please consider Michele for this position; she has all the qualifications that I believe would make a great judge in Great Falls, as is evident from the six months she spent previously in this position.

Sincerely,

Sharon E. Stearns
Great Falls, MT

MARRA EVENSON & LEVINE PC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

2 Railroad Square, Suite C • P.O. Box 1525
Great Falls, Montana 59403-1525
P: (406) 268-1000 • F: (406) 761-2610
email@marralawfirm.com • marralawfirm.com

June 30, 2021

VIA EMAIL: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Governor Greg Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

RE: Eighth Judicial District Court, Judicial Candidate, Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to ask you to appoint Michele R. Levine. Michele possesses the intelligence and patience necessary to do the work of instilling genuine confidence in our judicial system at a time when many citizens doubt the ability of our court systems to equitably function. While she was the appointed Judge here in Cascade County I heard only satisfaction or compliments as to her performance.

Michele has an excellent work ethic, a true interest in justice, and the energy to research the law and then apply the law to the facts. She is the spouse of one of the lawyers I practice with, which has provided me the opportunity to listen to her insights about working with people, whether clients, attorneys or judges. She is active in our community, and values the lives and livelihoods of all of the people with whom she comes into contact. She has always expressed an interest in learning, and has engaged in *pro bono* work in the area of family law.

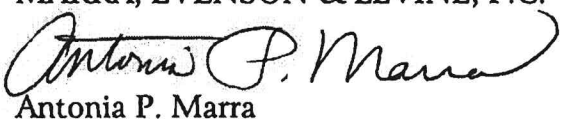
Michele has a talent for listening, and discerning all points of view. She possesses a patient demeanor and calm persona and can clearly articulate her understanding of facts and their application to the law. She is aware of the growing frustration among litigants over the time it takes to obtain rulings and is committed to being organized and issuing rulings on motions and final rulings in bench cases, so that the parties can go on with their lives or go on appeal.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW Barbara E. Bell (of counsel) • Kirk D. Evenson • Amber Henning • William J. Levine • Antonia P. Marra • Joseph R. Marra (1924-2015) • Thomas A. Marra
PARALEGALS Roxie Halter • Brenda McGee • Donna M. Osterman
LEGAL ASSISTANTS Vicki Evjen • Sharon E. May
ACCOUNTS Connie Manning

Finally, I have practiced in many areas of the law, as a prosecutor, in criminal defense, in the family law arena, and both "sides" of civil practice (plaintiff and defendant) in many areas of law. There is no area of law that Michele could not handle. She has the brains and the brawn to do the work. She is not afraid of hard work or of research. I have full faith that she would treat every person and every argument with fairness and respect, as that is who she is day to day. Michele is an excellent attorney and should be reappointed.

Sincerely,

MARRA, EVENSON & LEVINE, P.C.



Antonia P. Marra
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*Also licensed in Connecticut & Washington D.C.
**Also licensed in Idaho

MILODRAGOVICH • DALE • STEINBRENNER, P.C.
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June 30, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
VIA EMAIL AND USPS: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte,

This letter is written in support of Michele Reinhart-Levine's Judicial Application for District Court Judge in Cascade County.

I met Michele in law school when she presented as a guest speaker with respect to her work as a legislator. I was impressed with how articulate and engaging she was about her work. We became friends, and over the years I have reached out to Michele for advice or recommendations from everything from sippy cups to the Subsequent Injury Fund for comp clients. Her advice or thoughts are always spot on, and she would make time for a quick call even with her caseload and busy household.

Michele's practice has been primarily in the civil and administrative arena, and her experience as a trial lawyer would lend well to the bench. She takes time to examine both sides of an issue, does her research, and strives to make stronger and better case law. As a judge, I firmly believe she would bring compassion, insight and sound logic to the matters she presides over.

Finally, given her community involvement and role as a parent of young daughters, she would be a positive role model and familiar with the challenges faced by those she would preside over. I believe this quality would greatly benefit Cascade County and our judiciary.

Sincerely,

MILODRAGOVICH, DALE
& STEINBRENNER, P.C.

Hannah Stone
EMAIL: hstone@bigskylawyers.com

HS:sn

BOONE KARLBERG P.C.
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JULIE R. SIRRS
TRACEY NEIGHBOR JOHNSON
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ZACHARY A. FRANZ
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EVAN B. COREN
ALISON R. POTTS
WILLIAM T. CASEY
REBECCA L. STURSBERG

June 30, 2021

By email to: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Application of Michelle Reinhart Levine for the 8th Jud. Dist. Vacancy

Dear Gov. Gianforte:

Michelle Reinhart Levine is an excellent candidate to serve as District Judge for the Eighth Judicial District. Ms. Reinhart Levine is smart, thoughtful, diligent and empathetic—in a word: judicious.

My practice consists of civil litigation, primary representing defendants. With that perspective, I enthusiastically support Ms. Reinhart Levine. I am certain she will treat all parties fairly.

Ms. Reinhart Levine has the intelligence to fulfill the duties of judge; the temperament to maintain the honor of the position; the wisdom to further the interests of justice; and the work ethic to manage the heavy caseload in Cascade County. I urge you to strongly consider her for the position.

Sincerely,

Zach A. Franz

201 West Main St., Suite 300 | P.O. Box 9199 | Missoula, MT 59807-9199 | TEL: 406-543-6646 | FAX: 406-549-6804 | www.boonekarlberg.com

June 28, 2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Judge - letter opposing Michele Levine's appointment

Dear Gov. Gianforte,

Michelle Levine should not be appointed as the next 8th Judicial District Judge. A majority of the members of the Montana legislature have spoken and determined that Michelle Levine has proven herself to be a political activist and that her ability to serve as an unbiased judge would be limited and/or jaded because of her political views.

While she claimed the legislature was playing a game of politics, it is important for everyone to remember that the legislature applied the same process to the Judges that were appointed in Gallatin County and Lewis and Clark County, and approved both of those nominations. It was Ms. Levine, not the members of the legislature, who established her record of political activity. Political activists such as Ms. Levine do not just shut off their views like a light switch. Regardless of her blanket statements to the contrary, her strong political views and activism no doubt influence her way of thinking, how she interprets laws, how she listens, how she judges the people who come before her, and what facts she would find compelling or not compelling.

We humble members of the general public who are affected daily by decisions of district court judges have all seen instances where a judge wants to reach a certain result that is consistent with his or her own political beliefs, so he or she interprets a law or put more importance on certain facts in order to reach that result. This was one of the legislature's concerns with Ms. Levine and it is a significant concern to those who would have to appear before her if she were appointed. We do not need more judges on the bench whose strong political views influence decisions. Ms. Levine would be one such judge.

In addition to her political activism, Ms. Levine has also demonstrated herself to be a hypocrite which is not a characteristic we need on the bench. One on hand she stated repeatedly that she is not a "rubber stamp" judge. When the Montana legislative body actually evaluated her and did not "rubber stamp" her appointment, she disrespected the legislature by criticizing their decision even though they expressed valid reasons for the decision. Her actions speak louder than her rehearsed words. If she does not believe in rubber stamping decisions/orders, she should respect the legislative body's decision not to rubber stamp her appointment.

I watched the interviews for all three judicial appointments by the judicial nomination commission. The interviews, particularly the Cascade County interviews, were nothing more than an exercise in and display of political favoritism. All but one committee member gushed over Ms. Levine and commented how they went back to their days together in the legislature. It wasn't a huge stretch to know which applicant the committee was going to give the nod to. The judicial nomination committee needed to be disbanded.

Ms. Levine bragged that no one appeared at her confirmation hearing to oppose her confirmation. If it would have been announced more publically as to the date and time of the confirmation hearing, there would have been opponents. The people who supported her were specifically advised as to the date and time. Opponents did not have that same courtesy. It is not surprising that attorneys did not voice opposition being as how every other legislature has rubber stamped the nominations and the risk of having to appear before someone like Ms. Levine would impact the attorney and the attorney's clients.

I reviewed the various letters people have written in support of the applicants. What troubles me is that most are the overstated letters written by public officials. I do not believe this is right because it demonstrates a bias by an individual currently holding a public office. For example, Judge Best wrote a letter advocating for Ms. Levine. Judge Best claimed Ms. Levine is the hardest working judge she has ever seen in a 40 year career. The statement is so over the top it brings her credibility into question. If we are to believe that statement, maybe that judge should not be on the bench since she admittedly isn't working that hard. Judge Best also referred to Ms. Levine as "Judge Levine" through her letter. Ms. Levine is not a Judge. She was stripped of that title by the legislature. Shouldn't that title be reserved for actual Judges? What Judge Best just revealed is that she is a liberal advocating for another liberal, which was precisely the legislature's concern with Ms. Levine's appointment, which is the inability for judges who are political activists to remain "neutral" and "unbiased". This is not a novel concern. It has been demonstrated time and time again and people are sick of it.

Likewise, I think it is inappropriate for a department head of a County office to voice any opinion on the matter. Those department heads represent the citizens of the entire County, and the opinions that were offered certainly do not represent my opinion as a citizen of this County. Further, it brings to question why the County Attorney is utilizing County resources and time to write personal letters, especially when another member in that same office is an applicant and Ms. Levine is now working under the department head.

Ms. Levine is a political activist. The die is cast. We do not need any more political activists on the bench to impose his/her political ideals on the rest of us, especially when there is another applicant with more relevant experience. Ms. Levine should stick to what she knows which appears to be worker compensation matters and political activism. Let's set the bar high and appoint an applicant with the best qualifications and characteristics who could truly demonstrate an ability to remain unbiased. Ms. Levine is simply not the best applicant for the position. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Truly yours,

April Taylor

April Taylor

Life in Clover Great Falls, Montana

June 25, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
Office of the Governor
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Gianforte:

We support Michele Levine for Cascade County District Court Judge.

We feel strongly that she did an admirable job in her time as a Judge for Cascade County. Ms. Levine works hard, follows the law and is a dedicated public servant.

Please restore Michele Levine to the bench, and do so quickly – the court system in Cascade County has gotten badly congested with delayed court cases.

Sincerely,

Melissa Smith David Saslav

Melissa Smith and David Saslav
2736 Clover Drive
Great Falls, MT 59404
406-315-3733

June 24, 2021

TO: Governor Gianforte
C/O Hannah Slusser, Governor's Office
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

The following statements are made in strong support for the application of Michele Reinhart Levine as District Judge for the 8th Judicial District.

There is no doubt about the exemplary professional and personal qualifications that brought Judge Levine to be appointed Cascade County District Court Judge nearly seven months ago. During her time on the Court, Judge Levine absorbed a heavy case load including YINC hearings requiring continuity and time-sensitive criminal cases demanding timely action.

My own observations of Michele Levine's professional attributes come from our serving together on the Cascade County Zoning Board, on which I currently sit as chairperson. Michele Levine's research and thoughtful consideration of matters before the Board was impressive, and she showed skill in resolving difficult issues while adhering to all pertinent laws and regulations.

Judge Michele Levine, during her short tenure as sitting judge in Cascade County, hit the ground running and made a positive impact on the overcrowded docket presented to the judges in our county. Judges are required to be nonpartisan. From my collaboration with Michele Levine on the Zoning board as well as watching her work as a District Judge, she has displayed a proper nonpartisan Judicial temperament.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please concur in my recommendation and appoint Michele Reinhart Levine as District Judge in the 8th Judicial District of Montana.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles W. Kuether, Esq.
seffertz@holmanonline.com
406 727-2442

Slusser, Hannah

From: Laura Walker <lwalker@jardinelaw.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 9:44 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] support email - Levine

Dear Commission members,

I am writing to express my support for Michele Levine. I have known Michelle practically my whole life, having grown up together in Livingston. Michele is a compassionate person who genuinely cares for her clients and their struggles. She is intelligent and hardworking, and has a long standing commitment to the communities where she has resided and public service. She will bring a commitment to equal justice and access to the courts that is needed in this district.

Laura E. Walker
Attorney
Jardine, Stephenson, Blewett & Weaver, P.C.
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Circular 230 Disclosure:
Pursuant to recently-enacted U.S. Treasury Department Regulations, we are now required to advise you that, unless otherwise expressly indicated, any federal tax advice contained in this communication, including attachments and enclosures, is not intended or written to be used, and may not be used, for the purpose of (i) avoiding tax-related penalties under the Internal Revenue Code or (ii) promoting, marketing or recommending to another party any tax-related matters addressed herein.

406 ATTORNEYS

ATTORNEYS:
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Eric D. Mills

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104 4th Street N., Ste. 200
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Phone: (406) 315.3242
Fax: (406) 727.1812

June 30, 2021

Governor's Office
ATTN: Hannah Slusser
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
Fax: (406) 444-4151
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: 8th Judicial District Judge Position;
Support for Michele Levine

Advisory Council:

I am happy to support Michele Levine for the appointment to the vacancy left by Judge Pinski in the Eighth Judicial District Court, Cascade County. The politization of the appointment of judges is unfortunate, especially given that the overwhelming majority of cases before a district court judge does not involve political whatsoever. I have known Michele for several years both professionally and personally and I urge you to give serious consideration to Michele Levine for this position.

Michele has an impeccable reputation for her zealous representation of Montanans and promoting access to justice by her selfless actions of pro bono and law clinic work in our community. Michele's commitment to public service and hard work is evident in her history serving in the Legislature, serving on various non-profit boards, becoming a young shareholder at her firm and, of course, raising two children and maintaining a healthy family life. Michele's law practice focused on civil personal injury and complex litigation situates her to efficiently handle the now backlog of civil cases.

During Michele's brief stint serving the people of Cascade County from the bench, Michele jumped right in to get a handle on the overloaded docket. Being without a fourth judge has been a terrible scenario and has frankly been a disservice to the citizens of Cascade County. I have no doubt Michele is ready to again jump right in and work tirelessly as a judge. I am confident Michele has the character, experience and ability we need on the in the district court.

Very truly yours,
DUBOIS MILLS, PLLC

Neal P. DuBois

ASUM
ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

LEGAL SERVICES
Klaus D Sitte, Emeritus, Of Counsel

University Center, Room 116
32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812

Phone: (406) 243-6213
Fax: (406) 258-0450

To: Gov. Greg Gianforte

Date: June 30, 2021

Re: Michele Reinhart Levine

From: Klaus D. Sitte

This memo in support of Michele Reinhart Levine for her appointment for the Eighth Judicial District Court judgeship. Michele became a member of the ABIII Law School Negotiation Team when I served as coach during her law school career. We spent many hours together in practice and on-the-road competition while Michele was a member.

You will, of course, find Michele articulate, capable and qualified. Her résumé details the depth of her qualifications. Her varied background provides a solid framework for her common sense and good judgment. While on the Team, Michele was a quick study, an important prerequisite for adjusting to the challenges of assuming a district court judgeship. She was able to rapidly assimilate the necessary skills to navigate the nuances and differences between interests and positions. The skills she has accumulated over the last nearly 20 years will serve her well in dealing with the challenges a new judge will face.

During her time on the Team, Michele was under the regular and persistent scrutiny of teammates, competitors, and judges. She developed an ability to express good insight, while accepting some difficult and poignant critique. The ability to withstand outside pressures and even disparaging remarks, while exercising her own good sense, will serve her, and Montana's citizenry, well.

Acting as a District Court Judge is one of the most difficult jobs in Montana. Judges need to be dedicated, thoughtful, nonpartisan, and patient. Michele has demonstrated those characteristics throughout her working life. All Montana citizens can be confident she will continue to do so as a District Court judge for the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Slusser, Hannah

From: Brett Clark <bpclark.esq@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 11:00 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 8th Judicial District Vacancy

To whom it may concern,

I am a partner with the Helena office of Crowley Fleck PLLP. I am submitting this comment on my own behalf and not on behalf of my firm.

Governor Gianforte should take a harder look at Michelle Levine. I am aware of the reasons why the Senate passed on her. If the point of our recent revisions to the judicial nomination process is to take politics out of the courtroom, then the Governor should lead by example. Put aside the politics and examine the candidates on their merits. We should not be using Judge Levine's public service in the legislature against her.

I have known Judge Levine for more than 20 years. In that time, I have known her as a colleague on the Carroll College Debate Team, as an attorney in the Montana bar, and as a judicial officer. She is--and always has been--kind, understanding, intelligent, and insightful. And while I have always been impressed with her as a person, I was more impressed with her work ethic as a judge. She dove into Cascade County's gigantic case load and took it all in stride. In her time as a judge, she strengthened her reputation among the bar as a fair-minded and professional attorney.

Judge Levine has showed us what she can do. She is eminently qualified to do it. That should matter more than ideological purity tests. I ask that you please consider her for appointment to the bench.

Very truly yours,

Brett P. Clark

Slusser, Hannah

From: Matt Pugh <mattjpugh@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 11:45 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Eighth Judicial District Judgeship Vacancy - Comments in Support of Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Judicial Nomination Committee:

I'm writing to you to express my support for the re-nomination of Michele Reinhart Levine to the Eighth Judicial District Court.

I've known Michele for over ten years. I first met Michele in law school in 2009. From the first time I met her, it was clear that Michele was pursuing a career in law because she truly wanted to serve the community. Michele carried that passion for service into her work in Great Falls, and quickly established a reputation as a capable and hard-working attorney. There is no question that Michele has always been dedicated to her clients and her work in the law. More importantly, Michele has demonstrated that she is dedicated to the principles needed in a judge: fairness, justice, integrity, and compassion.

Given the case load in the Eighth District, it is important to nominate someone who can immediately step into the role and be ready to take on the work from day one. Michele is that candidate. Michele has already demonstrated that she has the knowledge, experience, and temperament to handle the job. I can't imagine a candidate more qualified and suited for the position. Michele will be an outstanding judge because she is an outstanding person.

I hope the Committee will consider my comments in making its decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Matt Pugh
Montana Bar No. 12460

Jessica M. Carranza M.Ed, Ed.S, NCSP
GFPS School Psychologist, MASP Past-President, MSSC Chair
1408 9th St. NW Great Falls, MT 59404
406-788-9533

June 29th, 2021

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

RE: 8th Judicial District Judge Position;
Support for Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Commissioners,
I'm writing this letter on behalf of Michele Reinhart Levine in support of her nomination to fill the vacancy in the 8th Judicial District Court. I first met Michele nine years ago upon joining the Association of Women's Junior League in Great Falls, MT. Michele's commitment and passion to support women and children in her community was an inspiration to me. Michele was willing to step into whichever role was needed within our association, including President, Nominations Chair, and Membership Chair. She was always able to help problem solve and generate ideas that allowed a small group of women to accomplish great things in the Great Falls area. With Michele's drive and guidance, the Women's Junior League was able to sponsor the Great Falls Public School's STEAM Expo which allowed for Pre-school through High School age students to develop and share STEAM related projects. Michele also went above and beyond to ensure that students at our lowest-income elementary building were able to participate by spending her lunch hour partnering with Girl Scouts of America to work hands on with these students. In addition to directly supporting our younger generation with building valuable life-long skills, Michele worked with the Women's Junior League to address Cascade County's ongoing problem of high rates of abuse and neglect. Michele spent countless hours with the association fundraising for the Children's Receiving Home on an annual basis. Michele also has been an advocate for the partnership between Women's Junior League and Toby's Crisis House Nursery. The partnership with Toby's Crisis House Nursery has involved fundraising, advertising, and manual labor, which Michele has been a part of and supported from the very beginning. Overall, Michele is continually dedicated to addressing the needs of her community through both hands-on work and advocacy.

Throughout the time that I have known Michele, I have been in awe of her ability to balance work, home, friendships, and volunteering. She is steadfast with time-management and always reliable despite so many things going on. I also appreciate the time that she will carve out to have a conversation, especially with those people that may not have the same belief system that she does. When I first moved to Montana, nine years ago, Michele helped me build a

better understanding of the law. Despite my more conservative nature, Michele was supportive in answering my questions, and took the time to understand my points of view. Because of her, I have been able to feel confident enough to increase my involvement in grass-root advocacy efforts for my own profession.

In summary, Michele is a passionate individual committed to doing what is right for her community. She has strong time-management and effective decision making skills. The respect and professionalism that she embodies at all times with people from all walks of life is admirable. Michele's breadth of qualities indicate that she would be a fantastic choice to fill the vacancy for the 8th Judicial District Judge Position.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Jessica M. Carranza

Jessica M. Carranza
School Psychologist, M.Ed, Ed.S, NCSP
Jessica_carranza@gfps.k12.mt.us

June 30, 2021

Judicial Nomination Commission
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Re: Letter of Recommendation for Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

I am writing to you in support of the nomination of Michele Reinhart Levine for the District Court Judgeship in the 8th Judicial District.

