OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Stanley L. Garnett, District Attorney

March 26, 2014

Via Email and Regular U.S. Mail
Helen Stone, Chair
20th Judicial District Judicial Performance Commission
4710 Table Mesa Drive, Ste. B
Boulder, CO 80305

Re: Judicial Evaluation of Judge Maria Berkenkotter

Dear Ms. Stone:

It is my pleasure to provide observations and comments to the Judicial Evaluation Commission as part of the evaluation process of Judges of the 20th Judicial District. As I have mentioned many times, Colorado has an excellent judiciary and the 20th Judicial District, in particular, has an excellent set of judges dispensing justice in both civil and criminal matters. The intent of my office in providing written comments about each judge is to make certain that the point of view of my deputies who appear in front of many of these judges several times a day is included in the evaluation process undertaken by your Committee. Also, I believe, as District Attorney, part of my job involves providing input to the public about our judges and passing along helpful suggestions to the bench. Although occasionally, every judge issues a legal ruling with which my staff does not agree, those are matters for the appellate courts, not for the Judicial Evaluations Committee.

This year, there are nine judges up for evaluation. We will provide separate, written comments on each one addressed to you, with copies to the reviewed Judge and to the Chief Judge of the Judicial District.

Judge Maria Berkenkotter was appointed to the bench in 2006. Judge Berkenkotter has handled a variety of assignments since I became District Attorney in 2009 including service on the criminal docket, the ITC docket and, most recently, she was appointed to serve as our Chief Judge. Judge Berkenkotter is an excellent trial court judge. She runs trials and her docket efficiently and with great fairness towards both sides and with appropriate judicial demeanor, while at the same time being pleasant and showing appropriate interest in the human drama of the cases that come before her. My staff, without exception, always enjoys appearing in front of Judge Berkenkotter and finds her to be an excellent District Court Judge. In polling my staff, we could find no areas of judicial temperament or conduct of the Courtroom that we felt needed improvement.

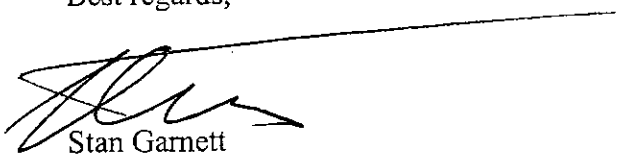
BOULDER OFFICE: JUSTICE CENTER, 1777 6TH ST., BOULDER, COLORADO 80302 303.441.3700 FAX: 303.441.4703
LONGMONT OFFICE: 1035 KIMBARK, LONGMONT, COLORADO 80501 303.441.3700 FAX: 303.682.6711
WWW.BOULDERCOUNTYDA.ORG EMAIL: BOULDER.DA@BOULDERCOUNTY.ORG TDD/V: 303.441.4774

I should also mention that Judge Berkenkotter has done a terrific job as Chief Judge. She is very interested in hearing from all concerned parties, and is truly collaborative in a meaningful sense with regard to making decisions about the Justice Center and the Court dockets which are, of course, of interest to my office, the Public Defenders' Office and the private bar.

It is a pleasure to have her on our bench and serving as Chief Judge. Judge Berkenkotter should be retained.

I look forward to appearing before your committee on April 2nd at 5:30 p.m.

Best regards,



Stan Garnett

SLG/psm

cc: The Honorable Maria Berkenkotter