

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Sunday, August 30, 2020 7:46 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: John Heenan <john@lawmontana.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 12:28 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 1st Judicial District judicial vacancy

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

I would strongly urge you to pass along Greg Bonilla and nominate him to the Governor to fill the judicial vacancy in the 1st Judicial District. I have worked with Greg extensively as he has consulted on a pro bono case involving a youth. Greg has put in significant time and effort, without pay, because he believes in justice and that it is simply the right thing to do. In working with Greg on that case, I have found Greg to be smart, articulate and practical. As demonstrated by Greg's background and experience, he has extensive legal work in multiple areas of the law that enable him to "hit the ground running" as a judge. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Best,

John Heenan
HEENAN & COOK
1631 Zimmerman Trail
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 839-9091



J. WAYNE CAPP

WCAPP@CJS.LEGAL

1821 SOUTH AVE. W., SUITE 400
MISSOULA, MT 59801

JACK JENKS

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FRED SIMPSON

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TEL: 406-549-2322
FAX: 406-549-2707

August 28, 2020

(Sent via Email only)

MONTANA JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005
MTSupremeCourt@mt.gov

Re: Support for Gregory L. Bonilla for First Judicial District Judge

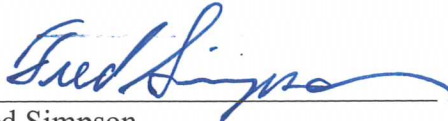
Dear Commission Members:

I am pleased to support Gregory L. Bonilla for appointment as district judge for the Montana First Judicial District. I firmly believe that Gregory has all the necessary qualities that are required of every district court judge in Montana. On the cases in which Gregory and I have worked together, including a recent case where we were on opposite sides, he demonstrated superior analytical ability, sound judgment and a practical approach to problem solving. Gregory also has a wealth of experience litigating complex civil cases. That experience will be particularly valuable for a district judge in the Montana First Judicial District where such cases are routinely filed. Just as importantly, Gregory possesses the temperament and demeanor required of district judges who have to grapple with difficult cases involving *pro se* litigants on a daily basis. I have no doubt that as a district judge, Gregory would be conscientious, even-handed and fair in his application of the law and the administration of justice.

The people of the First Judicial District deserve to have Gregory appointed as their next district judge, and I respectfully ask that you submit his name to Governor Bullock for appointment.

Sincerely,

CAPP, JENKS & SIMPSON, P.C.


Fred Simpson

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 8:19 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Rick <rick@lawyerinmontana.com>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 5:24 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Cc: GBonilla@mtcounties.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judicial Nomination Commission- c/o Lois Menzies

To the members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

Greetings: I was honored to be asked by Greg Bonilla to write a letter of support for his application to become the District Judge replacement for Judge Jim Reynolds. I was sorry to learn that Judge Reynolds chose to step down but I fully understand it given the amount of time, effort and service he has performed over the years in that position. I had several civil jury trials in Judge Reynolds court and always found his courtroom demeanor, treatment of all parties and counsel and all witnesses to be kind, thoughtful and very humane. I have known Greg Bonilla personally and professionally for over years and I was very pleased that he chose to apply for the position because Greg has those same attributes and personal inter-relational skills. He is a genuinely good, kind, thoughtful and caring human being. Dealing with the general public and the numerous indigent or unrepresented people or people just down on their luck or raised in dysfunction, which goes with the territory of a District Court Judge's workload, requires that the person in that position of authority and power be able to balance the community well being and safety needs with the need to provide many sound, legally reasoned and yet pragmatic decisions on a daily basis. When I talked to Greg about his desire to apply for this position he impressed me with his deep desire to serve and provide the continued help to those served by the "treatment court" established by Judge Reynolds. I can't say enough good about the tremendous work and impact that court has on the Helena community.