Michele and I met in 1999 at Carroll College where we both students. Michele and I have stayed in touch since graduation and I was honored to preside at her wedding to Bill Levine.

Many others have vouched for Michele's professional excellence, her work ethic, and her commitment to public service. I add to their commendations a reflection on Michele's personal ethics. I'm using the term *ethics* here to mean "why we do what we do."

I think Michele is motivated by a deep sense of responsibility for the well-being of others. She is not a candidate who would seek this appointment for personal advancement, but for the satisfaction of her deeper desire to uphold justice. Commitment to a larger vision will sustain Michele through the demands of the position and hold her fast to what is just, true, and good while making decisions.

The District will be well served by Michele and I give her my highest recommendation.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev. Kendra Wilde
Ordained Minister of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Helena, MT

JARDINE, STEPHENSON, BLEWETT & WEAVER, P.C.

GARY W. BJELLAND
JOSHUA I. CAMPBELL
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ROBERT B. PFENNIGS
HEATHER M. STARNES
LAURA E. WALKER
PATRICK R. WATT

June 30, 2021

Via Email
Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Candidate Michele R. Levine
Position of District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District

Dear Governor Gianforte and Advisory Council Members:

I am writing to express my support for Michele R. Levine to fill the judicial vacancy created in the Eighth Judicial District Court. I have worked with Ms. Levine for several years and believe Ms. Levine would be an excellent District Court Judge.

During the brief period in which Ms. Levine served as District Court Judge, I appeared before and found that she was prepared, knowledgeable, and respectful. She had genuine concern about the case and finding the best and most legally sound outcome.

I am confident that Ms. Levine will make an excellent District Court Judge and support her candidacy for this important position.

Very truly yours,

JARDINE, STEPHENSON, BLEWETT & WEAVER, P.C.

By
Joshua I. Campbell

Please note that this letter does not necessarily reflect the position of this law firm and is the opinion of the signatory only.

FAURE HOLDEN
attorneys at law pc

Jean E. Faure • Jason T. Holden • Katie R. Ranta

June 30, 2021

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Ms. Slusser:

We write this letter in support of Michele Reinhart Levine as an applicant for the Montana Eighth Judicial District judicial seat. Michele is dedicated to serving the people of Montana. As a result of her service in the Montana Legislature, she understands and respects how laws are created. She also knows the role and importance of the judiciary in our democracy, both on the national and state level.

In her time on the bench, Michele demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to getting cases adjudicated. She spent a great deal of time and energy on working through the backlog, which is an ever-present problem in Cascade County. She conducted hearings and trials in a just and efficient manner. Michele always was well-prepared and very well-versed in legal precedent.

Shortly into Michele's tenure on the bench, we had a hearing to approve a complicated class action settlement on behalf of a state entity. This case had been pending for several years. Michele jumped in head-first with significant attention to detail. She had carefully read the history of the matter and quicky grasped the facts. She knew the law and applied it appropriately.

Michele is dedicated to the people of Cascade County. She has practiced law here since her graduation from law school in 2012. She is actively involved not only in the legal community but volunteers her time to our community's struggling youth and serves on the County Zoning Board. Michele will protect, preserve, and promote our Montana values within the framework of Montana law.

Very truly yours,

Jason T. Holden Jean E. Faure Katie R. Ranta

CARPENTER LAW FIRM

professional liability company

CHARLES H. CARPENTER
(406) 543-0511 (Office)
(406) 214-9540 (Mobile)

210 NORTH HIGGINS AVENUE
HIGGINS BUILDING, SUITE 336
MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Greg Gianforte
Governor
PO Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Application of Michele Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I provided a letter to the Judicial Nominating Commission in support of the nomination of Michele Reinhart Levine as a district judge in the 8th District, and am honored to be doing so again, to you.

I have known Ms. Levine for nearly 10 years, and has always found her to be thoughtful and careful. While I did not appear before her during her recent judicial service, people that I respect have, and their experience confirms my judgment: she ran a fair and efficient courtroom, and followed the law without fear or favor, and certainly without regard to the politics of the parties before her.

She is, in my opinion, the very model of what a district judge should be. She cares about the litigants before her, and always strives to apply the law diligently and fairly. It may be that certain partisans would be disappointed in her appointment, but the people who appear before her, whether as litigants or lawyers, will not share this view. They will know that you chose the best candidate for the position. And this, more than anything else, is what the legislature entrusted Governors to do in its recent changes of the law.

Yours,

Charles H. Carpenter

MELISSA A. HORNBEIN
1025 MAULDIN STREET
HELENA, MONTANA, 59601
hornbein@gmail.com
406.471.3173

June 30, 2021

Hon. Greg Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser
Office of the Governor of the State of Montana
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re. Application of Michele Reinhart Levine for Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I write in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application for the Eighth Judicial District judgeship. Michele possesses a combination of skills, experience, and commitment to public service that uniquely suit her to the judiciary. The Legislature made a mistake when it rejected Michele's nomination to this judgeship, and you are now in a position to rectify that mistake.

I met Michele through mutual friends when I was finishing law school in Missoula and she was serving in the Montana Legislature. She immediately impressed me with her grasp of the law—though she had not at that time started law school—and her understanding of the ways in which law and policy intersect to affect individual Montanan's lives. When she made the decision to attend law school, it was a natural fit. Michele and I have been friends since that time, but my first opportunity to work directly with her came when I was serving as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Montana and she was in private practice. We worked as opposing counsel on a personal injury case. I found Michele to be thoughtful, consummately professional, and an articulate advocate for her client.

Michele's experience as a legislator and later as an attorney representing clients in matters of complex civil litigation make her an ideal judicial candidate. On top of these qualifications, in a few short months on the bench last fall she proved her fairness, toughness, and total commitment to public service and the law. Michele has knowledge of the law, integrity, and the ability to be totally apolitical in its application. You could not do better than to choose her to fill this position.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Hornbein

June 30, 2021

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Michele Reinhart Levine, applicant for the Eight Judicial District.

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

My name Is David Van Son, I am a retired Battalion Chief with Great Falls Fire Rescue and was with the department for 25 years. I am submitting this letter of support for Michele Reinhart Levine for her nomination to the Eight Judicial District.

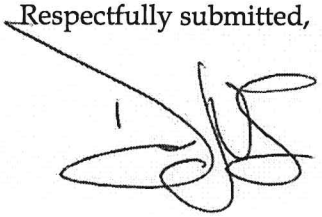
With Michele's past experience as Representative of House District 97 I feel she has a good understanding of the legal system in Montana. She also has experience working as a student attorney in the Missoula County Attorney's Office and is currently representing workers in Montana as an attorney in Great Falls.

I recently lost a Brother fire fighter and dear friend of mine to occupational cancer. Michele worked tirelessly with representatives of the International Association of Fire Fighters, physicians that specialize in epidemiology, and others to secure a worker's compensation death benefit for my friend. By doing so, Michele not only helped his family during this troubled time, but she also honored his 17 years of dedication to the City of Great Falls as a fire fighter after he succumbed to occupational cancer.

In October , 2019, three members of Great Falls Fire Rescue were on a routine call and were tragically struck by a drunk driver under my watch. Two of the three members suffered severe injuries and one still has not returned to work. When the workers compensation system was not providing for these individuals Michele stepped in. She has successfully secured the treatments and rehabilitation for the members on my shift, allowing one member to return to the streets in May so he can continue to serve the community of Great Falls and providing continued treatment for the other so someday soon he too can return to work.

Michele has proven to be a hard worker, is dedicated to the rights of others, and is a positive role model within our community. For those reasons and the reasons stated above I am positive that Michele Reinhart Levine would serve the Eighth Judicial District with honor and integrity and I am proud to give her my support for the position

Respectfully submitted,



David Van Son

Slusser, Hannah

From: d <chartelius@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 4:35 PM
To: NominateJudges
Cc: davidgrubich@aol.com; channing@harteliuslaw.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] David Joseph Grubich Esquire Judicial Nomination

6.29.2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office

Please be advised that I endorse David Joseph Grubich's application for the Judicial Vacancy in the Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County.

I have been practicing law for nearly 50 years and believe I have the experience to evaluate who would be a very good judge. Mr. Grubich qualifies in that regard.

I have known Mr. Grubich professionally and personally when he first came to Great Falls and practiced law with the Ugrin Law Firm We had a limited number of cases but I viewed him as ethical, professional and competent.

I also was very impressed with Mr. Grubich when he was active with the Cascade County Bar Association assisting in programing and interaction with fellow lawyers.

Although his status as a Standing Master is not in my area of practice I know several lawyers who practice in front of him and find him thorough and fair and very importantly able to make a decision without undue delay.
This is truly the mark of a good judge.

Thus, I would be more than enthusiastic to address Mr. Grubich as Judge Grubich.

Respectfully,

Channing J. Hartelius, Esq.
Hartelius Law Center
Bar Number 625
406-788-0035
channing@harteliuslaw.com

Slusser, Hannah

From: Leanne Frost <leanne.frost@gfcmsu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 8:17 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] letter of support for Michele Reinhart-Levine

I have worked with Michele Reinhart-Levine on the Kairos Youth Services Board of Directors for over five years. During that time, I have been impressed with Michele's analytical but compassionate approach to making decisions. Michele chaired the board and provided outstanding leadership. When difficult decisions and circumstances arose, Michele sought information and then took measured steps to ensure a reasonable and fair resolution. She balanced the needs of the organization, all legal requirements associated with the organization's licensure, and the impact on Kairos' employees and clients.

As District Court Judge, I believe Michele will follow the same approach. She will seek information and then work towards a reasonable and fair resolution, following the law, for all those involved. I wholeheartedly support Michele in her application for the District Court Judge position.

Please feel free to contact me for more information or with questions,

Leanne Frost

Dr. Leanne Frost
Executive Director of Instruction
Director, General Studies Division
Great Falls College MSU
406-771-4372
leanne.frost@gfcmsu.edu

8 WEEK ADVANTAGE
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Slusser, Hannah

From: Laurie Glover <nurse_glover@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 4:33 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please restore Michele Levine to the bench

Hello,

I support the reinstatement of Michele Reinhart Levine to the judgeship position in Cascade County. She is a respected community member who has contributed much in services and leadership over the years. As a CASA volunteer, I was able to observe her actions in the court, and found her especially attentive and judicious in those cases. I understand the courts are overwhelmed with cases, and her continuity and expertise would serve our county well.

Thank you,
Laurie Glover, 1318 16th St. So., Great Falls, MT

Montana State Senate

The Big Sky Country

June 29, 2021

Governor Gianforte,

We are glad to see the new process for filling judicial vacancies established under Senate Bill 140 in action for the first time with the open judge position in Montana's Eighth Judicial District.

We recognize that choosing which nominee to appoint is your decision to make and thus will refrain from endorsing a particular nominee at this time. However, as the leadership of the Montana Senate and Senate Judiciary Committee, we write to you ahead of your selection to express our opposition to one of the nominees on procedural grounds.

As you know, the Senate is constitutionally responsible for confirming appointed judges while the Legislature is in session. One of the nominees currently up for your consideration, Michele Reinhart Levine, did not pass Senate confirmation earlier this year.

We believe it would be inappropriate for you to make a "recess appointment" of a judge who has already failed to be confirmed by the Senate while the Legislature is out of session. For this procedural reason, we recommend you choose from among the other four nominees to fill the open position in Montana's Eighth Judicial District.

Sincerely,

Mark Blasdel, President of the Senate
Jason Ellsworth, Senate President Pro Tempore
Cary Smith, Senate Majority Leader
Keith Regier, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

CAPITOL ADDRESS • PO BOX 200500 • HELENA, MT 59620-0500 • (406) 444-3064

Slusser, Hannah

From: John Wallace <johnwallace78@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 8:33 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Livine

It is a sad day when good people doing good things fall prey to petty partisan politics. That is most certainly the case for Ms, Levine. Aside from a preponderance of support for Ms. Levine, our state government decided to not certify her to continue to do the job that she had been doing.

Now is an opportunity to correct this grievance and select her to fill the judicial vacancy. The sheer number of people who are in support for her should give you sufficient justification to correct this ridiculous error and provide the citizens a judge who can be counted on to do the job day in and day out.

Sincerely,

John Wallace

Sent from my iPhone

June 29, 2021

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Letter of Recommendation for Michele Reinhart-Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte,

My name is Haley Nelson, and I am writing to recommend Michele Reinhart-Levine for the Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship. I am an attorney with the Office of Legal Services for the Montana Department of Labor and Industry in Helena, Montana. I worked with Michele on a case before the Workers' Compensation Court, and she was a strong advocate for her client and a hard-working, thoughtful attorney.

Michele brings an important perspective to lawyering based on her years of experience before attending law school. I first met Michele in 2009 when she served in the Montana House of Representatives. Her intelligence, work ethic, willingness to listen, and ability to consider different perspectives on many issues was readily apparent. Michele has always been able to distill and articulate pertinent information when presenting any bill or idea to anyone. She was a very effective legislator who could work with members of any party and people from any background. A strong work ethic, research skills, and analyzing a lot of information from different perspectives are all essential skills for any judge, and Michele mastered these skills in a professional setting long before she attended law school.

I was fortunate enough to connect with Michele again when we both attend law school at the University of Montana. Michele was two years ahead of me, but she was quick to welcome me into law school and the legal profession, and she has remained a supportive friend and mentor ever since.

Most of all, Michele is guided by strong personal ethics, respect for our government, and the rule of law. She believes in public service and seeing justice served in our communities inside and outside the courtroom. I encourage you to appointment Michele for the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship.

Sincerely,

Haley A. Nelson

Haley A. Nelson, Esq.
Helena, Montana

Governor Gianforte,

I am writing this letter as an endorsement for Michele Levine for District Court Judge of Cascade County. I am a 27 year police officer for the City of Great Falls and currently the Municipal Court Bailiff for the city. During the course of my day, I have frequent conversations with lawyers on the prosecution side and also the defense side. In regards to Michele Levine, when she was District Judge, both sides described her as being honest, fair, and having a desire to do what was right. Fellow police officers that had cases before Judge Levine stated they felt she was doing a very good job. In my personal conversations with her, she stated she had a great thirst for knowledge of the criminal side of the law as she wanted to be able to do the best job she could. She expressed a desire to meet with police officers who were experts in different fields, such as child cases, so that she could increase her knowledge. She knew she had a huge backlog of cases but took them on and had the drive to do her best to be a fair and impartial judge.

I believe Michele Levine would make an outstanding District Court Judge for Cascade County.

Thank you for your time.

Bill Brooks
City of Great Falls
Master Police Officer
Badge #182

Slusser, Hannah

From: Amanda Taylor <amanda.taylor.randono@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 5:08 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter in support of Michele Reinhart Levine for 8th Judicial District

To Whom it may concern:

I wrote to express my support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application to become a District Judge for the 8th Circuit in September of 2020. Now my husband, Eugene "Geno" Randono, and I are writing to support Md. Reinhart Levine's application for appointment by the governor. We have known Michele since approximately 2001. We met at Carroll College where all three of us competed on the national-ranking speech and debate team. After Carroll, our paths crossed again at the University of Montana where she was in law school at the same time as Geno. While Geno and I now reside in Minnesota where we moved for my doctorate degree, I was born and raised in Great Falls and still have family and friends in the community. When I wrote my initial letter of support, I was confident that, based on my personal experience with both Great Falls and Michele, she would be an excellent choice for District Judge. During her tenure as judge, we have been pleased, though not surprised, to see that our initial expectations were not only correct, but Ms. Reinhart Levine exceeded our expectations in her service and dedication to the community of Great Falls.

Both at Carroll and UM, we were able to see how passionate Michele is about people. She cares deeply and uses her considerable intelligence, rhetorical skill, and problem solving skills to the benefit of her community and clients. During our overlapping time at Carroll and UM, she was actively involved in environmental conservation work and volunteering. Her experience as a state representative, working mother, and legal professional combined with her commitment to her community made her perfectly suited to be a careful but objective arbiter of cases that come to the 8th Circuit. Her record during her time as judge demonstrates the truth of that statement, and we would urge for her reappointment.

Sincerely,

Amanda D. Taylor, Ph.D.
Eugene "Geno" Randono, Esq.
998 Brooks Ave W
Roseville, MN 55113

Governor Gianforte,

I am writing this letter as an endorsement for Michele Levine for District Court Judge of Cascade County. I have known Michele Levine for 5 years as I am a Daycare Provider and have cared for her two daughters. We have frequent conversations and during her time as a civil attorney she always expressed her desire to help her clients to a fair outcome. I know she is a hardworking and caring person and during her time as District Court Judge, although she was surprised at the number of cases she inherited, she was determined to take them on and be fair and just in her judgements on those cases. She talked about continuing to improve her knowledge on criminal law to help her be the best judge she could be for our county.

I believe Michele Levine would make an outstanding District Court Judge for Cascade County.

Thank you for your time.

Kim Brooks

Slusser, Hannah

From: kimberly mckeehan <kimberlymckeehan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:22 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please restore Michele Levine

Dear public servants,
> I am writing to support the reinstatement of Michele Levine as judge because she works hard and respects the law. Our courts need help to catch up on all the delays created by Covid! Michele is educated and knows our community well and can go to work quickly. She has worked hard for our courts and I believe in her ability to practice authority without bias.
> Please restore Judge Levine to the bench!
> Sincerely,
> Kim McKeehan
> Great Falls

DUSTIN YOUNG
& COMPANY

June 29, 2021

Judicial Nomination Commission

Attn: Office of Montana Governor Gianforte

Re: 8th Judicial District Court Nominee Michele Reinhart Levine

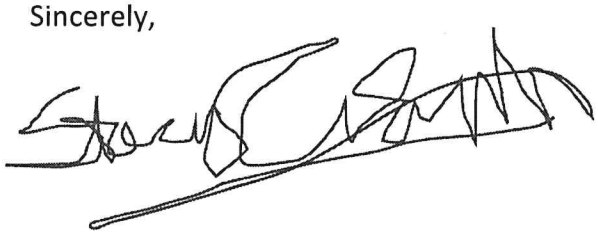
PO Box 203005 Helena, Mt 59620-3005

mt.supremecourt@mt.gov

Dear Nomination Committee,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Michele Reinhart Levine for the 8th Judicial District Court seat in Cascade County. I was fortunate enough to meet Michele as a member of Jr. League. While on the board of Jr. League of Great Falls, Michele was very organized, helping in any way she could with fundraisers and community events. It is very apparent that Michele has a desire to better our city and state and she is an asset to our community. Years later, I was even more fortunate to get to know Michele and her family on a personal level by helping them professionally. She is down-to-earth, easy to talk to, and fair. However, Michele can be tough. She knows what she wants and has worked to achieve her goals. It is without reservation that I believe Michele would make an incredible judge and I highly recommend her name be forwarded to the Governor for his consideration on this appointment.

Sincerely,



Stacy Everhart, REALTOR Dustin Young and Company

stacyeverhartrealtor@gmail.com

406-403-6766 1420 Marketplace Dr

Great Falls, Mt 59404

Haley Jackson
connell.haley@gmail.com

June 29, 2021
Sent Via Email

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Letter of support for Michele Reinhart Levine

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Haley Jackson and I am an appellate criminal defense attorney in Bozeman, Montana. I am honored to support Michele Reinhart Levine for the Eighth Judicial District Court Judge position. I have known Michele for over ten years and think she would make an excellent judge, as proven during her five months on the bench.

Michele and I met in 2009 as first-year law students at the Alexander Blewett III School of Law. It quickly became clear that Michele would be one of the top students in our class. She was eager to learn, excited to debate, and enthusiastic about sharing her knowledge and experience with her classmates and professors. Michele's work ethic was admirable, and she always came to class prepared, informed, and ready to learn. It came as no surprise that during Michele's time on the bench she worked tirelessly for the people in her courtroom.

Perhaps what I admire most about Michele is her commitment to public service and desire to help others. Michele is a lawyer because she truly cares about people and how the justice system treats them. She respects all people, listens to all positions, and carefully considers all arguments. I am confident that as a trial court judge Michele would make the people in her courtroom feel heard and treat all parties fairly.