Before I discuss my views regarding Greg's legal talent, ability and judicial temperament I want to say that during my time as Greg's neighbor in Helena he faced a terrible human crisis. His wife was diagnosed with cancer and passed away leaving Greg and their young son Greyson. This was an extremely sad and traumatic time for Greg and Greyson as his wife was a beautiful, talented, loving and kind wife and mother. Greg moved on with his son's best interests in mind

although this had to be a crushing blow for both. He has now remarried and his son is at the stage in his life (graduating high school) that Greg, as his life guide and mentor, is comfortable that he can take on the voluminous responsibilities that go with the day to day working of a judge. I was very impressed with the clear thinking decision Greg made to apply for and be a servant to the county of Lewis and Clark. I asked Greg some pointed questions about why he chose to apply. I learned that he is extremely well prepared mentally, emotionally, academically, and by his long and active practice of law in the courts of Montana to take on this position. Although Greg was always on the “other side” of cases I handled when I had opportunities to interact in his legal work, I found him smart, well prepared and reasonable in his approach to resolving cases/claims. I have never appeared in court against Greg or watched him in court. However, from reading his application to this tribunal regarding his practice, legal work and filings with courts I am sure many others can advise you about those talents and his character, methods, preparedness, effectiveness and efficiencies.

I have practiced in Helena District courts since 1979. I have appeared before and tried cases in front of every District Judge in Helena since that time with the exception of Judge McMahon. I firmly believe Helena has been fortunate to have had bright, caring, intellectually honest and well meaning judges since that time. It is important that a District Judge has the personality and social skills to treat every individual with dignity and fairness. Greg would be that judge. It is important that he/she know and understand the law and be prepared to competently review and decide cases based on the law and evidence presented in the case. Greg would be that judge. It is also vital that a judge in Helena have a “sense of the community” and common sense to apply to each legal matter presented in the court. Greg possesses the empathy, community based knowledge and stability needed to make good legal decisions following the law and serving the best interests of the community at large.

I appreciate the seriousness of your decision and wish you all the best as you make your decision. I firmly believe that Greg Bonilla would be an outstanding choice for the next District Judge for the First Judicial District. Thank you. Most sincerely, Rick Pyfer, Attorney (Helena, Montana).

Rick Pyfer

Doubek, Pyfer & Storrar, PLLP
P. O. Box 236
Helena, MT 59624
ph: 406-442-7830
fax: 406-442-7839

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Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 8:18 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Tom Keegan <tkeegan1313@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 1:11 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judicial Nomination Commission c/o Lois Menzies

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission, My name is Tom Keegan and I practiced law in Helena for over 40 years. The First Judicial District has been blessed with excellent jurists- from Pete Meloy and Gordon Bennett on. I believe Greg Bonilla should be added to that list. I have known him for many years, mainly from mediating a number of his cases. He is honest, fair and has the right temperament to be a judge. I shared his application with another retired attorney whose opinion I highly value. His response says it all- " He's a better man than I am". I share the same opinion. Thank you for your service. Tom Keegan

THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA

JIM RICE
JUSTICE

TELEPHONE (406) 444-5573
FAX (406) 444-3274
August 28, 2020



JUSTICE BUILDING
215 NORTH SANDERS
P.O. BOX 203001
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-3001

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

Re: Reference letter for applicant Greg Bonilla

Dear Commission Members:

It is my privilege to provide this letter of support for Greg Bonilla, an applicant for appointment to the First Judicial District Court in Helena.

I have known Greg for many years. Greg practiced in Great Falls with the Cascade County Attorney's Office, and moved to Helena to practice with the Montana Association of Counties. He has extensive litigation experience, and I have observed both the exercise of his legal skills and his conduct before the Court. Greg is a solid legal thinker, always providing clear and cogent analyses, and an excellent advocate. He conducts himself prudently and is always courteous and respectful to the Court and other parties. I have seen him ignore sharp argument from a party opponent and respond by simply directing the Court's attention to the legal authority.

I also have known Greg outside of the legal environment and have observed him in a variety of circumstances. His professional demeanor is matched by his personal conduct. He is by nature calm, gentle, and level-headed. He has been, and is, a dedicated and nurturing parent, including many years as a single parent. I believe Greg would exhibit an ideal judicial temperament, be considerate and compassionate to litigants, provide well-reasoned and supported legal decisions, and promote respect of the judicial process in the community.

For these reasons, I urge careful consideration of Greg's application. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Jim Rice
Justice

JAR:gg

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: gregg@bigskylaw.com
WWW SITE: <http://www.bigskylaw.com>

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

Attorneys at Law

September 1, 2020

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

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Re: Gregory Bonilla

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission:

I write to offer my support for Gregory ("Greg") Bonilla's application for the District Court Judge position in the First Judicial District, Lewis and Clark County.

I have known Greg for many years. He worked for a time at a former firm where I worked and I was so impressed with his skills and demeanor that my partner, Stephanie Oblander, and I offered him a position with our firm many years ago.

I know Greg has the right disposition to serve as a judge. He has been through some tough times in his personal life, yet always manages to maintain an upbeat and positive approach going forward. I think that sort of positive, problem-solving and pragmatic approach to life will serve him extremely well as a District Court Judge.

Greg was opposite me on a dissolution matter that he and I were both handling pro bono. Again, he always approached the matter without rancor and with an eye toward a resolution that would be best for the family involved. That is not always true in family law matters.

Greg's knowledge of the law is first-rate, and I have never known him to either miss an issue, or place too much weight on one. His decisions will be correct.

And, more to the point, Greg works hard. Not only will his decisions be correct, they will be timely. I offer Greg my complete support. He will be a great judge.

Sincerely,
SMITH OBLANDER & MEADE, PC



Gregory G. Smith

4974 Prospector Gulch Rd.
Helena, Montana 59601
September 1, 2020

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

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write to encourage you to advance Greg Bonilla as one of the finalists for the vacancy on the District Court for the First Judicial District, Lewis and Clark County.

You have seen Greg's resume and it demonstrates that intellectually he has the skills and professionally he has the experience which qualifies him for an appointment to this position. I also believe that he has the temperament to be an outstanding Judge.

I write to address those other qualities which I believe make Greg an outstanding candidate for this position. During my 50 years of legal practice I had the opportunity to practice with a number of individuals. Greg was the opposing counsel in one of the cases I handled for a woman with significant mental health challenges. Throughout the case, Greg was never condescending or indifferent to my client's issues and injuries. Indeed throughout Greg treated my client with respect and in the end, we resolved the case allowing my client a measure of dignity in achieving closure for a difficult and complex matter. I was impressed by how understanding Greg was and how he responded to the difficulties which my client posed as we worked through this matter.

As a District Court Judge, Greg will have to confront individuals who likewise suffer from mental health challenges and who have made poor decisions, in part due to their mental health. I believe that given my experience, Greg will be able to understand the human condition which those individuals bring with them to their courtroom experience and expect he will also treat each individual fairly, with respect and dignity.

During the case which we worked on together, Greg was a single parent, having lost his wife to cancer, leaving Greg to raise his young son alone. While he asked for some slight accommodations so he could be at home when his son returned from day care, he was able to both fulfill his professional obligations and also his parenting obligations, balancing the challenging task of being a full time parent and full time attorney remarkably well. Greg had the right balance, doing his work but also putting his parenting role first, placing his family obligations to the fore as he dealt with this difficult time in his life.

I feel that these life lessons will transcend and be incorporated into Greg's understanding and consideration of how he will treat others, being kind and generous, yet also enforcing and upholding the law.

The residents of Lewis and Clark County have had a long line of distinguished jurists: Gordon Bennett, Peter Meloy, Jeff Sherlock, Dorothy McCarter and Jim Reynolds. I am confident that if Greg Bonilla receives an appointment to this position, he will in time join the ranks of our distinguished Judges.

I urge you to advance Greg Bonilla as one of the individuals to be considered by the Governor for appointment to this vacancy in the District Court for the First Judicial District of the State of Montana.