Michele has the intelligence, work ethic, integrity, and experience to be an outstanding judge. She was an asset to the judiciary during her five months on the bench, and it would be in Montanans' best interests to have her resume that position.

Respectfully,

Haley Jackson

Haley Jackson

Slusser, Hannah

From: Joshua Manning <joshuamanning23@googlemail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 9:59 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Return Judge Levine to the Bench

Panel—

As partisan as I am, I have always believed in an independent and non-partisan judiciary. This may seem off and weird from someone like me, but I am just as big a supporter of Justice McKinnon (who leans one certain way) as I am of the others on the Montana Supreme Court who lean another way. This is why we have judges who interpret laws and dynamics of how laws change in current society. That debate is what makes things work so well.

The best lawyers want to sway those who may not see their cause or personal opinion or clients to their side. This is balance of justice. This is why we have advocates and activists as officers of the court and judges as the arbiters.

Judge Levine believes in this too. But she is now caught in a political turf war between a former and current governor. I don't know who should win that turf war. But that's your job. I want an independent judiciary because that is what truly makes America great. I hope you all do too.

Respectfully,
Josh Manning
Former Helena resident and believer in a Montana that represents the best of America, not a state run by a chosen few

Slusser, Hannah

From: Hilary Schoendorf <hschoendorf@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 9:37 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Michele Reinhart Levine

June 29, 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for Michele Reinhart Levine for judge. As a former colleague of hers, I can attest that she is a devoted public servant and cares deeply about justice and well being of all people.

Sincerely,
Hilary Schoendorf
1312 Howell St, Missoula, MT 59802

Slusser, Hannah

From: kschindele@mail.com
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 8:55 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Levine

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission Members,

My name is Kasey Schindele. I am the Executive Director of Kairos Youth Services in Great Falls, MT. I would like this email to be shown as my public comment in support of Michele Reinhart Levine for District Court Judgeship in the Eighth Judicial District.

I have known Michele for over three years as she sat as the Chair on the Board of Directors for Kairos Youth Services. Michele has been an asset in many ways to our nonprofit agency. She is a very helpful and active part of our agency offering her expertise in law, her ability to direct and has helped to make many difficult decisions for the better of staff, our youth and the community.

Michele is always knowledgeable and fair in any situation I have been in with her. It is clear her focus is to better our community and she is not afraid to work hard for the better of others. I admire Michele's ability to take on a task in front of her, logically thinking through the options, acknowledge the options and move forward towards a thoughtful outcome. Michele has always been willing to help how she can, as a support, and this has been invaluable to me and to the populations we serve.

Michele's education and experience qualifications show her as well versed in the law, knowledgeable and diverse in her practice. She is strong in her belief in our justice system, and would continue to do the good and hard work it takes for the position.

I strongly support and am proud of the nomination of Michele Reinhart Levine for District Court Judgeship.

Sincerely,

Kasey Schindele

Sent using the mobile mail app

Slusser, Hannah

From: Randy Gray <randygray@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 8:39 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: 8th Judicial District Court vacancy

Dear Governor:

It is my pleasure to send a note of support for Michele Reinhart-Levine for this vacancy. I practiced law in that District for 30+ years, but have been retired the past 15 years. I was also a three term mayor of Great Falls. I know Michele by virtue of several volunteer projects over the past decade. She is a very good thinker, listener, and communicator. She is diligent, organized, patient, always prepared and articulate. She is passionate about public service, as demonstrated by her service for three terms in the Montana House of Representatives and her long time service with the guardian ad litem program. Her empathy comes through loud and clear. She is a well regarded and respected member of the legal community of the District with lots of hands on experience representing clients in a wide ranging private trial practice. Come to think about it, all of the above are the very attributes of a really good trial judge. Simply put, she would be a distinguished, fair minded, but no-nonsense District Judge. She has actually proven her judicial capabilities during her 5 months of service (Nov last year through April of this year) on the bench here. By all accounts, she was excellent and was a significant benefit to meeting the work load in this overwhelmed and understaffed District.

Thanks for the chance to add my voice in support of Michele.

Randy Gray
Great Falls, MT
406-781-4150

Dear Governor,

I submit this letter in support of Michele Reinhart-Levine for the position of District Court Judgeship.

I am familiar with Michele as we were in the same law school class. I got to see Michele tackle the challenges and stress of law school as a fellow student. I think she would make a great judge for three reasons.

First, Michele is dedicated to public service. She served as a state legislator prior to law school and has always been dedicated to justice. I think her passion for service will make her an excellent judge—one who seeks to serve the public rather than some candidates who may seek a judgeship for social standing or ego.

Second, she will be fair and impartial. In appointing judges, it is important to select a candidate who will serve the bench and adhere to the law. Michele is committed to fairness and equality, and I have no doubt she will strive to be the best possible judge, always up for the new challenges that come her way on the bench. She has always been a person who presents herself with an even keel, a demeanor that will suit her for the bench.

Third, she will bring intelligence and preparation to the bench. Michele was always a bright student, exhibiting not only her comprehension of the materials, but that she put in the work and preparation necessary to learn new concepts.

Michele would make a fantastic addition to the bench. I urge you to select Michele Reinhart-Levine for the position of Eighth District Court Judge.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brady Minow Smith
Trial Attorney
Orleans Public Defenders
2601 Tulane Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70119

CONNER, MARR & PINSKI, PLLP
Dennis Patrick Conner
Keith Douglas Marr
Gregory Gerard Pinski
J. R. Conner
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520 Third Avenue North
P.O. Box 3028 ▪ Great Falls, MT ▪ 59403-3028
Telephone: (406) 727-3550 ▪ Fax: (406) 727-1640
Kitty Agostinelli, Legal Assistant
Clari Davis, Legal Assistant

June 29, 2021

Sent via email to: nominatejudges@mt.gov

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

RE: Letter of Support for Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Ms. Slusser:

This letter supports Michele Reinhart Levine. I urge the Advisory Council to recommend Michele to the Governor for consideration of appointment to the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Michele is known for her strong work ethic. She has worked tirelessly over the years as an advocate for injured workers, abused and neglected children, victims of domestic violence, and other underprivileged populations who might otherwise go unheard. She represented Missoulians in House District 97 as a three-term State Representative. She ahs worked in the private sector and for governmental entities. Michele has a diverse background which helps her communicate and identify with people from all walks of life.

The Eighth Judicial District Court has a challenging, crowded docket. If appointed, I am confident Michele will keep her docket current while adhering to high professional legal and ethical standards. She deserves to be a finalist.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis P. Conner

June 28, 2021

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing today to voice my support of Ms Michele Reinhart Levine to be returned to her position as Judge for the 8th Judicial District of Montana. I wrote to support Ms. Levine in 2020 as I see her as a competent and fair judge for the people of Montana. I also write today to voice my concern about how the people of Montana and Cascade county and the 8th district, in particular, have been treated in this matter. We have unfairly been subjected to the loss of a needed judge due to legislators, and our governor, being more concerned with partisan matters than with the safety and well-being of the people of Montana.

I have known Ms. Reinhart Levine for approximately seven years and had the pleasure of serving with her on the Board of the Junior League of Great Falls. Ms. Reinhart Levine brings passion and a wealth of knowledge to all that she does. She is the kind of person who expects the best of herself and who not only expects the best in others, but inspires them and helps them to achieve it. Personally, I know that when I bring a problem to her attention, she will either find the solution or give me the appropriate resources to do so myself. Time after time, she has given me legal and personal advice unfettered by her personal opinions. In fact, until she was removed from her judicial seat and her previous work became public discussion, I was unaware of her political persuasion at all.

It sickens me to hear that her ability to remain politically impartial while serving as a judge has been called into question. As a healthcare provider, an officer in the Montana National Guard, and a veteran of the United States Air Force, it is second nature for me to lay my political and moral opinions to the side and do what is either best for my patient or what is expected of me as a military officer. My job is to inform my patients of their options and what is in their best interest but ultimately empower them to make their own healthcare decisions without judgement. Likewise, when I wear the uniform of our nation and state's military, I know that my service is foremost and my personal opinions must play second fiddle.

What I have a difficult time understanding is how the great state of Montana can expect an 18 year old airman to understand this distinction while claiming that Ms Reinhart Levine is unable to do so simply because of her previous employment as a legislator and lobbyist. I am led to believe that perhaps it is not her inability to serve the public apolitically as a judge, but rather the executive and legislative branches of Montana's government that are unable to make decisions that are best for Montanans and not the ones that will further their own political careers.

It is no secret that Cascade County has a high incidence of drug, domestic violence, and child abuse cases. Without Ms. Reinhart Levine, three judges have been attempting to cover the workload of four AND the added congestion caused by COVID-19. Our community deserves to have Ms. Reinhart Levine continue serving as judge. The victims in these cases deserve to have the perpetrators tried and convicted if found guilty.

Please reappoint Ms. Reinhart Levine as judge for the 8th district of Montana. She was not removed due to any decision that she made during her time as judge or any notion of impropriety. The people of Montana had chosen her as our judge and we were excited to see how she would serve us. She deserves the chance to finish her term and the people of the 8th district deserve a fair, intelligent, caring judge to serve our community.

Sincerely,

Dr Michelle R Nieset, DDS
2501 6th Ave South
Great Falls, MT 59405

OGLE, WORM & TRAVIS
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, PLLP

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406-752-7550 Fax: 406-257-0411

Randall S. Ogle *e-mail: rsogle@owtlawoffice.com*
Darrell S. Worm* *e-mail: dsworm@outlawoffice.com*
Samantha P. Travis *e-mail: samantha@owtlawoffice.com*

*Also admitted in California

June 29, 2021
Sent via E-Mail

Governor Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Board and Appointments Advisor
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re. Application of Michele Reinhart Levine for Cascade County District Court Judgeship

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's candidacy for district court judge in Cascade County. I first met Michele over a decade ago socially, when I was a law student and she was our community's local representative to the Montana legislature. I also know Michele through professional legal associations in Montana. She is kind, hard-working, fair, and thoughtful. She knows that each person's case is the most important case to them. She will give each party due consideration. She will study the facts, review the law, and apply the law to the facts.

Given that I frequently represent civil litigants across Montana who are experiencing substantial delays in the justice system, it is my hope that Michele will also assist civil litigants in receiving expedicious hearing and trial dates and swift well-reasoned orders to achieve just and timely resolution to their legal matters. I also believe Michele's background in complex civil litigation will be an important asset in her role as district court judge. I am aware she has also handled criminal cases. Her wide diversity of private legal practice with exposure to many areas of the law will certainly come in handy, if she were to be appointed to the position. She is also a busy lawyer mom, like me. We know how to manage time, balance work and family life, and do what needs to be done, even if that means coming in early or staying late, or working from home after the children go to bed.

I encourage you to please consider Michele for reappointment to the bench in Cascade County.

Sincerely,

/S/ Samantha Travis
Samantha P. Travis

JEFFRY L. OLSON
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

June 29, 2021

Judicial Advisory Committee,

This letter is in regards to Michele Levine's candidacy for District Judge of the Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County. After Michele's appointment as District Judge last fall, I appeared before her in approximately two dozen cases. The types of cases included criminal, Youth Court, and civil dependent neglect proceedings. I also appeared before her as a guardian *ad litem* for abused and neglected children.

Based on my appearances before her while she was District Judge, I found Michele to be knowledgeable of district court rules and practices, the rules of evidence, and the substantive and procedural laws applicable to each case. She was prepared for each case, and exhibited a calm and steady presence from the bench. I believe she rendered fair judgments in my clients' cases. It appeared to me that Michele transitioned smoothly into her position as judge. While I am not familiar with Michele's legal career prior to her appointment as District Judge last fall, I believe she was effective in that position and should be given strong consideration by this committee.

Sincerely,

Jeff Olson

410 Central Avenue, Ste. 302, Great Falls, MT 59401 • 406.788.8748

Slusser, Hannah

From: Charles W. Kuether <seffertz@holmanonline.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 27, 2021 11:56 AM
To: Slusser, Hannah
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support for 8th Judicial District candidate

Attn: Hannah

Please find below my letter of support for Judicial Applicant Michele Reinhart Levine.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Charles W. Kuether

June 24, 2021

TO: Governor Gianforte

C/O Hannah Slusser, Governor's Office

nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

The following statements are made in strong support for the application of Michele Reinhart Levine as District Judge for the 8th Judicial District.

There is no doubt about the exemplary professional and personal qualifications that brought Judge Levine to be appointed Cascade County District Court Judge nearly seven months ago. During her time on the Court, Judge Levine absorbed a heavy case load including YINC hearings requiring continuity and time-sensitive criminal cases demanding timely action.

My own observations of Michele Levine's professional attributes come from our serving together on the Cascade County Zoning Board, on which I currently sit as chairperson. Michele Levine's research and thoughtful consideration of matters before the Board was impressive, and she showed skill in resolving difficult issues while adhering to all pertinent laws and regulations.

Judge Michele Levine, during her short tenure as sitting judge in Cascade County, hit the ground running and made a positive impact on the overcrowded docket presented to the judges in our county. Judges are required to be nonpartisan. From my collaboration with Michele Levine on the Zoning board as well as watching her work as a District Judge, she has displayed a proper nonpartisan Judicial temperament.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please concur in my recommendation and appoint Michele Reinhart Levine as District Judge in the 8th Judicial District of Montana.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles W. Kuether, Esq.
seffertz@holmanonline.com
406 727-2442

Arlyne Reichert
1409 4th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405

JUNE 24, 2021

HANNAH SCUSSER
GOVERNORS OFFICE
P.O. BOX 200801
HELENA, MT 59620

THOSE WHO LIVE IN CASCADE COUNTY ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE MICHELE LEVINE AS A CANDIDATE FOR DISTRICT COURT JUDGE. SHE HAS PROVEN HERSELF TO BE A DEDICATED, FAIR, HARD-WORKING JUDGE. PLEASE HELP RESTORE JUDGE LEVINE TO THE BENCH. THANK YOU. Arlyne Reichert

BLACKFORD | CARLS
TRIAL LAWYERS

SHERINE D. BLACKFORD
HILLARY P. CARLS

June 29, 2021

Via Email:
Office of the Governor Greg Gianforte
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: *Michele Reinhart Levine*

Dear Governor Greg Gianforte:

This correspondence is in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application for appointment as District Court Judge in the Eighth Judicial District.

Ms. Levine is an exceptional lawyer that has built a strong reputation in advocacy for her clients. Since law school, she has devoted her practice to representing injured clients and fighting for real people both in and out of the Courtroom. In doing this, she has developed skills that are vitally important for any Judge. This has also given her the litigation experience necessary to understand, and successfully and efficiently navigate, the court process.

As a person, Ms. Levine is dedicated to all aspects of her life, including her community, her work and her family. This dedication will certainly translate to her position as a Judge should she be selected to serve in this capacity.

Cordially,

BLACKFORD CARLS P.C.

Sherine D. Blackford

Hillary P. Carls

DOWNTOWN BOZEMAN
602 W. Lamme St.
Bozeman, MT 59715

email: info@blackfordcarls.com
office: 406.577.2145
fax: 406.219.0256

Slusser, Hannah

From: Peggy Olliff <olliffstnp@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 10:59 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte,

We have known Michele Reinhart Levine since she was a young girl on the debate team in Livingston, MT. Even at that age she was the most prepared, dedicated, and thoughtful young person we had met. We have watched her grow as a legislator and judge who has dedicated herself to serving Montana. We strongly request that you appoint her.

Sincerely,

Peggy and Tom Olliff

Slusser, Hannah

From: Mark Good <mgood91700@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:17 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Attn: Hannah Slusser

June 28,2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

I live in Great Falls and I'm writing to encourage the Governor Gianforte to reinstate Michelle Reinhart Levine as district court judge. Determining who would be the best most qualified person for the position should be based not on politics or political party affiliation but on who will honor our laws and make fair decisions.

As a district court judge, Michelle has already shown that she brings integrity and energy to the position, and her decisions are fair and respected by plaintiffs and defendants alike. Nothing says that better than the comments of other judges who work with her and the attorneys who have come before her in the court.

As quoted in the Great Falls Tribune, " 'Judge Levine was doing an excellent job, and suddenly it's been very disruptive,' " stated Judge John Parker. 'and that can't help but be a setback for people who had a case in her court.' "

"Judge (Elizabeth) Best called Levine "a 'workhorse' who put in nights and weekends to catch up and handle her docket. 'She was learning as hard as she could and as fast as she could,' said Best. 'What I heard from lawyers on all sides and in all kinds of cases, she was respected and well thought of. She treated people fairly with courtesy and respect and she got her orders out promptly.' "

At a time when judges in Cascade County are facing an excessive case load, Michelle's experience allows her to immediately jump in and help relieve the pressure on others. Justice deferred is not justice.

I ask you give fair consideration to Michelle. She did an admirable job as a Judge. She works hard, follows the law, and is dedicated to public service. Please reinstate Judge Levine to the bench.

Sincerely,

Mark Good
917 3rd Ave South
Great Falls, MT 59405

odegaard kovacich snipes | TRIAL LAWYERS

Paul D. Odegaard
Mark M. Kovacich
Ben A. Snipes
Andrew J. Miller
Ross T. Johnson

Lucas A. Wallace*
Greg E. Overturf
Leanora "Lea" Coles
Benjamin J. Langford

Of Counsel:
Tom L. Lewis
J. David Slovak
Jay P. Dufrechou

June 29, 2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Office of Governor Greg Gianforte
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
Via Email: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application for the judicial vacancy in Montana's Eighth Judicial District. I first met Michele in 2014, when she was prosecuting a complex chemical exposure case before the Workers' Compensation Court. In the years that followed, Michele and I were frequently opposing counsel on workers' compensation matters. In that context, I always found Michele to be conscientious, well-prepared, and highly persuasive. She was an extremely effective advocate.

Michele has consistently demonstrated incisive legal reasoning and insight into complex legal issues. I believe she is "level headed," is able consider both sides of disputed issues, and will make decisions based on the law.

Given the workloads shouldered by our District Courts, one of the primary considerations should be the applicant's work ethic. A District Court judge must be diligent and self-motivated. She must be careful to give every litigant due consideration and a fair hearing. Only with conscientious effort can a judge set aside her personal or political beliefs and resolve each matter on the facts and the law. Based on my knowledge of Michele's character, I wholeheartedly supported her previous application for this position. During her tenure as a District Court Judge, she demonstrated that character, and garnered unanimous support from the community and the stakeholders who regularly appear in District Court.

Michele Reinhart Levine is the only applicant with a proven track record. She continues to be the best candidate for the Eighth Judicial District Vacancy.

Sincerely,

ODEGAARD KOVACICH SNIPES, PC

LUCAS A. WALLACE
lucas@mtlawyers.com

JARDINE, STEPHENSON, BLEWETT & WEAVER, P.C.

GARY W. BJELLAND
JOSHUA I. CAMPBELL
DALLIN A. LIND
PHOEBE P. MARCINEK

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ROBERT B. PFENNIGS
HEATHER M. STARNES
LAURA E. WALKER
PATRICK R. WATT

June 28, 2021

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

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Candidate Michele R. Levine
Position of District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District

Dear Governor Gianforte and Advisory Council Members:

I am writing to express my support for Michele R. Levine. I have known and worked with Ms. Levine for several years and believe Ms. Levine would be an excellent District Court Judge. In addition to being intelligent and hard-working, Ms. Levine is a compassionate and genuinely cares for her clients and their struggles.

Ms. Levine has a long-standing commitment to Cascade County. She is active in this community through volunteer work and public service. As such, Ms. Levine will bring her demonstrated commitment to equal justice and access to the courts that is so needed in the Eighth Judicial District.

Thank you,

Heather M. Starnes
Attorney at Law

Please note that this letter does not necessarily reflect the position of this firm and is the opinion of the signatory only.

GRAYBILL
LAW FIRM, PC

BENJAMIN R. GRAYBILL
RAPH GRAYBILL
300 4th Street North • PO Box 3586
Great Falls, Montana 59403

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Toll Free: (866) 452-8566
Telefax: (406) 727-3225

June 23, 2021

Email and US mail
Hon. Greg Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser
Office of the Governor of the State of Montana
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Governor Gianforte:

The Eighth Judicial District is one of the busiest in the State. In order to best serve the people who are relying on the Eighth Judicial District Court for swift, efficient, and fair adjudications of cases, please reappoint Michele Levine to fill the Eighth Judicial District judgeship vacancy.