Ronald F. Waterman

THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA

DIRK M. SANDEFUR
JUSTICE

TELEPHONE (406) 444-5573
FAX (406) 444-3274
dsandefur@mt.gov



JUSTICE BUILDING
215 NORTH SANDERS
PO BOX 203001
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-3001

August 25, 2020

Montana Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Beth McLaughlin, Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

** Via Email Transmittal -- bmclaughlin@mt.gov **

Re: Professional Reference (Gregory Bonilla) -- Mont. 1st Jud. Dist. Court Vacancy

Dear Commission Members:

Please consider this correspondence in support of the application of Gregory Bonilla for nomination for appointment as a District Court Judge in the upcoming vacancy in the Montana First Judicial District, Lewis and Clark County. In my various capacities in the legal profession over the years, I have known and observed Greg to be an excellent practicing lawyer in the various capacities in which he has served.

In my former capacity as the Chief Civil Deputy in the Cascade County Attorney's Office, I hired, supervised, and worked with Greg on a wide variety of civil and criminal matters involving the State of Montana, Cascade County, various school districts in Great Falls and surrounding areas, and a myriad of county officers, employees, departments, and county-affiliated boards and districts. Upon my departure, I highly recommended Greg to replace me as Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney which he did and then served in an exemplary manner. In my 14-year tenure as a state district judge in the Montana Eighth Judicial District, I frequently observed Greg as a practicing civil litigator representing various Montana counties in insurance-defense matters as a lawyer employed by the Montana Association of Counties (MACO). In my current capacity as a Montana Supreme Court Justice, I have continued to observe and review Greg's excellent civil litigation work for MACO on behalf of Montana counties.

Greg is an exceptional, highly-competent and experienced lawyer of the utmost personal and professional integrity. He has the perfect blend of expertise, wide-ranging experience, integrity, fair and reasoned judgment, balanced and calm demeanor, and professionalism which will well-serve the citizens of the State of Montana as a District Judge in the Montana First Judicial District. I highly recommend him for your consideration for nomination for appointment by the Governor to that position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dirk M. Sandefur".
Dirk M. Sandefur, Associate Justice
Montana Supreme Court



Montana Association of Counties

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2715 SKYWAY DRIVE, SUITE A, HELENA, MT 59602

(406) 449-4360 Fax (406) 442-5238

www.mtcounties.org

Beth McLaughlin
Montana Supreme Court Administrator
PO Box 203002
Helena MT 59620-3002

August 14, 2020

C/O Judicial Nominating Committee

Ms. McLaughlin:

Please accept this letter as public comment in support of the application of Mr. Gregory Bonilla for consideration for appointment to the vacancy on the 1st Judicial District Court bench. As his application will demonstrate, Mr. Bonilla is has dedicated his career to the practice of law in a manner that uniquely qualifies him for consideration of this important position.

As a Montana lawyer for the past 23 years, Mr. Bonilla has represented criminal defendants, prosecuted criminal cases, provided civil guidance, and litigated countless issues on behalf of Montana local governments. His well-rounded experience would be an incredible asset to the 1st Judicial District. His experience and dedication to the law will be clear in his application.

As the 'managing partner' in a law firm dedicated to representing Montana counties, Mr. Bonilla brings credible and practical experience deserving consideration. Given the unique relationship created by the Montana Association of Counties when we created a law firm with the sole purpose of defending MACo Property and Casualty Trust members in covered litigation, Mr. Bonilla has been a staunch advocate for the highest ethical standards in representing clients. His loyalty to his clients has never wavered, and his advocacy on their behalf has tested relationship between MACo, the Property and Casualty Trust, and member counties he represents. At the end of each day, his clients have always benefited from his counsel and as such, MACo and the Trust benefit as well.

Mr. Bonilla will do a fine job outlining his experience and qualifications in his application. What won't be so clear is the impact Mr. Bonilla has had on improving justice throughout Montana. His representation of public sector employers, public agencies, and public actions both by and through his formal representation and litigation experience AND his advice and counsel, has had a dramatic impact on public sector decision-makers. Mr. Bonilla is not afraid to tell elected officials that their actions are wrong when the situation warrants. But more than that, his representation is often done with an eye towards improving the systems and operations of government. His advocacy for improvements in operations, liability protection, open government, due process, and effective government is unmatched in his profession. You will find no better advocate for justice in the justice system than Gregory Bonilla.