Michele brings first-hand knowledge and experience to the cases now existing in the Court. Not selecting her will result in delay and inefficiency for hundreds of pending cases.

Eighth Judicial District Court judges handle an array of legal matters that take time and require getting to know the case and the parties involved. Michele has already done that. Many of these matters are not complicated, but are only challenging due to the time and effort needed to conduct hearings and understand relevant facts. Again, Michele is already familiar with most of these cases. I have practiced law here for a long time; I know when a judge has control over her docket; Michele had control—she was moving cases. Please don't precipitate delay and confusion by installing someone who has to start from scratch.

The Legislature made a mistake. Respectfully, don't make the same mistake. Michele is a fair, tough-minded, effective judge. There's no politics in her courtroom. She listens to both sides and applies the law as written. Michele has the experience to capably keep a handle on her docket and she is committed to balancing that priority in a way that fairly promotes justice for all who appear before her.

Michele has integrity, intelligence, and she is decisive. She's a first rate judge.

Very truly yours,

GRAYBILL LAW FIRM, P.C.

By _____
Benjamin R. Graybill

BRG/bn

MAXON R. DAVIS
GREGORY J. HATLEY
PAUL R. HAFFEMAN
JOSEPH M. SULLIVAN*
STEPHANIE A. HOLLAR
TRAVIS A. CUSHMAN
DENNIS J. TIGHE (Retired)

*Also admitted to practice in Oregon & Washington

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E-Mail
@dhhtlaw.com

FILE NO.

June 29, 2021

Sent Via Email

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

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Judge Position

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter in support of Michele Levine to fill the judicial vacancy in the Montana Eighth Judicial District Court.

Michele and I worked on opposite sides numerous times when I as a claims attorney at the Montana State Fund. Michele was a zealous advocate for her clients. She was also focused on reaching an amicable resolution of the contested issues for the benefit of her clients.

When Michele was appointed to the bench in late 2020, she took over a civil case that I was involved in that was ready for trial. Michele hit the ground running and ruled on pending pretrial motions, conducted the final pretrial conference and presided over the trial. I found Michelle to be prepared and willing to work hard. She ruled on the pending motions in a timely manner which was much appreciated. Michele was open minded and fair to both parties. I believe that Michele would make a fine district court judge if she were to be appointed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Hollar

June 29, 2021

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

Re: Michele Reinhart-Levine Letter of Support

Dear Ms. Slusser:

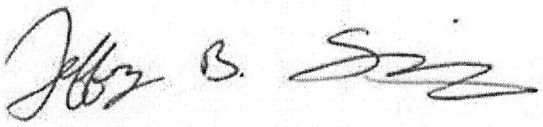
My name is Jeffrey B. Smith. I am a partner at Garlington, Lohn & Robinson, PLLP. I was admitted to practice in Montana on October 6, 2009 and have been in good standing since admittance.

I am writing this letter in support of Michele Reinhart-Levine's appointment for the District Court Judge position in Cascade County. During my eleven years of practicing law at Garlington, Lohn & Robinson, PLLP, I have worked with and against a very diverse group of attorneys. I have also represented clients in civil matters across the entire State of Montana. From this experience, I have learned the best attorneys and judges possess a strong work ethic, an enthusiasm for attention to detail and an unbiased opinion.

I have known Michele since shortly after she was admitted to practice law in 2012. During this time, I have been opposing counsel to Michele on numerous Workers' Compensation cases. She has proven to be a very hard working, energetic and objective attorney. Michele's skills as an attorney would make her a great Judge.

Very truly yours,

GARLINGTON, LOHN & ROBINSON, PLLP



Jeffrey B. Smith
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Joel G. Krautter, Esq.
417 2nd St. SW
Sidney, MT 59270
(406) 560-5952
Joel.krautter@gmail.com
June 29, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
C/O Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing today to support the appointment of Michele Reinhart Levine to the Montana Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship. I previously supported her appointment with a similar letter in September of 2020, and was disappointed when she was not confirmed by the Montana Senate during the 2021 legislative session.

My recommendation of Ms. Levine for this position is based on my interactions with her since I first got to know her as we attended law school together at the University of Montana School of Law and also after law school as fellow attorneys.

Ms. Levine was a 3L while I was a 1L student and I was appreciative of the helpful feedback and advice about succeeding in law school she provided as I began to navigate the rigors of my first year of law school. This is an example of the character Ms. Levine would bring to the bench, that of empathy and looking out for others.

Ms. Levine and I have stayed in contact as we each began legal practice. I have been impressed by Ms. Levine's strong advocacy over the years on behalf of injured Montanans. In my nearly seven years as an attorney, I have also had the opportunity to represent injured Montanans and this experience has given me an appreciation for those attorneys who are willing to fight for justice for the indigent, the downtrodden, the injured and the forgotten. Ms. Levine has fought for these people and I believe this experience and understanding will be an asset to her as a judge.

I hope you will give serious consideration to Ms. Levine's appointment.

Sincerely,

Joel G. Krautter, Esq.

June 28, 2021

Office of the Montana Governor

Re: Letter of Recommendation for Michele Reinhart Levine for Eighth Judicial District Court Judge Nomination

Dear Governor Gianforte or Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to support Michele Reinhart Levine as an applicant for the current vacancy for district court judge in the Eighth Judicial District. I have known Michele since we were students together in law school at the University of Montana. I graduated from UM Law in the class of 2013, while Michele graduated in 2012. I am currently employed as an attorney with the State of Montana, and was, from 2013 to 2014, employed in private practice in Great Falls at the same time that time Michele was early in career with the law firm where she is now a shareholder. I can attest that Michele has spent the last several years since relocating to Great Falls dedicating herself to that community. When she moved from Missoula to Cascade County after law school, she sought with intention and purpose to make Great Falls her home, not just a place to live and, as a district court judge, I believe that she will bring this same spirit of community service.

Having known Michele for several years, I can attest to the fact that she possesses exactly the sort of experience, temperament, and dedication that one looks for in a district court judge. As an attorney, Michele's experience has primarily been in civil litigation, particularly workers compensation and personal injury, though, as her resume states, she also has a background in criminal law, administrative law, and environmental law. While these are the simple facts of Michele's practice history on a resume, there is far more to Michele than any resume could convey.

Michele's dedication to public service goes back many years from working as an organizer for community, Montana based environmental efforts through her years of service representing her legislative district in Missoula, and her service on non-profit boards, Michele has never stopped working for Montanans. I remember, even amid the stresses of law school, when most of us were primarily concerned about simply surviving the rigors of our classes and worrying about our future careers while trying to balance our personal lives, Michele took the time to serve her district in the state House. Through her years in the state House, Michele represented her portion of Missoula County honorably and professionally. It was well known that Michele earned the respect of her colleagues on all sides of our political, partisan divides. These same characteristics, passion for justice, balanced with fairness is exactly what one should want out of a district court judge.

The work of a district court judge is a serious undertaking – the caseloads are heavy, the work is, at times, monotonous, at times very complex, the hours can be long, and the lives of many are seriously impacted by the decisions made by a judge. From the wide discretion we invest in judges for criminal sentencing, to the power a judge possesses over the lives of children in youth courts and youth-in-need-of care cases, to the authority over families in divorce/custody proceedings, and the lives impacted by personal injury cases, being a district court judge is a weighty responsibility. It is no hyperbole to say that lives can often hang in the balance, dependent on a district court judge's wisdom.

The Eighth Judicial District (arguably) seems to bear a disproportionate weight of criminal cases, cases impacting families and complex civil personal injury cases, as compared to some of Montana's other judicial districts. Michele has both the civil law experience needed for the Eighth Judicial District, the commitment to public service, and, most importantly, the dedication to fairness that this position requires. Replacing Judge Pinski, who also had a background in civil law, Michele would come into this position well prepared to handle the civil caseload.

As both a practicing Montana attorney and someone that has known Michele since law school, I can enthusiastically recommend Michele for this district court vacancy.

/s/ Bradley R. Jones
Helena, MT

Slusser, Hannah

From: Steve and Candace <hills2prairie@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 11:03 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Levine in Cascade County

Greetings,

I would like to suggest Michele Levine to fill the vacant judgeship in Cascade County. She has served in this position previously and brings a proven record of fairness and adherence to the law, as well as a solid work ethic. She would be an asset to the judicial system.

Steve Paulson
Billings, Montana
(former co-worker of Michele's)

Slusser, Hannah

From: Denver Cobb <cobb.dl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:12 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Cascade County Judge Nominations

To whom it concerns,

I am writing in Support of Judge Levine. I am a police officer in Great Falls and have testified in her court. Judge Levine was fair and treated all parties with respect. I have spoken to other officers and court employees about Judge Levine and her work ethic. I have found no one who spoke poorly of her.

As a conservative and avid political follower, I found it troubling Judge Levine was not approved by the Senate. It is safe to say I probably do not agree with Judge Levine's political views, however, as a District Court judge in Montana there isn't much she could do to legislate from the bench. I know of very few cases in Montana where a District Court judge can do this. Typically if this happens it's from a Judge in Helena and only until out Supreme Court rules.

I feel Judge Levine would be a fair Judge who would follow the Constitution.

Sincerely,

Denver Cobb
Great Falls MT

"Evil is powerless if the good are unafraid." —President Ronald Reagan

June 28, 2021

ATTN: Hanna Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

To Whom It May Concern:

I support the appointment of Michele Reinhart Levine to the bench of the 8th Judicial District. I have known Ms. Levine since law school and consider her a valuable friend and legal colleague. Ms. Levine possesses all of the qualities needed to be a successful judge in Great Falls. She displayed these qualities during her short tenure on the bench. Ms. Levine is intelligent – she is capable of understanding a vast array of legal topics and smart enough to seek out resources when she needs help or guidance. She is compassionate – she treats every person who walks into the courtroom with dignity and respect. She is tough – she understands that being a judge means making hard decisions and has made those hard decisions during her time on the bench. She is efficient – she is the only applicant who truly understands the weight each judge in the 8th Judicial District carries and she worked extremely hard and efficiently to keep her docket moving. Finally, Ms. Levine is a team player – Ms. Levine knows the importance of community and will ensure that she works collaboratively with fellow judges, clerks, attorneys, and community members to make her courtroom and the community a better place.

Ms. Levine is an invaluable asset to Great Falls. I whole-heartedly support her appointment to the bench.

Sincerely,

Amber Henning, Attorney
MARRA, EVENSON & LEVINE P.C.
2 Railroad Square, Suite C
P.O. Box 1525
Great Falls, MT 59403-1525
ahenning@marralawfirm.com

Joseph C. Engel III, P.C. Attorney at Law

600 Central Plaza Suite 428
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Great Falls, MT 59403
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Phone: 406.727.0121
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June 22, 2021

Greg Gianforte
State Capital
Executive Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena MT 59620-0801

RE: Michelle Levine

Dear Gov. Gianforte:

Ms. Levine has solicited a letter of recommendation from me. As you know, I have also sent you a letter of recommendation regarding Dave Grubich.

I am unable to speak directly to Ms. Levine's qualifications as I did not have the opportunity to practice before her while she sat as Judge.

However I can concur that based upon her previous vetting by the Judicial Review Panel, she appears to posses all of the appropriate requisites to serve as Judge in the County and therefor she has my support in addition to that of Mr. Grubich.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Engel, III

DUROCHER & WINTER, PC
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW
D&W
Roland B. Durocher | Jeffrey G. Winter

June 23, 2021
via regular mail & fax: 406-444-4151

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena MT 59620

Re: Montana 8th Judicial District Appointment

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to express my support for Michele Reinhart Levine to be appointed to the vacancy in the Montana Eight Judicial District Court, Cascade County. Our district was already running at capacity before the pandemic. The slowdown of the courts was exacerbated by the retirement of Judge Pinski. When Michele took the bench last year, she proved herself to be fair, thoughtful and hard-working, which helped get the district moving in the right direction again. She earned the trust and respect of law enforcement, and attorneys working on both sides in both criminal and civil practice.

Because of our need for a capable judge to be on the bench as soon as possible, the one with the experience will be best suited to get things moving again. Our remaining three judges are working above and beyond what should be expected of them, and due to constitutional necessity, are putting the greatest emphasis on criminal and youth matters. Civil litigants suffer every day we do not have a judge, and even if we get a different person appointed, the learning curve will continue the delay and increase the backlog.

In my decades of practicing law, I have found that no matter what their backgrounds were, Montana judges take their jobs seriously, and put

politics aside. They do not rule as liberals or conservatives. Especially at the District Court level where they apply the law as referees, not lawmakers. Michele's appointment and lack of confirmation were unfortunately marred by politics. I ask that you, as Governor, put the needs of the citizens of Cascade County above politics, and put her back on the bench. I truly believe Michele has done, and will do, an admirable job in a very tough job.

Regards,

Roland B. Durocher
Durocher & Winter, PC

Slusser, Hannah

From: Gerry Boland <gerrywboland1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 3:10 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Eighth Judicial District Court & Michelle Levin

June 27, 2021

Gerald W. Boland
Cascade County Public Administrator
PO Box 2365
Great Falls, MT 59403

Governor Greg Gianforte
Office of the Governor
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I write in support of Michelle Levine and her application for re-appointment to the vacant seat in the Eighth Judicial District Court, Cascade County.

I have served as Public Administrator for Cascade County for the past 15 years and in that capacity, I have worked with many public officials and private law firms in administering conservatorships and estates when there are no alternatives. Michelle Levine is one of the public-spirited attorneys in Great Falls with whom it has been an honor and privilege to work with.

My ancestors settled in Great Falls over a century ago, and down the generations, I and my large extended family were taught that public service is an honorable, even noble, calling, no position being more so than serving in the capacity which Michelle now pursues - the Eighth Judicial District Court of Cascade County. Her knowledge, work ethic and relentless dedication to the pursuit of justice make her eminently qualified for re-appointment to the Eighth Judicial District Court.

It is no secret the Eighth District is in great disarray due the lack of a fourth Judge. Michelle is the only candidate with the experience to step back in and help get the system back on track, and in short order. I strongly encourage you to re-appoint Michelle Levine to the vacancy on the Eighth Judicial District Court of Cascade County.

Sincerely,

Gerald W. Boland
Cascade County Public Administrator

cc: Michelle Levine

Slusser, Hannah

From: Gordon Whirry <gwhirry@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 2:29 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michelle Levine for District Judge

Governor Gianforte,

I wholeheartedly support restoring Judge Michele Reinhart Levine to the bench as Cascade County District Court Judge. She has served in this position very well in a fair and dedicated manner. Her public service, legal expertise and hard work have been a gift to our county.

Gordon Whirry
1912 4th Ave N, Great Falls, Mt 59401

Slusser, Hannah

From: Murry Warhank <mwarhank@jmgm.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 2:23 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judge Levine
Attachments: Murry Warhank.vcf

All:

I write to ask you to right a wrong. Judge Levine should be returned to the bench so she can continue her good work.

Thanks,

Murry Warhank
Jackson, Murdo & Grant
President and Shareholder
(406) 442-1308 Work
(406) 438-3155 Mobile
mwarhank@jmgm.com
203 North Ewing Street
Helena, MT 59601
www.jmgm.com

MARRA EVENSON & LEVINE PC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Great Falls, Montana 59403-1525
P: (406) 268-1000 • F: (406) 761-2610
email@marralawfirm.com • marralawfirm.com

June 28, 2021

VIA EMAIL: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Governor Greg Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

RE: Eighth Judicial District Court, Judicial Candidate, Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I thoroughly support Ms. Michele Reinhart Levine's application for appointment as the new Eighth Judicial District Court Judge. In full disclosure, you should know her husband, Bill Levine, is a fellow shareholder in our law firm. As such, our attorneys have a unique perspective on her skill set, work ethic and judicial temperament. That said, it is a disadvantage for our firm, as Ms. Levine will recuse herself on any case in which our firm appears.

I have spoken with many attorneys in the Cascade County Bar Association regarding Ms. Levine's potential appointment as a District Court Judge. Based on those discussions, I have no doubt that Ms. Levine will make an excellent Judge.

I am confident Ms. Levine will be an effective and impartial judge. I urge you to appoint Michele Reinhart Levine as the next Eighth Judicial District Court Judge.

Very truly yours,

Marra, Evenson & Levine, P.C.

Kirk D. Evenson
E-mail: kevenson@marralawfirm.com

ATTORNEYS AT LAW Barbara E. Bell (of counsel) • Kirk D. Evenson • Amber Henning • William J. Levine • Antonia P. Marra • Joseph R. Marra (1924-2015) • Thomas A. Marra
PARALEGALS Roxie Halter • Brenda McGee • Donna M. Osterman
LEGAL ASSISTANTS Vicki Evjen • Sharon E. May
ACCOUNTS Connie Manning

WORDEN THANE P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
Established in 1924

Donovan Worden, Sr. (1892 – 1967)
Donovan Worden, Jr. (1918 – 2001)
Jeremy G. Thane (1927 – 2016)

Ronald A. Bender
Martin S. King
W. Carl Mendenhall
Sean M. Morris
Reid J. Perkins
William E. McCarthy
Amy M. Scott Smith
Jori Quinlan
Jesse C. Kodadek

Chris A. Johnson (MT,WA)
Dana L. Hupp
Martin Rogers
Joel E. Henry
Brand G. Boyar
Natalie L. Black
Elizabeth W. Erickson
Clare Kealey
Jennifer Shannon

June 28, 2021

Office of the Governor of the State of Montana
Attn: Hannah Slusser
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Public Comment on 8th Judicial District Judge Applicant Michele Reinhart Levine

Governor Gianforte:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application to fill the district court judgeship vacancy in the Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County.

I have known Michele for over a decade, in a variety of contexts. First, we were coworkers at the Missoula City-County Office of Planning and Grants. Then, she represented my parents' legislative district, and while door-knocking during her campaign, deeply impressed them with her understanding of the issues and her concern for her constituents' needs and interests. Later, we attended law school together, although in different classes.

At all times, Michele has demonstrated the highest degree of integrity, empathy, and fair-mindedness. She is intelligent, conscientious, and patient, and she takes the time to understand all sides of an issue. She is also, when appropriate, firm and decisive. She has the respect of her peers, her constituents, her colleagues, and her clients. I can think of few others whose temperament is as well-suited for the role of a judge in our state courts.

Michele's tenure as a district court judge in Cascade County exemplified her fair-mindedness and dedication to the rule of law. Attorneys, parties, and the public can count on Michele to carefully analyze the issues presented and to apply the law even-handedly.

I encourage you to strongly consider Michele's application. She would be an asset to the bench.

Sincerely,

Jori Quinlan

McGarveyLaw

CONTACT@MCGARVEYLAW.COM
MCGARVEYLAW.COM
406-752-5566
345 1ST AVE EAST
KALISPELL, MT 59901

June 28, 2021

Dear Governor Gianforte,

On behalf of the undersigned attorneys of McGarvey Law, this letter offers our earnest support for Michelle Levine in her application for the judicial vacancy in the 8th Judicial District.

We have known Michelle personally and professionally over the years, and it is our experience with her remarkable demonstrated judgment, communication skills, dedication, and enthusiasm for her many endeavors that lead us to believe she will be an excellent jurist.

Michelle has dedicated her life to public service. From her work as a legislator, on the Board of Environmental Review, on the Board of Adjustment for Cascade County, and as an attorney with important litigation experience, she has demonstrated the characteristics that are the hallmark of a good judge. In each of these endeavors, Michelle is respected by all involved for weighing the facts presented, carefully considering the applicable legal standards, and making difficult decisions. Although the necessity to determine winners and losers often involves a difficult decision, it is an essential role for a Judge. When faced with having to do just this, Michelle has maintained a dignified demeanor and respect for all involved.

In sum, Michelle is intelligent, has remarkable judgment, and had the thoughtful and caring character to be a judge for the 8th Judicial District of the highest quality.

Thank you for your public service and consideration of our comments.

Yours sincerely,
McGarvey Law

Roger Sullivan
Dustin Leftridge
Allan McGarvey
John Lacey
Jinnifer Mariman
Ethan Welder

Jamie Holman-Ronholdt
113 39th Ave NE
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 788-4193
Jamie.L.Holman@gmail.com

June 27, 2021

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
hannah.sluuser@mt.gov

Re: Michele Levine, 8th Judicial District Application

Dear Governor Gianforte,

My name is Jamie Holman-Ronholdt and I have known Michele Reinhart Levine for about 8 years. We were members of the Great Falls Junior League and both served on the Junior League board together.

I am writing to show my support of Michele for the application to fill the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship vacancy.

Working with Michele on various projects over the years, I have seen firsthand her dedication to our community and the people who reside here. She has excellent standards and work ethics. When Michele was in charge of a project, it was completed on time and to the upmost perfection. She had the respect of all of the Junior League members, including mine.

I have resided in Great Falls for the majority of my life. I believe Michele would bring the right amount of empathy, ethical principles and equal judgement to Cascade County's judicial system. Her logical thought process, detailed oriented attitude and attention to an on-time schedule is exactly what our court system needs at this time of consistent backlogs and overwhelmed courtrooms.

I believe Michele would make an excellent Judge. She is an avid listener, a great researcher, and always comes with an open mind. She will be able to listen to both parties, research the unknown, and come the best conclusion possible for the persons involved and our community as a whole. She will always have the bigger picture at heart and that is exactly what we need in our judicial system.

Sincerely,

Jamie Holman-Ronholdt

MAXON R. DAVIS
GREGORY J. HATLEY
PAUL R. HAFFEMAN
JOSEPH M. SULLIVAN*
STEPHANIE A. HOLLAR
TRAVIS A. CUSHMAN
DENNIS J. TIGHE (Retired)

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*Also admitted to practice in Oregon & Washington

June 28, 2021

VIA E-MAIL

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Candidate Michele Reinhart-Levine
Position of District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District

To Whom It May Concern:

Michele Reinhart-Levine has asked me to write a letter on her behalf in support of her appointment to fill the judicial vacancy on the Montana State District Court for the Eighth Judicial District. It is my honor and pleasure to do so.

I am also providing a letter of support for David J. Grubich. I am providing letters for both Michele and Dave because they are both highly qualified and I see my role as providing the Governor and his staff with all the information necessary to make a well-informed decision.

Michele has both the intellect and demeanor to make for a fine District Court Judge. She has shown this is the time she served in this position over the last several months. She has compassion and will ensure those before her feel they have had an opportunity to be heard. She has an excellent work ethic which is needed in this role because of the substantial caseload she will be expected to manage.

Michele is willing to do "extra." I first met Michele when she was still in law school. She was a panel member in a Continuing Legal Education program I was helping put together for the State Bar. At a time most law students were more concerned about their next exam, she was already serving her future profession. This bodes well for someone, who as a Judge, will be called on to go out into the public and educate on the Rule of Law. Likewise, her willingness to do extra will help sustain projects like the Veterans' Court.

Because of these factors, I, without hesitation, recommend to you Michele Reinhart-Levine.

Very truly yours,

DAVIS, HATLEY, HAFFEMAN & TIGHE P.C.

/s/ Joseph M. Sullivan
Joseph M. Sullivan

JMS:

June 28, 2921

From: Lois Baker
Member of Kairos Youth Homes Board
3432 13th Ave. S.
Great Falls, MT 59405

To: Governor Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing in support of Michele Reinhart-Levine's application to fill the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship vacancy. I have known Michele for the last 6 years and worked with her on the Kairos Youth Homes board. I have found her to be reliable and competent every month when we meet to discuss business matters relating to the youth homes in Great Falls. She has volunteered to help in every way possible to make sure that the children we deal with have the best possible facility and adults supporting their lives. She thoughtfully examines the data that the staff presents to us and makes logical decisions about matters of finance and staffing. I find her compassionate and caring about the needs of the children. She is realistic in dealing with what we have to work with and keeping the best interest of the children and staff in mind. She listens to all facts and is fair to all sides. Her community service is a priority to her and is handled with the quickest turn around.

Three years ago, my son who was a fireman, died in the line of duty here in Great Falls. Michele helped my daughter-in-law finalize the workman's compensation case so she would have financial help for she and her two children. It was such a relief to have the legal support that was so competent and time sensitive.

I admire Michele and her commitment to making our community a better place. I highly recommend your consideration to appoint Michele Reinhart-Levine for this vacancy as district judge.

Sincerely,

Lois Baker

Slusser, Hannah

From: Franke Wilmer <frankewilmer1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 6:22 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nomination of Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte and Judicial Nomination Reviewers:

I write to offer my strongest, unreserved support and recommendation for Michele Reinhart Levine's appointment to the open Cascade County district court judgeship.

In my now-nearly 30 years as a professor of Political Science at MSU in Bozeman, where I served twice as Department Head, and having served 8 years in the Montana House of Representatives I have had ample opportunities to mentor and recommend quite a few exceptional individuals for law and graduate school admissions, public service, political candidacies, and two outstanding judicial appointments - Elizabeth Best and Mike Wheat. I unhesitatingly include Michele in the last category.

I served with Michele during three of the four terms I served in the legislature, and was, from day one, extraordinarily impressed not only with her ability to quickly master the most complicated policies (and their political implications) but also the civility and diplomacy with which she engaged those whose views or interests differed from her own. This made her one of the most effective legislators with whom I served - and gave me, as well as her other mentors - hope and confidence that she would pursue a legal career. That she has done so, and so successfully, is not surprising, nor is her interest in judicial service. She has all the right talents and, equally important, motives, to be one of Montana's most respected and impactful judicial public servants.

Please do not hesitate to follow-up with any questions you may have, or if you think I can provide additional insight into her qualifications and exceptional suitability for this appointment.

Yours,
Franke Wilmer

--
Franke Wilmer, Ph.D. Professor
Department of Political Science Montana State University Wilson Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717
406-994.5246

--
Franke Wilmer, Ph.D.
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Professor
Department of Political Science
Montana State University
Wilson Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717
406-994.5246

Slusser, Hannah

From: Charles Jennings <317charlesjennings@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 27, 2021 10:36 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Rhinehart Levine for Cascade County District Court judge

Dear Governor Gianforte,
I am writing a letter in support of Michelle Rhinehart Levine for Cascade County district court judge. She has done an admirable job in the past as judge and will fill this position with outstanding service. She cares about public service and especially standing up for protection of children. She has the support of law-enforcement, prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys, and civil attorneys.

Sincerely, Charles D. Jennings MD
Great Falls

June 24, 2021

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I write you today in strong support of Michele Reinhart Levine for her reappointment to the 8th Judicial District Court.

I met Michele during our first year of law school in 2009. Law school is a mostly unenjoyable, three-year grind that can be surprisingly detached from the actual practice of being a lawyer. By virtue of class rankings, summer internships, and the perceived quality of employment after graduation, law students are naturally inclined to measure their intellectual capabilities against their peers.

During our three years together at the University of Montana, Michele's inherent good character, compassion, and considerable life experience set her apart from many of our classmates. In addition to our shared appreciation for eastern Montana, what remains with me today is Michele's enduring optimism. Maintaining a genuinely positive attitude throughout all of law school's trials and tribulations, a rare feat in its own right, is a quality that has served Michele well as she has professionally endured her ascension to, and demotion from, the District Court bench.

In my experience, the best judges in our state are those who abandon their roles as advocates, detach from their political and religious beliefs, but maintain compassion for their fellow human beings. As a career prosecutor, my friends and colleagues who later ascended to the bench held various beliefs across the political spectrum that are now impossible to detect as they discharge their daily duties. As is apparent from her letters of support, many litigants appearing before Michele have experienced the same.

I imagine that it would be virtually impossible to find a single person without a history expressing some opinion on a controversial matter. It would be even more difficult to find an attorney, notoriously and sometimes frustratingly opinionated people, who were not compelled to speak on the very thing that necessitates their existence in the first place: the law.

Over four short months Michele demonstrated her worth to the citizens of the 8th Judicial District by discharging her duties, many of which are accurately described as uninteresting to lawyers and non-lawyers alike, without controversy or politicization. This is the work of our District Court judges, a job that is admirable, understated, and absolutely essential to a functional democracy. I urge you to appoint Michele back to the bench so that she may resume this important work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ben Halverson
Benjamin J. Halverson

MAXON R. DAVIS
GREGORY J. HATLEY
PAUL R. HAFFEMAN
JOSEPH SULLIVAN
STEPHANIE HOLLAR
TRAVIS CUSHMAN
• • •
DENNIS J. TIGHE (Retired)

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FILE NO.

June 27, 2021

VIA E-MAIL

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Candidate Michele Levine
Position of District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District

To Whom It may Concern:

Please accept this letter of support for the appointment of Michele Levine to fill the judicial vacancy on the Montana Eighth Judicial District Court. I also submitted a letter of support for Dave Grubich, but would be remiss if I did extend my support for Michele Levine's judicial appointment as well.

When Michele and I dealt with one another in private practice, it was typically on the opposite sides of civil cases involving personal injury claims. Although our clients were adverse to one other and Michele was a competent and zealous advocate for her clients in those case, I always found her to pleasant to deal with on a personal basis, and focused on an amicable resolution which benefitted her clients. During her tenure on the bench on a temporary basis in late 2020 and early 2021, I was impressed by what I observed to be her exemplary work ethic, while continuing to maintain a friendly judicial disposition and self-deprecating sense of humor where appropriate. From one of my law firm's partners who tried a civil case in front of her earlier this year, I have heard nothing but compliments about Michele's performance as a judge, both in terms of her willingness to work hard and even-handed decision-making. Given the circumstances, I have no reason to believe that Michele would be anything other than a fine judge again, if given that opportunity.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/Paul R. Haffeman
Paul R. Haffeman

PRH:

Slusser, Hannah

From: Sharon Patton-griffin <pattongriffin@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 26, 2021 8:34 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Eighth District Court Judge Appointment - Letter of Recommendation for Judge Michelle Levine

June 26, 2021

Atten: Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59020

RE: Michelle Levine, 8th Judicial District Application

Governor Gianforte:

I am writing this letter in support of Judge Michelle Reinhart Levine for the position of the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship.

Judge Reinhart has had the opportunity to serve in this position for the last several months. She has served with the same professionalism and integrity that she demonstrated during her career as a lawyer. Judge Reinhart is respected by her peers, regardless of their political affiliations, for her fair and impartial decisions.

The late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg best described Judge Michelle Levine's leadership as a lawyer and a judge:

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.
One lives not just for oneself but for one's community."

Judge Levine brings the qualifications not only of a highly qualified lawyer but also of a wife and mother. The balance between the head and the heart is the essence of true judicial wisdom.

Judge Levine has proven herself capable and deserving of this position.

I enthusiastically support Judge Michelle Reinhart Levine's reappointment to the Eight Judicial District Court.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sharon Patton-Griffin, Ed.D.
GFPS – Retired
pattongriffin@yahoo.com
(406) 899-5917

Carolyn K. Craven
101 14th Avenue South
Great Falls, MT 59405
lifeisgood4us@xmailpost.com

June 26, 2021

Greg Gianforte
Governor, State of Montana
Office of the Governor
ATTN: Hannah Slusser
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing in support of Michele Levine, who did an excellent job as a newly appointed District Judge. Due to the Senate's adverse action to confirm her appointment as District Judge, that position is officially vacant.

Michelle is knowledgeable, efficient and was completely dedicated to her job as District Judge. She certainly has the credentials, experience and impartiality to continue as District Judge. She is highly regarded in the community and has the support of many criminal and civil attorneys, local law enforcement and community members. She is dedicated to public service and is a person of high moral and ethical integrity.

Please restore Judge Michele Levine to the bench!

Cordially,

Carolyn K. Craven

Slusser, Hannah

From: Camille Consolvo <caconsolvo@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 26, 2021 4:18 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judge Support Email

Michele Levine has my support for Cascade County District Court Judge. She performed well as a Judge. She is a hard worker who adheres to the law. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.

Camille Consolvo
Great Falls, Montana

Slusser, Hannah

From: JAMES J HECKEL <jheckel8@msn.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 26, 2021 2:38 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Cascade County District Court

I would like to encourage the appointment of Michele Levine as Judge for Cascade County District Court. a position she previously held with dedication and distinction. Thank you.

Jim Heckel
3012 Carmel Dr
Great Falls, MT 59404
404-454-1465
jhexkel8@msn.com

Slusser, Hannah

From: Gerry Jennings <jenningsg92@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 26, 2021 2:12 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support for Michele Reinhart-Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte,
26 June 2021

I am writing in support of Michele Reinhart-Levine for the open seat on the Cascade County District Court. Since 1974, I have lived in Great Falls, with my husband Dr. Charles Jennings. We raised our four children here. I have been active in the community for decades and had a hand in helping establish the Paris Gibson Square Museum, the HANDS Great Falls Public Schools elementary after school program, the River's Edge Trail, and the Island Range Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association. The Great Falls Public Schools Foundation is also one of my projects, as is Get Fit Great Falls and Great Falls Rising. I am a former board president of the YWCA, the Junior League of Great Falls, the United Way of Cascade County, the GF Symphony Assn. and the Montana Wilderness Association.

Michele and I have crossed paths many times over the years, when working for and attending various community events and functions. Michele shares my passion for contributing to our local community. She has also been the President of the Junior League of Great Falls, as well as Vice President, Membership Chair, and Nominating Chair. Junior League helps train women leaders through voluntarism. While she was an active member with Junior League, she helped create the new grocery store exhibit at the Children's Museum. She also helped with Junior League's donations of science fair judging and giving money to the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Expo for Great Falls Public Schools. Her organizational skills led to the success of the annual Cabaret for a Cause, a community fundraiser for Junior League and the Children's Receiving Home, an emergency crisis shelter for abused and neglected children. Another Junior League activity for Michele has been organizing rummage sales for Toby's House, a crisis respite childcare facility to help prevent child abuse and neglect. Other volunteer activities are Kairos Youth Homes and the Cascade County Zoning Board of Adjustments.

Through Carol's List she and I have worked together to identify women leaders in the community, helping to recruit more women to run for office and to have more women participate in all levels of government. Michele has attended community forums that I have organized, including one highlighting the recent school levy, urging citizens to be informed about the GF Public Schools budget and the importance of the funding formula.

Michele has shown her commitment to bettering our community. With the heart of a volunteer, she cares about the effectiveness and efficiency of all branches of government. She will uphold and safeguard the values we all share, including justice, fairness, liberty, and equality for all. Michele served as Cascade County District Court Judge from November 23, 2020 through April 23, 2021. During this period of time she served 1200 cases, and the case load is only growing larger. She had a number of cases of "youth in need of care." Michele especially wants to protect kids and stop the cycle of abuse and crime. For all these reasons, please select her for the open position on the Cascade County District Court. As shown by her community involvement and her work on the District Court, she has broad community support and would serve the Eighth Judicial District well.

Best wishes,

Gerry Jennings
Great Falls, Montana

JOHN W. PARKER
District Judge

Telephone: (406) 771-6566
Facsimile: (406) 771-6549

Cascade County Courthouse
415 2nd Avenue North - Rm. 203
Great Falls, Montana 59401

DISTRICT COURT
EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

June 25, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to ask that you appoint Michele R. Levine to serve in the vacant District Judge position here in the Eighth Judicial District. I had the honor of serving with Ms. Levine during her tenure here in the Cascade County Courthouse and I can assure you she is hard-working, highly intelligent, and a top-notch public servant.

There are several strong candidates who have applied, but I believe Michele Levine is certainly the strongest among them. She is the only applicant who has already served as District Judge. She presided over several jury trials and managed a huge docket including child protection cases, felony criminal offenses, family law, youth court, complex civil litigation and more. Michele's hard work and humility have already earned her substantial political support for her re-election and rightly so.

Do not hesitate to contact me by mail or phone if I can provide more information about Ms. Levine's stellar work ethic, team-player approach, and her sharp analytical mind. I would be glad to meet with you in person as well. I would be grateful for the opportunity to serve as a resource in your appointment process.

Sincerely,

John W. Parker
District Court Judge
Great Falls, Montana

Slusser, Hannah

From: Jessie Sherburne <jsherb@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 12:50 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please restore Judge Levine to the bench

To Whom it May Concern:
I am writing to support Michele Levine in her effort to be restored to the bench. Michele and I met as cross-country runners on rival teams at Montana cross-country meets in the mid-nineties. We've kept in touch ever since. She is a noble person with a sensible temperament. She is a hard worker who excels at her job. Michele is dedicated to public service and I have the utmost confidence that she will be a just and reasonable judge for the state of Montana.
Please restore Judge Michele Levine to the bench. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I'm happy to help in any way I can. Sincerely,
Jessie Sherburne Boise State University - Biological Science Lecturer 208.386.0254

Carroll College
1601 N. Benton Avenue
Helena MT 59625-0002
406.447.4300 p
406.447.4533 f
www.carroll.edu

June 11, 2021

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Letter of Recommendation for Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to you in support of Michele Reinhart Levine for the District Court Judgeship in the 8th Judicial District. I have known Michele since 1999, when we first became friends as undergraduate students at Carroll College, and Michele and I have remained in touch over these years. Throughout this time, I have been able to witness her extraordinary commitment to public service and to the greater good of our communities. Michele possesses many attributes I associate with an excellent judge. I hope you will strongly consider her for this important position.

You can see from her application that Michele has an impressive record of experiences and accomplishments. I want to speak to her character and strengths. Michele is one of the most compassionate individuals I have ever met. One of my earliest memories of her is of a conversation we had in the hallway, just after a class in American Indian Studies, in which she teared up reflecting on the history of federal-tribal relations. She has always cared deeply for others and has directed her education and career towards using her energies, skills, and talents to improve the lives of others. This is the reason Michele wants to serve as District Court Judge. Everything Michele does is towards this end.

Michele is a gentle person, and yet she is strong—physically, mentally, and emotionally. She has never shied away from tough issues or unpleasant people. She possesses the ability to be direct and to hold others accountable. She was one of the youngest representatives when elected to the Montana State Legislature; this required thick skin and a particular combination of confidence and humility. Visiting her at the Capital, I recall being uncomfortable simply witnessing some of the interactions between various lobbyists, legislators, staff, and citizens. Michele could engage with anyone, on any topic. She is an excellent listener and communicator and can have meaningful dialog—including with those who have differing opinions or are even hostile towards her. Michele has a record of working well with a wide variety of people—from adversarial landowner/conservationist groups during her time with Northern Plains Resource Council to all parties in domestic violence situations to grieving families in her current position with Fair Claim. And Michele has succeeded in high-intensity situations as well as thrived and found meaning in doing the day-to-day tasks that others may find mundane.

Michele has integrity. She campaigned for and served as a state representative all while attending law school, which certainly speaks to her focus and drive, time-management skills, and passion for law. But even more so, it speaks to her commitment to do everything she can to better the lives of others, and to do it well, with a clear conscious. I remember that after long days at the Capital, while I was heading home to sleep, Michele would begin a night of reading up on the issues and pouring over proposed bills. Some of Michele's colleagues were out socializing, taking shortcuts to gaining ground in the legislative process. Michele was home doing her research. She engaged in the necessary conversations needed to get things done, but she came to those conversations armed with information. Michele is prepared to do the right thing, in the right way, even if it takes time and energy to do so.

Clearly, I could go on. These are just some of the traits Michele possesses that have served her well in the five months she has already been a judge, and that record speaks for itself. Our communities have already been better off with Michele on the bench. I have enormous respect for Michele, and I trust her. She is intelligent, honest, hard-working, ethical, and empathetic. For these and many other reasons, I highly recommend you choose her for the District Court Judgeship in Cascade County.

Best,

Jamie Dolan

Jamie Dolan, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Sociology
Director of Gender Studies
Carroll College

Slusser, Hannah

From: Brenda Kelly <lunagraphics@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 11:43 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote to restore!

To whom it may concern,

Please restore Judge Levine to the bench! She is such an asset to Great Falls, so many lives have been affected by the decision to pull her. If you want Montana strong, you should not be causing such chaos in our already strained community. My daughter goes to school with her daughter, they have been through daycare together as well. Michelle is a glowing spirit, she is loving and caring and I know she passes that spirit into her career. Please re-consider and restore her! I nominate Levine for Judge! I support an independent judiciary for Montana!

Concerned Great Falls Resident.
-Brenda Kelly

Slusser, Hannah

From: Amanda Anderson <amanda.anderson.law@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 10:28 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] In support of Judge Michele Reinhart Levine

To whom it may concern,

I write today in full support of Judge Michele Reinhart Levine for the judicial seat in Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana 8th Judicial District Court. Judge Levine had been on the bench for several months and she is ready for the pressures and stressors of remaining on the bench. She is ready to take on the immense waiting caseload.