I urge the committee's consideration of his application. While the Montana Association of Counties and each of our member counties have benefited from his legal work these past several years, it is time to share his experience with a larger audience. The First Judicial District deserves an honorable and experienced legal practitioner and you have one in Gregory Bonilla.

Sincerely,

Eric Bryson
MACo Executive Director

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

Dear Ms. Menzies and members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

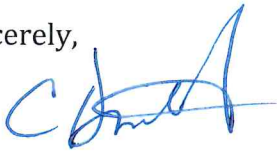
It is with great pleasure I write this formal letter of recommendation on behalf of Gregory Bonilla, whom I understand has applied for the position of First Judicial District Judge recently vacated by the Honorable Judge James Reynolds.

I have known Gregory for over fifteen years having first met him through his employment as an attorney for the Montana Association of Counties. As I became to know Greg through the cases he was assigned with my office it became very apparent he was a highly motivated, responsible, professional, person who is an excellent advocate for the legal system and understands the duty to provide justice in a trustworthy, honest, and unbiased manner.

Greg is very community minded and is involved in many issues to help make his community a better place to live and work.

I highly recommend Gregory Bonilla for the position of Judge; he will make a superb addition to the first Judicial District.

Sincerely,



Craig D. Doolittle, Sheriff
Jefferson County

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

Dear Commission Members,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for Gregory Bonilla for appointment to fill the pending vacancy created by the retirement of District Court Judge James Reynolds in the First Judicial District.

Since my retirement from the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation in 2012, I have worked as a licensed private investigator and consultant. During the past 34 years of my career, I have worked with numerous attorneys in both criminal and civil cases as a witness, expert witness, investigator and consultant.

I have worked extensively with Mr. Bonilla and have seen Mr. Bonilla professionally on numerous occasions. I have some observations regarding Mr. Bonilla's suitability for appointment as a District Court Judge.

I first became acquainted with Mr. Bonilla in approximately 2001 when he worked as a Deputy County Attorney for Cascade County. At that time, I was a Lieutenant in charge of the Cascade County Sheriff's Office, Criminal Investigations Bureau and later in charge of the Central Montana Drug Task Force. I had professional contact with Mr. Bonilla on various legal matters through our association within Cascade County. I left Cascade County in 2004 to go to work for the State of Montana. Mr. Bonilla was later opposing counsel in a legal matter I was involved in with Cascade County. After my retirement from the State of Montana, I began a business initially conducting insurance investigations. This business evolved to include consulting, litigation support and expert witness testimony involving accepted police practices and use of force issues. I have worked as a consultant and expert witness in numerous cases for Mr. Bonilla in his capacity for Montana Association of Counties Defense Services since 2012.

In the approximate 19 years that I have known Mr. Bonilla, I have formed a very positive opinion of him. Even when he was opposing counsel in a matter that directly involved me, I held him in high regard. Mr. Bonilla is always honest, ethical and fair. He is professional and courteous in his dealings with everyone. He has always conducted himself as a true "class act" in all of my observations of him. Mr. Bonilla's reputation in the community is respected. Regardless of whether people agree with the side he is representing or not, they speak highly of him as a person.

Mr. Bonilla is extremely well organized and efficient. In each of my professional contacts with him, he has consistently impressed me as always prepared and organized.

Mr. Bonilla is an extremely accomplished writer with exceptional spelling, punctuation and grammar. I have marveled at his abilities in written language skills on numerous occasions. If he is selected as a judge, I am confident that his written opinions and decisions would be clear, concise and well written.

There are very few lawyers that I feel so strongly about that I would write a letter such as this. I believe that Gregory Bonilla is the type of person who would make a very fine District Court Judge.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Phil Matteson

P.O. Box 643
Cascade, MT 59421
Ph. 406-403-1753



AXELBERG

MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION, PLLC

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September 6, 2020

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

Re: Gregory Bonilla

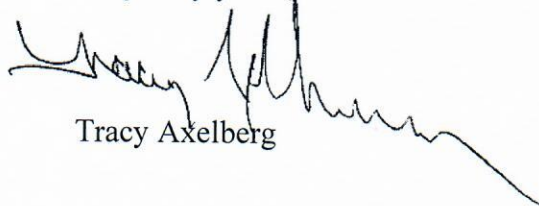
Dear Commissioners:

I am a 35-year member of the Montana Bar, having spent the last ten years as a full time “neutral” (mediator, arbitrator, and Special Master to the Court). I write to respectfully request your consideration of my friend and colleague, Greg Bonilla, for the District Court Judgeship created by the upcoming retirement of the Hon. James P. Reynolds.