The role of district court judge is to apply established Montana law in a fair and transparent manner; I have no doubt that Judge Levine will apply Montana law fairly and justly in her courtroom.

I have known Michele for many years - in law school and in practice. Michele is a competent attorney, a hard worker, and a dedicated public servant in the Montana Bar. Michele entered the field of law in order to improve the lives of people in her community. She cares about her constituents. She will handle her caseload with dedication, efficiency, and balance.

I can think of no better candidate than Michele Reinhart Levine to fill the open seat in the 8th Judicial District Court.

Sincerely,
Amanda Anderson
Bozeman, MT

Slusser, Hannah

From: Merianne Stansbury <meriannest@ymail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 6:04 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Eighth Judicial District Court Judge

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing this in support of Michele Reinhart Levine to fill the Eighth Judicial District Court vacancy. I am a former Associate Attorney with the Brown Law Firm in Billings, MT, and also have experience working as Judicial Assistant and Law Clerk to the Honorable Mary Jane Knisely. I am a former classmate of Michele's from the Joint Law and Environmental Studies Program at the University of Montana and had the pleasure of working on a class study of State Superfund sites with her. I believe Michele has the experience and character necessary to succeed as a District Court Judge.

Michele has a wide variety of legal experience, from drafting and passing legislation to civil litigation to bench trials, which makes her a particularly good candidate to be a Judge. She has experience representing all types of clients, including some experience with family law, and has excellent research, writing, and oratory skills. While Michele has a lot of past experience as an advocate, she has always been one to see and listen to both sides before making judgments. When I received flack from other Environmental Studies students for accepting a job doing civil environmental defense work immediately following law school, Michele was the only one to defend my decision because she understood that everyone deserves a defense and that working for "the other side" can influence positive behavior. This more than any other interaction with her has earned her my respect and friendship for a lifetime.

Michele is not only experienced, but she has the right temperament for the job. She asks questions when she doesn't understand, and sticks to her convictions once she has made a decision. She listens to those with whom she engages and reflects when necessary. Michele has compassion and empathy, and is always respectful of others' choices and opinions even if she disagrees. She has always held herself to the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, and integrity. I believe Michele would be a calming voice of intelligence and reason on the bench.

For these reasons, and those highlighted by other friends and colleagues, I highly recommend Michele Reinhart Levine for Judge for the Eighth Judicial District of Montana.

Sincerely,

Merianne A. Stoneback, J.D.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [go.onelink.me]

To: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Letter of Recommendation for Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application for the position of District Court Judge in the Eighth Judicial District Court.

It was my distinct pleasure to work for Michele as her paralegal for many years. During those years I was impressed by her professionalism, dedication, and passion for her work and community. She has strong verbal and written skills enabling her to effectively communicate with her clients and colleagues. I admire the way Michele can look at an any issue or situation and see it from multiple perspectives. She is am impressive orator enabling her to state her position effectively and respectfully. I learned so much working for her and am grateful I had that opportunity.

I have also been fortunate enough to know Michele socially and consider her a close friend. Michele's positive attitude and approach to life is inspiring. She is a smart, funny, intelligent woman whom I admire and respect.

I highly recommend Michele Reinhart Levine for the position of District Court Judge for the Eighth Judicial District Court. Michele is and will be a great asset to the court and the community.

Sincerely,

Brenda L. McGee
Paralegal

Karen S. Townsend
1450 Pattee Canyon Rd.
Missoula, MT 59803

May 19, 2021

To Members of the Nominating Committee:

I write in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application for the position of District Court Judge for the 8th Judicial District. Although I recognize that it would be unusual from an individual to be reappointed to that judicial position after the Senate refused to confirm her earlier appointment, I believe that she is not only uniquely qualified for the job, she demonstrated her ability to do the job during the several months that she served in that capacity.

After Judge Pinski retired, I was appointed by the Montana Supreme Court to cover the docket in his Department until a new judge could be appointed by former Governor Bullock. I thus presided over Dept. A in Great Falls for a couple of months in the fall of 2020. My previous experience was serving as a District Court Judge in the 4th Judicial District for almost nine (9) years. Prior to that service, I had been a state and local prosecutor for 30 years, spending part of that time also as a special assistant United States Attorney, and spending two and one-half (2 ½) years as Director of Training for the National College of District Attorneys.

As you know, District Court Judges in Montana are general jurisdiction judges and must preside over and decide a broad spectrum of case types. Their docket includes criminal cases, juvenile cases (both juvenile criminal and dependency cases), family law cases including dissolutions, custody decisions, guardianships, conservatorships, injunctions, involuntary commitments, general civil cases, landlord/tenant, and appeals and/or trials de novo from lower courts. Many of these cases are time sensitive and thus requires skill in managing a busy case load. The case load generally breaks down to about 1/3 criminal, 1/3 family, and 1/3 everything else. No lawyer who becomes a District Court Judge in Montana has significant experience in all of these legal areas, so we must all learn as we go since we get no training on how to be a judge after appointment or election before assuming the bench.

I have done a lot of thinking about what makes a "good judge". I think the qualities that a good judge must have are: even temper, impartiality, humility, fairness, empathy, open-mindedness, decisiveness, confidence, effective communication skills, a natural curiosity for learning, an insatiable quest for truth and justice, and the ability to interpret and apply legal principles to a given set of factual circumstances. I hope that I had those traits. From my observation of her work, I believe that Ms. Levine has these traits.

When she was nominated last fall by former Governor Bullock, one of the first things she did was to contact me and ask if she could observe me running court in Great Falls

as she closed down her private practice until she could be sworn in. At the time, court was not being held in person, but was being conducted over Zoom. I of course agreed, and she sat in on each court session I had until she was officially sworn in. She thus watched me do arraignments, set bail, take guilty pleas, set trial dates, and sentence criminal defendants. She reviewed Orders I issued on pre-trial matters. Although I had had considerable experience with criminal cases, some experience in juvenile cases both criminal and dependency, and some experience with involuntary commitments in my previous career, I had precious little experience in family law matters and essentially no general civil experience. I remember that I spent time after my election before assuming the bench a couple of months later observing the judges in the 4th Judicial District conduct law and motion in areas I was unfamiliar with and meeting with groups of lawyers in practice areas I needed to bone up on so that I would feel more comfortable with cases that I had had little or no experience with. Her request to observe demonstrated to me not only her dedication to doing a good job but her intent to be as prepared as possible. After each court session, we talked about what I had done and why. After she was sworn in, she asked me to observe her during her first weeks presiding and give her feedback, which I did. She wrote out and sent to me what she intended to say during a couple of sentencing hearings that were scheduled for her first law and motion day and asked for comments. She also eagerly asked for materials she could review that might help her in areas she was not familiar with. I sent her some of my own materials and pointed her to other resources to assist her. She also consulted with and/or observed her fellow District Judges in Great Falls in the interim between nomination and taking the bench and continued to do so after assuming the bench. Bottom line is that she worked hard at being the best judge she could be.

I believe she has demonstrated that she can be a good and fair judge and deserves to be placed back in that slot subject to election by the voters of Cascade County in November, 2022.

Sincerely,

Karen S. Townsend,
District Court Judge, Retired.

Slusser, Hannah

From: Leia Pate-Terry <leiapateterry@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 9:23 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ML

Michele Levine is fair and dedicated to public service. Please reinstate her
Thank you,
Leia Pate-Terry
Anaconda MT

Slusser, Hannah

From: Erin Schattauer <erschattauer@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 9:19 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Judge Michele Levine

As a Montana resident, voter, worker and mother, I am writing to express my support to restore Michele Levine to the bench as District Court Judge. Judge Levine has my full support and her record displays her dedication to the job and ability to be fair and just. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.

Sincerely,
Erin Schattauer
Helena, MT

Slusser, Hannah

From: Stuart Lewin <stuartlewin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 7:35 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please select Michele Reinhart Levine to return to the bench in Cascade County

Dear Governor,

I support Michele Reinhart Levine for District Court Judge in Cascade County.

I have been a licensed attorney practicing law in Montana for almost 50 years. I do business, estate, real estate and tax planning mostly for farmers and ranchers.

I have had Mrs Levine review several matters for my clients over the years while she was in private practice here in Great Falls. Our discussions and her analysis of these matters demonstrated a keen legal mind and careful consideration of my clients' problems.

I know her to be an honest and fair-minded person: a credit to the legal profession and the citizens of our state. Please reinstate her as District Court Judge.

Sincerely yours,

LEWIN LAW OFFICE

By Stuart F. Lewin

Slusser, Hannah

From: K B <karl.benish@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 5:05 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Michele Levine for Judge

I am resending this email(see below) as forgot to include my address. My apologies.

Thank you,

Karl Benish
508 25th Ave. NE
Great Falls, MT 59404

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **K B** <karl.benish@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 24, 2021 at 5:03 PM
Subject: Michele Levine for Judge
To: <nominatejudges@mt.gov>

Governor Gianforte/To Whom It May Concern,

I support Michele Levine for Judge because she did a good job as a Judge. She works hard, follows the law, and is dedicated to public service. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.
Thank you,
Karl Benish

ATTORNEYS:
Neal P. DuBois
Eric D. Mills

406 ATTORNEYS

DUBOIS MILLS, PLLC
104 4th Street N., Ste. 200
P.O. Box 1348
Great Falls, MT 59403
Phone: (406) 315.3242
Fax: (406) 727.1812

June 24, 2021

Governor's Office
ATTN: Hannah Slusser
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
Fax: (406) 444-4151
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: 8th Judicial District Judge Position;
Support for Michele Levine

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of the application of Michele Levine for the appointment to the vacancy left by Judge Pinski in the Eighth Judicial District Court, Cascade County. As Michele and I have both practiced in the same community for the last eight years I have had the opportunity to get to know her.

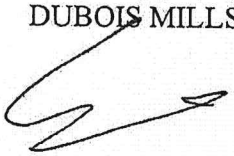
You do not have to look at her lengthy resume, letters of recommendation or application to get a sense of her and her character. When you meet her, you will understand the absolute dedication, intelligence, hard work and sense of fairness which she will bring to work with her every day as an Eighth Judicial District Court Judge.

She and I have had the opportunity to discuss the needs of both lawyers and litigants in this community. She is absolutely committed to getting orders out in a timely manner in order to keep cases moving along. Not only does she want the process to be fair for everyone, but she also wants to ensure that there is little to no judicial delay in issuing orders.

Somehow despite Michele's commitments as business owner, wife, mother, and outdoor adventurer she has found time to serve in the legislature, on the board of Kairos Youth Homes, Junior League of Great Falls, Carols' List, Cascade County Zoning Board of Adjustments, and the Montana Board of Environmental Review.

It is unfortunate that Michelle must apply again due to politics. I supported her before and do so again because Michele would be an absolute asset to the judiciary.

Very truly yours,
DUBOIS MILLS, PLLC



Eric D. Mills
Attorney at Law

LWC

LEONA WALDHAUSEN COLVIN
LEONA@NEMONT.NET

CONTACT

PO Box 503
Culbertson, MT 59218
406.787.5599

JUDICIAL APPLICATION LETTER OF SUPPORT

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

June 25, 2021

Dear Governor Gianforte:
It is an honor and a privilege to write this letter in support of **Michele Reinhart Levine** for **Eighth Judicial District Judge.**

I first met Michele when I worked with her as a community organizer. Our effort to protect Montana's natural resources and rural way of life was at times very stressful, controversial, and demanding. In the face of difficult circumstances, I found her to be enthusiastic, hard-working, focused, and extremely talented at achieving the goals of our organization, despite limited funds and high staff turn-over.

Several years later, while Michele was serving in the Montana Legislature, she visited the northeastern part of the state, where I live. Rather than relying on various reports about our situation in the Bakken Oilfield, she took the time to inform herself. Once again, I was very impressed with her hard-work and level-headed approach to learning about local benefits and struggles related to the oil-boom and other concerns faced by our rural communities. Upon meeting local residents, she was humble and showed respect, kindness, empathy, humor, and professionalism. All that met her felt heard and they were thankful for her attention to detail.

Michele would make an excellent judge, and I truly hope she will be selected. Thank you kindly for opportunity to support her application.

Warmest Regards,

Leona Colvin

Slusser, Hannah

From: Desirae DeVries <dvdevries@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 12:09 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Levine

I support Michele Levine for Judge because she did a good job as a Judge. She works hard, follows the law, and is dedicated to public service. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.

Thank you for your time,
Desirae DeVries

Sent from my iPhone

UGRIN ALEXANDER ZADICK, P.C.

JORDAN Y. CROSBY
KEVIN C. MEEK
ANDREW T. NEWCOMER

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
#2 RAILROAD SQUARE, SUITE B
P.O. BOX 1746
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA 59403-1746
TELEPHONE (406) 771-0007
FAX (406) 452-9360
E-MAIL frontdesk@uazh.com
Website http://uazh.com

ROGER T. WITT
GARY M. ZADICK
JAMES R. ZADICK

June 24, 2021

Via Email Only: nominatejudges@mt.gov

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

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Judicial Opening – Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Members of the Council:

I am writing in support of the application of the Michele Reinhart Levine, one of the applicants for the open Eighth Judicial District Court position.

Michele filled the position as an appointee and was highly regarded for her work during that time.

Michele is clearly qualified and in the time that she spent as District Judge she demonstrated her excellent legal abilities and commitment to working hard to keep up with a very crowded docket.

Cascade County is in a dire situation with a heavy case load. Judicial experience is important.

I appreciate your time and attention and your consideration of Michele Reinhart Levine for appointment to the position.

Sincerely,

UGRIN ALEXANDER ZADICK, P.C.

Gary M. Zadick

Slusser, Hannah

From: Karen L. Reiff <KReiff@chjw.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:26 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michelle Levine

To whom it may concern:

I support Michele Levine for Cascade County District Court judge. She is dedicated to public service and will work hard for constituents of Cascade County. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.

Sincerely,
Karen L. Reiff

Karen L. Reiff
Church, Harris, Johnson & Williams, P.C.
114 3rd Street South
P.O. Box 1645
Great Falls, MT 59403
Phone 406-761-3000
Fax 406-453-2313
www.chjw.com
[chjw.com]

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
This message is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that dissemination, distribution or forwarding of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this message from any device/media where the message is stored. Thank you.

June 24, 2021

To Whom It Concerns:

We are writing in support of Michele Levine for the position of Eighth Judicial District Judgeship.

We have known Michele since she was a young girl. We have watched in admiration as she grew up to become a caring, honest, and humble person. Michele excelled at just about anything she attempted, through hard work and determination.

One event in her life stands out to us. Tragically, she lost one of her younger brothers, Simon, in an accident. Michele responded through her faith and love of family.

We were very proud of Michele when she was elected to the Montana House of Representatives. Even though we weren't in her district, when an issue concerning our business came before her committee, she reached across the aisle, to help reach for ha common ground solution.

Michele Levine would make a dedicated, fair minded judge. She would empathically look at all sides and work extremely hard to reach decisions that follow the law and protect the rights and freedoms we all care about.

Sincerely,

Richard Baerg
Mikelann Caywood-Baerg

Slusser, Hannah

From: mary moe <mary.sheehy.moe@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 8:29 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Reinhart Levine for District Court Judge

To the Nominations Committee:

I urge you to forward the name of Michele Reinhart Levine for the governor's consideration to restore her to the position of District Court Judge in Great Falls, Montana.

I have known Michele since she moved to Great Falls with her husband, both practicing attorneys. I knew her family long before then, since her mother and I both attended Catholic schools in Billings, MT. She comes from a family known for their caring for others and for their work to ensure the benefits of "liberty and justice for all" accrue to all Montanans and all Americans. I really came to know Michele when we were both dealing with feeding babies in the early morning hours, communicating our weariness, our worries, and our joys to one another four years ago. Michele is a woman of uncommon understanding, uncommon patience, and uncommon intelligence, an individual Montanans can trust to do what is right, no matter how difficult.

When Michele assumed the seat vacated by Judge Pinski in late 2020, I knew the court would be in good hands. So it has proved. She has handled a massive workload with equanimity and intelligence, while balancing her duties as the mother of young children. Her time on the court has established beyond a doubt her competence, her work ethic, and her understanding of the ethical requirements of the role.

I recommend her without reservation.

Mary Sheehy Moe
mary.sheehy.moe@gmail.com
(406) 868-9427

Slusser, Hannah

From: Richard Liebert <wwranch@3rivers.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 11:24 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nomination for judges

Dear Governor Gianforte,

Please consider Michele Reinhart Levine to again serve the people of Montana and Cascade County. She's capable and very experienced

and although she was a legislator, that shouldn't be held against her as she's been very fair and balanced in her cases.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Liebert

289 Boston Coulee Road

Great Falls, MT 59405

Slusser, Hannah

From: Corey McBain <malonemcbain@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 7:13 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Supporting Michele Levine for judicial district 8

I am writing in support of Michele Levine for district court Judge. She is honest and fair. She works hard to give back to the community on her own time. In her brief tenure it was made clear that she follows the law and is very capable. Returning Michele to her post is the swiftest way to deliver the resolution to the cases that have unnecessarily been left waiting in our district.

Corey McBain
Great Falls, MT

Slusser, Hannah

From: Brenda Brooks <brendabrooks6@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 6:40 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Levine

I support Michele Levine for Judge because she did a great job as a Judge. She had a huge case load and was willing to answer the phone 24 hours a day 7 days a week. She works hard, follows the law, and is dedicated to public service. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.

Thanks!

Brenda Brooks

406-868-9351

GRAYBILL
LAW FIRM, PC

BENJAMIN R. GRAYBILL
RAPH GRAYBILL
300 4th Street North • PO Box 3586
Great Falls, Montana 59403

brg@silverstatelaw.net
rgraybill@silverstatelaw.net
graybilllawfirm.com

Telephone: (406) 452-856
Toll Free: (866) 452-8566
Telefax: (406) 727-3225

June 23, 2021

Email and US mail
Hon. Greg Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser
Office of the Governor of the State of Montana
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Governor Gianforte:

The Eighth Judicial District is one of the busiest in the State. In order to best serve the people who are relying on the Eighth Judicial District Court for swift, efficient, and fair adjudications of cases, please reappoint Michele Levine to fill the Eighth Judicial District judgeship vacancy.

Michele brings first-hand knowledge and experience to the cases now existing in the Court. Not selecting her will result in delay and inefficiency for hundreds of pending cases.

Eighth Judicial District Court judges handle an array of legal matters that take time and require getting to know the case and the parties involved. Michele has already done that. Many of these matters are not complicated, but are only challenging due to the time and effort needed to conduct hearings and understand relevant facts. Again, Michele is already familiar with most of these cases. I have practiced law here for a long time; I know when a judge has control over her docket; Michele had control—she was moving cases. Please don't precipitate delay and confusion by installing someone who has to start from scratch.

The Legislature made a mistake. Respectfully, don't make the same mistake. Michele is a fair, tough-minded, effective judge. There's no politics in her courtroom. She listens to both sides and applies the law as written. Michele has the experience to capably keep a handle on her docket and she is committed to balancing that priority in a way that fairly promotes justice for all who appear before her.

Michele has integrity, intelligence, and she is decisive. She's a first rate judge.

Very truly yours,

GRAYBILL LAW FIRM, P.C.

By _____
Benjamin R. Graybill

BRG/bn

Slusser, Hannah

From: Lisa Armitage <lisaarmitage@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 3:39 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Levine for District Court Judge

I support Michele Levine for District Court Judge because she is committed to public service. She works hard, follows the law, and is dedicated. Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.

Thanks,
Lisa Armitage

Sent from my iPhone

Slusser, Hannah

From: Trudy Skari <trudyskari@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 1:15 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judge M Levine

Thank You for Your consideration on nominating Judge Levine To the Court System again. Her short tenure was productive and fair.
She is committed to the rule of law and a fair and efficient judge.
Thank You
Trudy Skari

DUROCHER & WINTER, PC
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW
D&W
Roland B. Durocher | Jeffrey G. Winter

June 23, 2021
via regular mail & fax: 406-444-4151

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena MT 59620

Re: Montana 8th Judicial District Appointment

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to express my support for Michele Reinhart Levine to be appointed to the vacancy in the Montana Eight Judicial District Court, Cascade County. Our district was already running at capacity before the pandemic. The slowdown of the courts was exacerbated by the retirement of Judge Pinski. When Michele took the bench last year, she proved herself to be fair, thoughtful and hard-working, which helped get the district moving in the right direction again. She earned the trust and respect of law enforcement, and attorneys working on both sides in both criminal and civil practice.

Because of our need for a capable judge to be on the bench as soon as possible, the one with the experience will be best suited to get things moving again. Our remaining three judges are working above and beyond what should be expected of them, and due to constitutional necessity, are putting the greatest emphasis on criminal and youth matters. Civil litigants suffer every day we do not have a judge, and even if we get a different person appointed, the learning curve will continue the delay and increase the backlog.

In my decades of practicing law, I have found that no matter what their backgrounds were, Montana judges take their jobs seriously, and put

politics aside. They do not rule as liberals or conservatives. Especially at the District Court level where they apply the law as referees, not lawmakers. Michele's appointment and lack of confirmation were unfortunately marred by politics. I ask that you, as Governor, put the needs of the citizens of Cascade County above politics, and put her back on the bench. I truly believe Michele has done, and will do, an admirable job in a very tough job.

Regards,

Roland B. Durocher
Durocher & Winter, PC

DUROCHER & WINTER, PC
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW
D&W
Roland B. Durocher | Jeffrey G. Winter

June 23, 2021
Via email ONLY to: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Governor Greg Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Support of Michele Reinhart Levine for Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Governor Gianforte:

It is my pleasure to again provide a letter of support for Michele Reinhart Levine's appointment as District Court Judge in the Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County. I supported Michele's application last year to fill the vacancy left by Hon. Gregory Pinski's resignation, and I continue to support her in this endeavor.

When Judge Pinski left the bench in October 2020, we were left with three judges to handle a docket that realistically needs 5 or more judges to efficiently manage. Fortunately, the vacuum created by Judge Pinski's departure was quickly filled by Michele Reinhart Levine's appointment by Governor Bullock, and Michele hit the ground running. Instead of easing into her new role, Michele took immediate control of the docket she inherited and began moving her cases forward in an extraordinarily timely and efficient manner. In light of the challenges posed by COVID-19 at the time Michele took the bench, this was a particularly impressive feat.

I would like to convey an example of Michele's extraordinary work ethic and efficiency, based on my own experience. Shortly after Michele took the bench last fall, I had a scheduling conference with her to set deadlines and trial dates for two civil cases. Michele scheduled trial dates for these cases in late October and early November 2021, which was sooner than I expected and much more timely than the trial dates set in other cases I am litigating in the Eighth Judicial District. In fact, some of these other cases are not scheduled for trial until 2023. This delay is not the fault of our other judges, but instead is a result of the difficulty of overseeing an overwhelming workload exacerbated by COVID-19. But somehow Michele was able to step into this maelstrom and figure out a way to afford litigants timely access to justice and a speedy trial, against all odds. That itself speaks volumes to her dedication and capabilities as a judge.

Just as importantly, Michele is honest, unbiased and ethical beyond reproach—and I know this from my dealings with her long before she became a judge. I would hate to appear before Michele without being fully prepared to explain and defend my client's position in utmost detail and answer the hard questions she will undoubtedly ask. Michele will decide the issues before her in a fair and impartial manner, based on the law and facts, and free of any political agenda or other extraneous influence. If Michele rules against my client in a matter, I may be disappointed but at least I will know if was a well-reasoned and unbiased decision, which is all we can, and should, expect from a judge.

In summary, during the first few months of her tenure, Michele proved her ability to fairly and competently take on the responsibility of an overwhelming caseload, and to keep cases moving in order to afford a timely resolution of disputes. Unfortunately, her extraordinary efforts were largely for naught because the Montana Senate did not confirm Michele's appointment as District Court Judge. Without Judge Levine, the courts in Cascade County are now operating in crisis mode due of the unrealistic expectations placed on the few remaining judges who are already stressed and overwhelmed beyond capacity.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's appointment as District Court Judge for the Montana Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County.

Very Truly Yours,

Jeffrey G. Winter
Durocher & Winter, PC

LAWRENCE A. ANDERSON
ATTORNEY AT LAW, P.C.

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P.O. Box 2608
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Telephone (406) 727-8466
Fax (406) 771-8812
E-Mail laalaw@me.com

June 23, 2021

VIA MAIL & E-MAIL: nominatejudges@mt.gov

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

Re: Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Ms. Slusser:

The purpose of this letter is to support the application of Michele Levine for the Eighth Judicial District Court vacancy.

During the last 45 years practicing law in Great Falls, we have had numerous district court judges.[1] These people had various levels of professional and other experience before becoming a judge.

What distinguished the good judges among this list was not necessarily their professional experience. What did distinguish the good judges is how they used the power of their offices. How one treats the service providers in their daily lives can be a good indication of how one will use power. And how prospective judges have used whatever power they have in their jobs often provides a good indication of how they will use judicial power.

Michele Levine's prior experience tells us a lot about how she will perform as a district court judge. In addition to her practice of law, Michele served on Cascade County's zoning board. Regulatory boards, generally, are apt to be controlled by the interests that the board seeks to regulate. In the case of zoning boards, the real estate and development industries regularly appear before zoning boards, and as a result, zoning boards typically end up promoting the interests of the real estate and development industries. Yet, Michele's tenure on this board showed she could use her power on this board in a measured and even-handed way to preserve the interest of the public.

Michele's tenure as district court judge also showed her approach to the use of power. Many varied and complex matters come before a district court judge. For this reason, district court

[1] An informal list from memory includes: R.J. Nelson, Paul Hatfield, Truman Bradford, Bill Coder, John McCarvel, Joel Roth, Marge Johnson, Bob Goff, Tom McKittrick, Ken Neil, Julie Macek, Dirk Sandefur, Greg Pinski, John Kutzman, Elizabeth Best, John Parker.

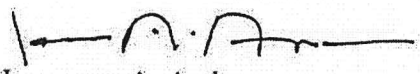
judges often are required to make decisions about which they have absolutely no experience or training. With a busy docket, it is easy for district court judges simply to rely on the lawyers before them in making their decisions.

I had one matter before Michele Levine. It was a complex class tax case that involved disabled law enforcement pensioners. The matter had previously been hotly contested, but at the point of Michele's involvement, it required the approval of the resolution of the case. The matters still involved both complex procedures and complex substantive elements to be approved. Michele could have easily simply relied on the final briefing and held a perfunctory hearing. Instead, in order to protect the interests of the absent class members, Michele had conducted her own legal research and asked far more penetrating questions than one expects at this stage of the proceedings.

Michele's practice of conducting her own legal research and of not simply relying on the lawyers' legal arguments for the legal decisions she was required to make is a rare quality for a busy district court judge. This quality makes for an extraordinarily independent judge. Exactly the quality that one expects, but rarely finds, in a judge. For this reason, I am pleased to recommend Michele Levine for the district court vacancy in Great Falls.

Thank you for consideration of this letter.

Very truly yours,



Lawrence A. Anderson
LAA/teb

CARLSON LAW, PLLC

TREVOR CARLSON, ATTORNEY AT LAW

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P.O. BOX 3703
600 CENTRAL AVE., SUITE 412
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA 59403

June 23, 2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Public Comment on 8th Judicial District Judge Applicants

To the Judicial Nomination Commission:

My name is Trevor Carlson, and I have been practicing law in Central Montana since 2013. I have a solo practice in Great Falls, Montana, that provides services for criminal defense, family law, landlord-tenant law, and civil litigation. I routinely appear in about a dozen counties around the area.

I am writing this letter in support of Michele Reinhart Levine for the Eighth Judicial District Court Judge position.

I have known Ms. Reinhart Levine since 2010, when I began law school at the Alexander Blewett III School of Law. Ms. Reinhart Levine was a year ahead of me, graduating in 2012. In 2017, started working at a firm in Great Falls and became re-acquainted with her as a member of the Cascade County bar.

Last year, Ms. Reinhart Levine served as the Guardian ad Litem on a family law case I litigated in Cascade County District Court. The case dealt with the heavy allegations of sexual abuse of a two-and-one-half-year-old child.

From the beginning of her involvement in the case, Ms. Reinhart Levine was attentive, thorough, and determined to ascertain the best interests of the child. She took her duties very seriously, leaving no stone unturned in her investigation of the case. She compiled

medical and counseling records and spoke to numerous individuals with knowledge of the matter.

She also spent several hours listening to my client's concerns and fears. She was always accessible and willing to discuss the case. Her final Guardian ad Litem report was detailed and well-reasoned. When the final hearing came, the judge asked us to attempt settlement of the case before the hearing. This turned into a full day of settlement discussions, with Ms. Reinhart Levine helping to facilitate the negotiations as an ad-hoc mediator. The case was ultimately resolved without a final hearing.

My client was a single mother with limited means. Throughout the case, we were under the impression that Ms. Reinhart Levine would be compensated for her time. Truthfully, her involvement was so in-depth that I began to worry her final bill would be a crushing financial burden for my client. After the case was settled, I asked Ms. Reinhart Levine when she would be submitting her final bill. I was shocked to hear she was not going to charge for her services. This single case undoubtedly took up a great deal of her time.

As an attorney who has served as Guardian ad Litem and as a pro bono attorney on other matters, I know how difficult it is to devote hours to a case you will receive no compensation for when paying clients are also vying for your attention to their matters. Ms. Reinhart Levine worked on this case as though she was billing top-dollar to a client with unlimited funds. Yet, in reality, she was working for free. To me, that is the hallmark of how pro bono work should be handled, and I do not think the court could have appointed a better Guardian ad Litem. Ms. Reinhart Levine's patience and work ethic were astounding.

I submitted a letter in support of Ms. Reinhart Levine during the 2020 judicial nomination process for the Eighth Judicial District. After she was appointed to the bench in the fall of 2020, I had the pleasure of appearing before her on cases. I appreciated her demeanor and attention to detail on the bench. As I expected, she made an excellent district court judge, and I support her nomination once again.

Sincerely,

Trevor Carlson
Carlson Law, PLLC

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

June 23, 2021

Re: Michele Reinhart -Levine

It is an honor to comment on Michele Reinhart-Levine's application for appointment to the District Court vacancy in Cascade County. I first met Michele as a freshman legislator in the Montana House of Representatives. We served together for the 2007 and 2009 legislative terms. I was impressed by her wide grasp of policy issues that impact Montanans. She was articulate and thoughtful. But most importantly she was able to work well with both sides of the aisle. She always listened and processed the differing opinions and views of all parties. She had an uncanny ability to craft solutions that met their differing needs. I have had the opportunity to work with her as a mediator and have found her to be well prepared in every case. Her community service work is an indication of her commitment to all who live in this community.

I believe Michele has the judicial temperament and qualities that will serve the community well should she be appointed to the District Court vacancy in Cascade County. From her work in the legislature, as a practicing attorney and her time on the bench is proof that she works well with the other Judges to make our 8th Judicial District court efficient and fair in serving the community's legal needs. Michelle will be able to step in on day one to continue the fine work she did under her first appointment.

Deborah J. Kottel

Deborah Kottel
6470 Heaven's View Ln.
Great Falls, Mt. 59404

Slusser, Hannah

From: jcurtiss53 <jcurtiss53@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 8:14 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] District court nominations

Hello,I am writing in support of Michele Levine for District Court judge in Great Falls. She did a great job as judge. Her record shows she follows the law. She is a dedicated public servant.
Please restore Judge Levine to the bench.
Jean Curtiss
Misdoula, MT

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Slusser, Hannah

From: Sterling Laudon <sterling.laudon@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 7:06 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Eighth Judicial District vacancy - support for Michele Levine

Governor Gianforte,

I write in support of Michele Levine's application to the Eighth Judicial District Court. I first met Michele in law school when we were classmates at the University of Montana School of Law. Michele was one of the hardest working members of our class and nothing has changed since. When Michele first applied to become a judge, she asked me to write a letter of support and I was honored to write on her behalf. I was even more impressed when, after she started on the bench, she reached out to speak to me and listen to my experiences working as a public defender in the criminal justice system. For an hour, in the midst of her evening, after a long day of work, she still had the energy to ask me about my job and ask thoughtful questions. Michele is passionate about doing the best possible job for the people of Cascade County. Based on the vast army of support letters she had received from the Montana legal community, it's clear that many others feel the same way. With the backlog of cases in Cascade County, a hardworking person with Michele's experience is desperately needed. I have no doubt she would continue to be an excellent judge.

Respectfully,

Sterling Laudon
406.672.6870
sterling.laudon@gmail.com

KAUFMAN VIDAL HILEMAN ELLINGSON PC

Suite 4000
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Attorneys at Law

Shelly Brander
Jeffrey Ellingson
Daniel Hileman
Lucas Mann
Nicole Morton
Stephen Nardi
David Tennant
Emily von Jentzen
Leonard L. Kaufman, of Counsel

Senior Status:
James E. Vidal

June 22, 2021

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

SENT VIA EMAIL TO: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: *Michele Reinhart-Levine Letter of Support*

Dear Governor Gianforte:

It is my absolute pleasure to recommend Michele Reinhart-Levine for the position of Eighth Judicial District Court Judge.

I have known Michele since 2016 as a fellow attorney and friend. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Michele and came to know her as a truly valuable asset to absolutely any situation. She is honest, dependable, and incredibly hard-working. Beyond that, she is an impressive leader who is always concerned for those around her. Michele's incredible work ethic, dedication and passion for justice would be a huge advantage to the community.

Along with her undeniable talents, Michele has always been an absolute joy to be around. Her bubbly personality always manages to foster positive discussions and bring the best out of others.

Without a doubt, I confidently recommend Michele for the position of District Judge. As a dedicated and knowledgeable attorney and an all-around great person, I know that she will be a beneficial addition to the court.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

KAUFMAN VIDAL HILEMAN ELLINGSON PC

By: Nicole F. Morton
Nicole F. Morton

June 9, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
State of Montana
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

ATTN: Hannah Slusser

RE: Nominating Judges – Michelle Reinhart Levine

Honorable Governor Gianforte:

I am writing a letter in support of the nomination of Michelle Reinhart Levine for the appointment to the Judicial bench here in Cascade County.

Ms. Levine is a professional on the bench, assisting the community with understanding the dynamics of the law and as well as being an important part of the community. High ethical standards, integrity, values and morals are important for a role in the legal profession and being a judge and Ms. Levine has these qualities to be a Judge for District Court that shows impartiality, adherence to the law, and professionalism.

Appointment of judges or the judiciary itself should never be about politics, but what is right, fair and just and Ms. Levine has proven her qualities as a judge and the understanding of the law.

Sincerely,

Sandra Lynne Pepos

Sandra Lynne Pepos
2111 3A Street South
Great Falls, MT 59405

Kathryn Whitt
Deputy Clerk of Court
415 2nd Ave N
Great Falls, MT 59401
06/18/2021

To Whom it May Concern.

My name is Kathryn Whitt and I am the Deputy Clerk of Court for Department A. Over the past year I have clerked the majority of the criminal hearing held in department A. When Michele Levine was appointed as district court judge, I did not know very much about her. However, over the several months that she was on the bench, I clerked numerous hearings for her, including, Bail, Change of Plea, and Sentencing hearings as well as two jury trials. Due to the caseload that we have in Cascade County, there was no time for a gentle introduction to the job. She hit the ground running and never slowed down. During this time, I learned that Michele was an incredibly hard worker, and a very quick learner. Michele was very transparent about her rulings as a judge and often stated on the record her reasoning behind her rulings. In fact, she often stated the exact statute that applied to the ruling she was laying down. If Michele was appointed district court judge, it would be extremely beneficial to the Cascade County because of her experience, adaptability, and work ethic I know she would be able to help get the large caseload in department A under control.

Aside from being a fair judge, Michele also went out of her way to get to know the people that worked in the Courthouse. She was always friendly and approachable. I would be very happy to resume working with Michele Levine in my role as deputy Clerk.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Whitt

Slusser, Hannah

From: Ada Stepleton <ada.stepleton@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 9:21 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for French, Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I write to offer my support for two of the judicial candidates you are considering for nomination.

Rebekah French is a trustworthy and dedicated lawyer whom I've had the honor of working alongside in the Women's Section of the state bar. She is extremely well prepared and objective.

Michele Reinhart Levine is a long-time friend and colleague whom I first met when we were in law school together at the University of Montana. She is a person of great personal integrity who takes great care to view all sides of a matter before reaching a conclusion. She is very organized and is a workhorse.

I hope you will nominate both candidates.

Sincerely,
Ada Montague Strpleton

CASCADE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

State of Montana

Telephone: (406) 454-6915 Criminal Department
(406) 454-6904 Civil Department
FAX: (406) 454-6949

Joshua A. Racki
County Attorney

121 Fourth Street North – Suite 2A
Great Falls, Montana 59401

June 21st, 2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Michele Levine, 8th Judicial District Application

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing you today on behalf of Michele Levine. Ms. Levine has been an attorney for eight years. Currently, Ms. Levine is working as a deputy county attorney. I may be a bit biased, but I believe that there is no more noble pursuit, for an attorney, than to help those who have been victims of criminal offenses and to protect our community.

Ms. Levine served as a district court judge for several months. During her term of service, she did outstanding. She has an excellent grasp of legal principles, the Rules of Evidence, and the ins and outs of how to conduct hearings and trials. Ms. Levine demonstrated an excellent judicial presence and ran her courtroom in an effective and efficient manner. She always demonstrated the proper demeanor for a judge.

Ms. Levine always sought to make sure the parties were heard and received a fair chance to state their case before making a ruling. Being a judge is more than just refereeing disputes and making black and white legal rulings. Judges frequently need to listen to testimony and evidence then apply the correct rules of law to those facts. Ms. Levine exceled at this task and always made sure her rulings were in accordance with the facts presented and Montana Law.

Ms. Levine has always handled herself with compassion and professionalism when she was on the bench. It is a great honor to recommend to Michele Levine for appointment as the new District Court Judge for the 8th Judicial District.

Respectfully,

Joshua A. Racki
Cascade County Attorney

Slusser, Hannah

From: Timothy Bechtold <tim@bechtoldlaw.net>
Sent: Sunday, June 20, 2021 12:18 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 8th district judgeship

I support the appointment of Michele Levine as 8th district judge.

Timothy Bechtold
Bechtold Law Firm, PLLC
PO Box 7051
Missoula, MT 59807
406-721-1435
tim@bechtoldlaw.net

Slusser, Hannah

From: James Taylor <James.Taylor@cskt.org>
Sent: Saturday, June 19, 2021 8:04 AM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Eighth Judicial District Vacancy- Michele Reinhart Levine

Gov. Gianforte:

I am writing in support of the application of Michele Reinhart Levine for the vacant position in the Eighth Judicial District. In 2005-2007 I taught at UM Law School, and several summers thereafter I ran the summer school and clinical program at the Law School. It was there I met Michele. As a fellow Carroll College and UMLS graduate, I have stayed in contact with her over the years and she has always impressed me with her interest in the law, her ability to reason, and her fairness in approaching any situation. I have followed her legal career and legislative career since her graduation, her short tenure on the bench, and I offer my whole hearted recommendation of Michele for the position of District Judge. She is a rising star as a civil litigator and would be a welcome addition to the judiciary. She has an excellent temperament for a judicial position, and the people of Montana would be well served with her contributions from the bench. Thank you for considering my comments.

Jim Taylor
Managing Attorney
Tribal Prosecutors Office
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
406-675-2700, ext. 1176
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
James.Taylor@cskt.org

HOYT & BLEWETT PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

ALEXANDER (ZANDER) BLEWETT, III
KURT M. JACKSON
JOSEPH P. COSGROVE
DREW BLEWETT
ANDERS BLEWETT
JOHN C. HOYT
1922-2001

501 SECOND AVENUE NORTH
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GREAT FALLS, MT 59403-2807
PHONE (406) 761-1960
FAX (406) 761-7186
h&b@hoytandblewett.com

June 15, 2021

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
Email: hannah.slusser@mt.gov

Re: Letter of Support for Michele Levine

Dear Ms. Slusser:

My name is Drew Blewett, and I am a partner at the law firm of Hoyt and Blewett PLLC in Great Falls, MT. I am writing this letter in support of Michele Levine respectfully requesting that the Governor's Office strongly consider her for Montana State District Court Judge in Cascade County. I first met Michele nine years ago when she began her legal career in Great Falls and have always found her to be a person of sound character and great integrity. Throughout the course of Michele's legal career, she has gained valuable experience representing injured workers while working as an associate and now a partner at Linnell, Newhall, Martin, & Schulke, P.C. and serving as a State District Court Judge in Great Falls. This type of legal experience has provided her with a unique perspective that lends itself well to serving as a State District Court Judge where she would be and was responsible for making important and sometimes life-altering decisions for people in Cascade County.