I have arbitrated and mediated complex civil matters with Greg for more than ten years. I have witnessed first-hand the quality of his written work product, his command of Montana law and the sound exercise of his judgment in negotiating the resolution of sensitive, complicated disputes. I have found Greg to be bright, articulate, thoughtful, compassionate, and guided by a sense of fairness. Most importantly, he has the temperament for the bench, as well as the respect of his peers. He would make a fine addition to our talented and experienced roster of district court judges.

Please heartily recommend Greg to Governor Bullock. Thank you for your service to Montana.

Very truly yours,



Tracy Axelberg

Steven C. Haddon
21 Lone Mountain Road
Clancy, Montana 59634

September 9, 2020

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

Via hand delivery

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

Gregory Bonilla has asked for my comment in support of his application for the upcoming vacancy in the Montana First Judicial District Court. I am pleased to provide input.

I first met Mr. Bonilla shortly after starting as Deputy Jefferson County Attorney in 2013. At the time, Mr. Bonilla was defending the county in a civil suit. Prior to coming to Jefferson County, a significant portion of my practice was devoted to civil defense work in state and federal courts. Based upon this experience, it was clear to me Mr. Bonilla was well versed in the law and in the procedural aspects of civil trial practice; both state and federal.

Over the years, as a Deputy, and as Jefferson County Attorney, I worked with Mr. Bonilla on a number of lawsuits against the county. I found his approach to his cases and dedication to his clients to be top notch. He ensured the lines of communications were open and was always responsive to inquiries about cases. Moreover, Mr. Bonilla diligently defended cases and was not afraid to engage in motions practice. In short, Mr. Bonilla is a competent trial lawyer.

I also worked with Mr. Bonilla in settlement conferences, depositions, and court proceedings. At all times, Mr. Bonilla displayed professionalism toward the court, witnesses, opposing parties and their counsel, as well as other professionals, e.g. law enforcement personnel. He sought to work toward resolution rather than foment confrontation. I have no doubt Mr. Bonilla will carry these same attributes into the role of District Court Judge.

Mr. Bonilla would make a fine addition to the bench. He possesses the intellect and skill required to competently carry out the duties of a Montana District Court Judge. Further, he has the demeanor and temperament for the role. It is with enthusiasm I write on his behalf and I ask the Commission to give him strong consideration.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Haddon

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Sunday, September 13, 2020 10:03:32 PM

From: Brad Davey <braddavey@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:02 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gregory Lee Bonilla

C/O Lois Menzies Office of Court Administrator

I am Brad Davey. I was the chairman of the Cascade County planning board for seven years, and the vice chairman of the Cascade County zoning board for 6 to 7 years. Greg was our county attorney for both boards, Greg does excellent work. Greg is very knowledgeable in the law, he would make an excellent judge. Greg would judge according to the law whether you were rich or poor black or white, liberal or conservative with no prejudice. Greg is a very good man and I recommend you put them at the top of your list.

Brad Davey
64 Serenity Lane
Great Falls
Montana 59404

406-899-5263
Sent from my iPhone

DeeAnn Cooney
Cooney Law Firm
P.O. Box 7775
Helena, Montana 59604

September 15, 2020

Via mtsupremecourt@mt.gov only

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

Dear Commission Members,

I am writing this letter in support of Gregory Bonilla's application for appointment to the First Judicial District vacancy.

I have known Gregory for approximately eleven years, both professionally and personally. Gregory and I began work together as two of the attorneys retained by the Montana Association of Counties to provide legal services to member counties. Gregory took over as the managing attorney for MACo Defense Services in 2013 and has since effectively juggled the responsibility of both an administrator and a litigator.