During her time representing injured workers and while serving as a State District Court Judge, she conducted herself with class and civility and demonstrated a strong understanding of the complexities of both civil and criminal litigation. Needless to say, her track record confirms that she is more than prepared to take on the challenges inherent in serving as a State District Court Judge.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly endorse Michele Levine for State District Court Judge in Cascade County and hope that the Governor's Office takes into careful consideration her legal experience in making its decision.

Sincerely,

Drew Blewett
Attorney
Hoyt and Blewett PLLC

HOYT & BLEWETT PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

ALEXANDER (ZANDER) BLEWETT, III
KURT M. JACKSON
JOSEPH P. COSGROVE
DREW BLEWETT
ANDERS BLEWETT
JOHN C. HOYT
1922-2001

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FAX (406) 761-7186
h&b@hoytandblewett.com

June 22, 2021

VIA EMAIL
nominatejudges@mt.gov

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

Re: Hon. Michele Levine

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Alexander (Zander) Blewett III and I am a lawyer in Great Falls. I am writing to support Michele Levine for the judicial vacancy in the 8th Judicial District. I worked with Judge Levine when she was a legislator and she was clearly well versed on the issues and worked well with others with an open mind. She was known for her reasonableness. When she was on the bench, she proved herself to be impartial and displayed extensive knowledge of the law.

Judge Levine is more than qualified for the position and I highly recommend she be appointed. Thank you.

Sincerely yours.

Alexander E Blewett III

Alexander(Zander)Blewett III

AB:jj

HOYT & BLEWETT PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

ALEXANDER (ZANDER) BLEWETT, III
KURT M. JACKSON
JOSEPH P. COSGROVE
DREW BLEWETT
ANDERS BLEWETT
JOHN C. HOYT
1922-2001

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PHONE (406) 761-1960
FAX (406) 761-7186
h&b@hoytandblewett.com

June 21, 2021

VIA E-MAIL
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. BOX 200801
Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Hon. Michele Levine

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Anders Blewett, and I am a partner at the law firm of Hoyt& Blewett PLLC in Great Falls, Montana. I am writing to voice my support for the appointment of the Hon. Michele Levine to the judicial vacancy in the 8th Judicial District.

I have known Judge Levine for more than a decade. As a Legislator, Judge Levine earned a reputation as an even-tempered problem solver who was open minded and worked well with others. As a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, Judge Levine stood out based on the extensive background work she did to prepare for the committee's hearings on complex regulatory matters.

In her short time on the bench, Judge Levine distinguished herself as an impartial jurist who exhibited the highest level of professional integrity. With Judge Levine's extensive background in civil litigation, she is well prepared to handle the large work load in the 8th Judicial District.

Judge Levine is a dedicated public servant who is well qualified to serve as a State District Court Judge for the 8th Judicial District. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Anders Blewett

AB:jj

FLAHERTY | GALLARDO
LAWYERS

Patrick Flaherty
Daniel Flaherty
Paul Gallardo
1026 First Ave. South
P.O. Box 1968
Great Falls, MT 59403
Phone: (406) 727-8494
Fax: (406) 727-8537

June 22, 2021

Attn: Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Letter in Support for Michelle Levine,

Dear Judicial Nomination Committee,

This letter serves as my support for Michelle Levine as District Court Judge for the Montana Eighth Judicial District. I have known Michelle personally and professionally for 10 years. She is known among her peers as an intelligent servant and advocate for the people. Those who know her can attest to this description. Throughout the years, I have seen Michelle bring a voice to those without one, and help those in need. But her strengths do not end at with her passions and drive. What stands out most to me is the gift Michelle has in connecting and communicating with others; again, those who know her understand what I am talking about. When Michelle interacts with others, she makes you feel like you are the most important person at the moment, and the topic is of the utmost importance. She is a great listener, recalls the smallest details, is empathetic, and engages with you. This, coupled with her intelligence and passion for justice, would make Michelle Levine a fair and excellent judge. I believe she can make a positive difference in our community, and I know that is truly the reason she is applying to be our next judge.

Throughout her brief judicial appointment this last year, I personally witnessed Michelle exhibit professionalism, courtesy, and an unbiased approach to upholding the rule of law.

I strongly recommend this Committee nominate Michelle Levine.

Sincerely,

Paul Gallardo

BOLAND AARAB PLLP

Samir Aarab, Attorney
sfaarab@bolandaarab.com

Caitlin Boland Aarab, Attorney
cbaarab@bolandaarab.com

June 17, 2021

Governor Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I write in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's application to fill the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship vacancy occasioned by Judge Pinski's resignation.

I have known Michele since 2010 when she was a law student, a legislator, and a fellow in the Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection. In the years since, we have charted similar paths. We both became attorneys, married attorneys, began practicing civil and criminal law in Great Falls, and became mothers. As I have walked along a parallel path to Michele's, I have seen how each new role she inhabits only increases her compassion, her sense of civic duty, and her work ethic. Michele believes to her core in equality and justice before the law, but unlike many others who share those principles, she has always been willing to step into a leadership role and be accountable to her community to help implement the principles she holds dear. She has the temperament and work ethic to make an excellent district judge.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely yours,

Caitlin Boland Aarab
BOLAND AARAB PLLP

GREAT FALLS COLLEGE
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Susan J. Wolff
CEO/Dean
406.771.4305
susan.wolff@gfcmsu.edu
www.gfcmsu.edu

June 10, 2021

ATTN: Hanna Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to support the application of Michelle R. Levine for the Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship.
The citizens served by the Eighth Judicial District Court are fortunate to have highly qualified attorneys applying to serve as the Judge.

Starting in Law School, Michelle demonstrated first her desire to learn various aspects of the law not only through the law program, but also in seeking and attaining a research assistantship. Secondly, she wanted to serve the public. She was the recipient of numerous scholarships to assist her in attaining her law degree. Her hard work and learning did not stop there as she has continued to serve in a variety of ways, all the while working with a broad cadre of clients, constituents, colleagues, and legal issues.

Serving multiple areas of law illustrate her ability to ably continue to serve as the Judge in the Eighth District Court. Having grown up on a ranch, I know if a person can listen to, work with, and be voice for ranchers (water rights); and creating collaborative, productive coalitions such as the Good Neighbor Agreement in Stillwater and Sweetgrass Counties, Michelle is able to work with all.

Through her legal and court cases and pro-bono work, she also provides legal guidance and service to those unable to navigate much of life. The area served by the Eighth District, in particular, has a high crime rate related to drug use; thus a high court case load. These cases need to be adjudicated in a timely way as a key component for individual, family, city, and area economic and personal well-being.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Wolff
CEO/Dean

Slusser, Hannah

From: Clare Krewer <ckkrewer@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 11:59 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Levine

6/9/2021

To whom it may concern,
This is my second recommendation for Michele Levine. The first was sent last year. In my first letter I mentioned that I met Michele Levine in college. Her room was just down the hall from mine. We became friends. I wanted to share the qualities and traits that she has that would be a wonderful addition to the District Court.

First of all, Michele is compassionate. She is able to truly listen especially to those that have a different opinion. She is considerate of other points of view. If she disagrees with someone, she is respectful. She never makes anyone feel that they are not important because they have a different opinion. She is extremely patient. She takes the time to listen to and consider the points that are being made. She is open minded and is willing to learn about things she is not sure about.

She has a good sense of humor which makes her easy to talk to. She is passionate about doing the right thing. She stands up for others to make sure their opinion is heard. The district court would be lucky to count Michele as a member.

I have absolutely no reason what so ever to change anything that I said in my first letter. I still feel that Michele will make an outstanding judge. I wanted to add that as a mother and a wife she has a unique understanding of the human condition. I feel these qualities would ensure that her selection as a district court judge would be in the best interest of the people who would seek justice in her courtroom.

Thank you,

Clare K. Krewer

BRYAN & DISTEFANO MATTINGLEY PLLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

L. JASON BRYAN
jason@nwmontanalaw.com
**Also admitted in Wisconsin*

FRANCESCA DISTEFANO
francesca@nwmontanalaw.com

DAVID A. MATTINGLEY
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423 FIRST AVE. EAST
PO BOX 2341
KALISPELL, MT 59903

406.890.1880 phone

877.717.8809 fax

www.nwmontanalaw.com

June 9, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
PO Box 200801
Helena Montana 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing on behalf of Michele Reinhart Levine to support her application for the 8th Judicial District Court Vacancy in Cascade County. I met Michele as a law school classmate in 2009. She is intelligent and conscientious, and is capable of thinking through critical issues in order to reach a just result. She is diplomatic and has a balanced temperament. She is also committed to civic engagement and her community. I believe she possesses the qualities necessary to make an excellent judge. I hope you will consider nominating her for appointment.

Please contact me should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,
BRYAN, DISTEFANO & MATTINGLEY, PLLP

/s/ Francesca diStefano

Slusser, Hannah

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

odegaard kovacich
snipes | TRIAL LAWYERS

Paul D. Odegaard
Mark M. Kovacich
Ben A. Snipes
Andrew J. Miller
Ross T. Johnson

Lucas A. Wallace*
Paul C. Collins
Greg E. Overturf
Leanora "Lea" Coles
Benjamin J. Langford

Of Counsel:
Tom L. Lewis
J. David Slovak
Jay P. Dufrechou

June 4, 2021
Sent via email: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Advisory Counsel for the Eighth Judicial Court Judge Applications, 2021

RE: Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Advisory Counsel:

I am writing to lend my voice to the process of seating the current judicial vacancy for the Eighth Judicial District Court. Although I cannot endorse this process from a constitutional prospective, I am able to confirm the high competency and qualifications of two applicants. Hon. Michele Reinhart Levine and Standing Master David Grubich each have unique experience and professional attributes that would be of great benefit to Montana's judiciary and bar. By this letter I am incorporating and reiterating my prior endorsement for each of these applicants. My prior letters of support to the Judicial Nomination Commission are attached hereto as Exhibits A and B.

It is most important to maintaining law and order to have a fourth judge actively participating in the judicial process in Cascade County. My hope is that a fair and impartial judge can be established so as to ensure the constitutional and legal rights of Montana citizens and litigants in Cascade County are properly served.

Thank you for your selfless efforts in determining those appropriate to wear the robe here in Cascade County.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Ben A. Snipes

BAS:mcw
Enclosures

odegaard kovacich snipes | TRIAL LAWYERS

Paul D. Odegaard
Mark M. Kovacich
Ben A. Snipes
Andrew J. Miller
Ross T. Johnson

Lucas A. Wallace
Greg E. Overturf *
Leanora "Lea" Coles
Benjamin J. Langford

Of Counsel:
Tom L. Lewis
J. David Slovak
Jay P. Dufrechou

September 15, 2020
Sent via email: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Nomination of Michele Reinhart Levine for Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Commission Members:

I have known Michele Reinhart Levine for nearly a decade. As an attorney, Michele demonstrates vigor and work ethic that sets her apart from others in the profession. Michele's substantial litigation experience has equipped her as a highly skilled professional. Through her career, she has demonstrated that she has the legal mind and temperament necessary for this incredibly busy judicial position.

Among her peers, Michele's work ethic is stands out. She continues to have the motivation to take on the substantial workloads necessitated not only for a thriving law practice, but for a diligent jurist. Michele has demonstrated the qualities necessary for an effective judge and elected official. Her dedication to the practice and her thoughtful demeanor will be of substantial public benefit to Cascade County.

Without reservation, I highly recommend Michele for appointment to the Cascade County District Court judiciary. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ben A. Snipes

BAS:mcw

mtlawyers.com
T: 406.222.2222
F: 406.259.3232

Billings
550 N. 31st Street, Ste 200
Billings, MT 59101

Great Falls
21 3rd Street North, Ste 301
Great Falls, MT 59401

Helena
845 Great Northern Blvd.
Helena, MT 59601

* Also licensed in Wyoming and North Dakota

EXHIBIT
A

odegaard kovacich snipes | TRIAL LAWYERS

Paul D. Odegaard
Mark M. Kovacich
Ben A. Snipes
Andrew J. Miller
Ross T. Johnson

Lucas A. Wallace
Greg E. Overturf *
Leanora "Lea" Coles
Benjamin J. Langford

Of Counsel:
Tom L. Lewis
J. David Slovak
Jay P. Dufrechou

September 15, 2020
Sent via email: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Nomination of David Grubich for Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to endorse the selection of David Grubich to fill the District Court vacancy created by Judge Pinski's retirement. I have known David for many years, primarily in the context of his excellent work with the Cascade County Law Clinic. David has an exceptional temperament and is always well prepared. Among members of the legal community, he stands out as a highly competent and experienced legal professional. His work as the District Standing Master has been exemplary.

David is a professional and demonstrates the integrity required of a District Court judge. I highly recommend him for the Cascade County judicial vacancy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ben A. Snipes

BAS:mcw

EXHIBIT
B

ELIZABETH A. BEST
District Judge

Telephone: (406) 771-3950
Facsimile: (406) 771-6549

Cascade County Courthouse
415 2nd Avenue North - Rm. 203
Great Falls, Montana 59401

DISTRICT COURT
EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

May 6, 2021

Gov. Greg Gianforte
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Re: Eighth Judicial District - Dept. A

Dear Gov. Gianforte:

I have known Judge Michele Reinhart Levine as a lawyer. After she was appointed as district court judge, I have observed her work, and her work ethic. She is bright, articulate, engaging, and industrious. She is one of the hardest working judges I have been around in nearly 40 years in the law.

She has made it her job to learn, and to get to know all people affected by the court. She enrolled in the Cascade County Sheriff's Citizens Academy after taking the bench and spent time at the detention center observing; was tased; did a ride-along with a deputy, and was able to observe the K-9, "Dutch," alerting on drugs.

Judge Levine is a work horse. She isn't looking for headlines. She simply did her work efficiently, and thoroughly, understanding that all parties need prompt resolution of their cases. She quickly became familiar and comfortable with the daily work and earned the respect of criminal prosecutors and defense lawyers, lawyers who handle Youth in Need of Care cases, CASA volunteers, citizens of all stripes, and law enforcement. She is not easily discouraged, and she is fearless. She is an excellent writer. She is industrious and energetic. She is well organized. She has demonstrated a keen ability to keep many plates in the air at once.

Judge Levine is service motivated and courageous. As a US Army veteran myself, she has earned my respect for her willingness to make hard and tough decisions. Her unique background gives her a wide and deep understanding of separation of powers, and the responsibilities of each branch of government. She has many times stated that she does not make the law, she applies it.

Montana district court judges handle high volumes of cases, multiple daily and nightly warrant requests, family crises, mental health challenges and addictions. Judge Levine never shirked any of it. As the Army puts it, Judge Levine "chopped the wood in front of her." She is an excellent judge. I urge you to reappoint her.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Best
District Court Judge

Smith Oblander & Meade, PC

A Professional Corporation

104 2ND STREET SOUTH, SUITE 400
GALLERIA BUILDING
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA 59401
TELEPHONE: (406) 453-8144
FAX: (888) 402-0579
E-MAIL: matt@bigskylaw.com
WWW SITE: http://www.bigskylaw.com

Gregory G. Smith
Stephanie A. Oblander
Matthew T. Meade
Kaitlyn J. McArthur

Attorneys at Law

May 25, 2021

Re: Michele Levine

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Matt Meade, I am an attorney in Great Falls, Montana. I am in my eighth year of practice and work primarily in civil litigation. I am writing to offer my support for Michele Levine.

I have known Michele Levine for several years. She is known around the community for her dedication to the county and her work ethic. Michele has been a regular supporter of the Cascade County Bar Association, and she served as a shareholder at a great local firm. Michele's hard work and dedication to her practice has led her to be where she is today and has made her a sophisticated practitioner.

During Michele's tenure as a District Court Judge she did a very nice job of working hard to keep her cases moving and to get timely results. Michele was eager to learn areas of the law in which she had not spent significant time practicing. Her dedication to learning the law and applying it correctly shows that she is someone who cares. I can confidently say Michele served the citizens of Cascade County well during her time on the bench.

While I intend to write letters of support for other applicants as well, I can say with confidence that Michele would be a quality judge if selected. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
SMITH OBLANDER & MEADE, PC

Matthew T. Meade

MARRA EVENSON & LEVINE PC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

2 Railroad Square, Suite C • P.O. Box 1525
Great Falls, Montana 59403-1525
P: (406) 268-1000 • F: (406) 761-2610
email@marralawfirm.com • marralawfirm.com

June 1, 2021

VIA EMAIL: hannah.slusser@mt.gov

Governor Gianforte
C/O Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

RE: Eighth Judicial District Court, Judicial Candidate, Michele Reinhart Levine

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I thoroughly support Mrs. Michele Reinhart Levine's application for the appointment as the new Eighth Judicial District Court Judge.

Mrs. Levine is a well respected member of the Bar in Cascade County. She is and will always be a dedicated public servant. Mrs. Levine's current work as a Deputy-County Attorney, prosecuting criminals, further reflects her public service.

Mrs. Levine has the work ethic and judicial temperament that are necessary to be an effective and impartial judge. Her legal background and understanding of all aspects of the law are traits that a judge needs in this day and age.

Please appoint Mrs. Levine as the Eighth Judicial District Court Judge.

Sincerely yours,

Marra, Evenson & Levine, P.C.

Thomas A. Marra
E-mail: tmarra@marralawfirm.com

TAM/blm

ATTORNEYS AT LAW Barbara E. Bell (of counsel) • Kirk D. Evenson • Amber Henning • William J. Levine • Antonia P. Marra • Joseph R. Marra (1924-2015) • Thomas A. Marra
PARALEGALS Roxie Halter • Brenda McGee • Donna M. Osterman
LEGAL ASSISTANTS Vicki Evjen • Sharon E. May
ACCOUNTS Connie Manning

Slusser, Hannah

From: Linda Metzger <legm7481@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 2:31 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michele Reinhart Levine

I've lived in Montana's Eighth Judicial District for 37 years. Michele Reinhart Levine is needed here.

Linda Metzger
Great Falls, Mt 59404

Slusser, Hannah

From: Gary Aitken <stategov@dreamchaser.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 6:14 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support for Michele Reinhart Levine (8th Judicial District)

I would like to register my support for Michele R. Levine to be appointed as judge for the 8th judicial district.

Ms. Levine was recommended by the non-partisan judicial nominating commission; there was no testimony against her confirmation. Her nomination was supported by a wide range of interests from police officers and sheriffs to attorneys.

None of the other candidates have received a recommendation by the judicial nominating commission. The judiciary should not be a partisan institution; it is important that it remain non-partisan.

Gary
Ovando, MT

June 10, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
Hannah.slusser@mt.gov

RE: Appointment of Michele Reinhart Levine to the Eighth Judicial District

Dear Governor Gianforte,

We write in support of Michele Reinhart Levine's appointment to the Eighth Judicial District. We have known Michele for over ten years and have always admired her forthright approach to problem-solving. She has a wide breadth of experience that would be extremely beneficial to the citizens of Montana seeking justice within Montana's courts.

In her brief time serving the people of Cascade County as a District Court judge, Michele has proven to be fair and effective. She quickly assimilated into the role and tackled the huge backlog of cases with integrity, grit and impartiality. Michele has already demonstrated her ability to objectively review each case, research the law, and render decisions with evenhandedness. Her past experience working with domestic violence, child custody, negligence, and protection orders; and worker's compensation cases is beneficial to the Eighth Judicial District where we have experienced some of the highest child abuse rates, mental health challenges, and job accidents in the state. A justice in our District Court system must be a work horse in order to maintain the pace of the caseload and reduce the court backlog. Michele has the intellectual ability and work ethic to keep the court process moving forward, an essential combination if the large volume of Eighth Judicial District cases is to be brought to closure.

We know Michele to be a strong, decisive leader of high integrity who is well respected by colleagues and others throughout the Great Falls community. She is dedicated to thoroughly researching the law and rendering decisions that are thoughtful and fair.

When making this important decision for our community, it is critically important to consider a candidate's ability to collaborate with colleagues. Michele Reinhart Levine has already proven her ability to assimilate into the Eighth Judicial District court system with grace and valor.

Thank you for your consideration of this fine judge.

Respectfully yours,

Jim Weber and Jane Weber

Jim and Jane Weber
Native Montanan and former Cascade County Commissioner