Gregory has extensive and varied legal experience, from water law issues to discrimination issues, road disputes and property issues to law enforcement civil rights cases. He has a very quick mind and generally identifies the crux of a case immediately. Gregory is articulate, well-spoken and is an excellent writer. These are important attributes which Gregory would bring to the bench.

In addition to his legal skills and ability, Gregory will bring compassion and humanity to the Court. These are critical qualities through which every decision a judge makes should be filtered. Gregory would be an outstanding judge. I urge you to forward Gregory's name and application to Governor Bullock.

Thank you
DeeAnn Cooney

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 6:57:04 PM

From: Tim McKittrick <kitty@strainbld.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 12:10 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Cc: Gregory Bonilla
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judicial Nomination

Dear Commission,

I have known Greg and his family for more than 30 years. When Greg moved from Great Falls to Helena, it was Great Falls' loss and Helena's gain.

I have been involved in cases in which Greg and I were on opposite sides. He has always been respectful, professional and totally prepared.

One case involved a small rural school district in which a group of parents and some teachers had knives out to get rid of an administrator. Greg had a mastery of the facts and law. He listened to all concerns and was able to diffuse a volatile situation and resolve the case to the benefit of the students and the District. I am confident Greg will bring the same attributes to the bench.

Sincerely Timothy McKittrick
McKittrick Law Firm PC

Sent from my iPhone



City Attorney's Office
Civic Center
P.O. Box 5021
Great Falls, MT 59403
Phone: 406-455-8422
Fax: 406-727-0005

Sara R. Sexe,
City Attorney
Joseph Cik,
Assistant City Attorney
Neil A. Anthon,
Chief Prosecutor
Cassidy R. Blomgren,
Deputy Prosecutor
Mark Dunn,
Prosecutor

September 17, 2020

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

To: *Judicial Nomination Commission*

From: Joseph Cik, *Assistant City Attorney, City of Great Falls*

Re: *Application of Gregory Bonilla for 1st Judicial District Court Judge*

Nomination Commission,

My name is Joseph Cik. I am the Assistant City Attorney for the City of Great Falls. I am writing this letter in support for Gregory Bonilla's application for appointment to the First Judicial District Judge vacancy. For the reasons stated below, I highly encourage this Commission to submit his nomination to the Governor.

Mr. Bonilla has the diverse legal background needed to be a District Court Judge. As courts of general jurisdiction, a diverse portfolio of legal knowledge is required to sit as a District Court Judge. Too often Judges are appointed that have an expertise in one field of practice such as criminal law or one of the various fields of civil practice. Mr. Bonilla has practiced in multiple fields and knows how to navigate the judicial system. From serving as a Deputy County Attorney to Chief Defense Counsel for the Montana Association of Counties (MACo), he has seen just about everything.

I first met Mr. Bonilla in 2012. At that time, I was serving as a young Deputy County Attorney in Lincoln County. Mr. Bonilla was assigned by MACo to represent a number of Lincoln County officials, including myself, in a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action. *Hubbard v. Sheffield* (9th Cir. 2016), 669 F. App'x 443. Being a young inexperienced prosecutor at the time I was obviously very anxious about the situation.

During the course of that litigation, Mr. Bonilla was not only an excellent legal advocate in what became a highly contentious and complicated case, but he also became a wonderful mentor for me. I was not only being personally attacked in the litigation of that matter by the Plaintiff but also online and in the community. Mr. Bonilla's incredible experience and expertise ultimately resulted in the matter being dismissed on the Defense's motion.

In the years since, Mr. Bonilla has become a wonderful mentor to me both professionally and personally. He shows compassion to those who deserve it, and he holds those accountable when the interests of justice require it. He takes all factors into consideration when making decisions in every case in which he is involved, not only applying impeccable legal judgement, but he also considers the human element of practicing law as well.

For these reasons I urge the Commission to forward Mr. Bonilla's nomination to the Governor. Please contact me with any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Joseph Cik

Assistant City Attorney, Coty of Great Falls



OUR FILE MI051-001

September 16, 2020

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

Re: Workers' Compensation Claim

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write to support Greg Bonilla to be appointed District Judge for the 1st Judicial District Lewis and Clark County to replace retiring District Judge James Reynolds.

I have known Greg during his practice of law in Great Falls. He is competent, diligent, and even tempered. I think he would make a fine District Judge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard J. Martin".

Richard J. Martin
rmartin@fairclaimlaw.com
(406) 454-5803

RJM/jb
Enc: As stated

LINNELL,
NEWHALL,
MARTIN &
SCHULKE,
P.C.

Richard J. Martin

J. Kim Schulke

Stacy Tempel-St. John

Michele Reinhart Levine

Megan L. Miller

Norman L. Newhall, Retired

Office Manager:

Tammy Turner

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120 - 1st Avenue North

P.O. Box 2629

Great Falls, MT 59403

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1-800-732-2451

(Montana Only)

Fax (406) 454-8000

www.FairClaimLawyers.com

Kimberly A. Potter, Legal Assistant
Montana Association of Counties Defense Services
2717 Skyway Drive, Ste F
Helena, MT 59602
406-202-0209

September 21, 2020

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

RE: *Letter of Support for Gregory L. Bonilla for First Judicial Judge*

To the Judicial Nomination Commission:

I began working for Gregory Bonilla as a Legal Assistant at MACo Defense Services in December 2010. In 2013, Gregory became the managing attorney of the Defense Services department.

On both a personal and professional level, Gregory always has been very fair, approachable and easy to work with. He is an outstanding attorney, a great leader, is kind, understanding, compassionate and a man of great integrity.

Although it will be hard for me to not have him as my supervisor, I believe Gregory would be an exceptional addition to our judicial system and I urge the Commission to forward Gregory's nomination to the Governor.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kimberly A. Potter
kpotter@mtcounties.org

September 21, 2020

Montana Judicial Nomination Comm.

P.O. Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Gregory Bonilla endorsement

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to endorse Gregory Bonilla as the next 1st Judicial District Court Judge in Lewis and Clark County.

I had the opportunity to work with Gregory while he was Deputy Cascade County Attorney. As former Cascade County Treasurer/County Superintendent of County School I worked closely with Gregory for a number of years.

In the past we worked on property tax issues, human resource, school hearings and motor vehicle issues. The issues I worked with Gregory on were very tough and emotional from property tax foreclosures to school districting hearings. During this period Gregory showed his professionalism, understanding and his honesty and his high moral standards.

I feel Gregory Bonilla would be a great choice as the next 1st Judicial District Court Judge. If you should have any question, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jess Anderson

(406)453-6068



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Andy Hunthausen

Jim McCormick

Susan Good Gelse

City County Building 316 North Park Helena, Montana 59623 406.447.8304 Fax: 406.447.8370

September 21, 2020

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

Ms. Menzies:

Please accept this public comment in support of Gregory Bonilla and his application for the appointment to the 1st Judicial District Court.

Mr. Bonilla has shown his talents and commitment to the law while managing the Defense Counsel for the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) Defense Services firm. Led by Mr. Bonilla, the MACo defense team has been a wealth of knowledge and support for Montana Counties. Many counties in Montana do not have the ability to hire staff lawyers nor do many counties have legal advisors with experience in many specific areas of the law. Mr. Bonilla and the MACo firm provide critical assistance and experience that may not be available across our state. From a legal standpoint, Gregory Bonillo and MACo have been crucial in the protection of the public county process and services.

As witnessed by his application and by his history of defending counties, Mr. Bonilla's clearly has the track record necessary to excel as a District Court Judge. The Judicial Nomination Commission can be confident in the experience and skills of Gregory Bonilla if recommended for appointed as the next 1st Judicial District Judge.

Sincerely,



Andy Hunthausen
Lewis and Clark County Commissioner

Seidlitz Law Office

ATTORNEY AT LAW

12 – 6th Street South, 1A

P.O. Box 1581

Great Falls, Montana 59403

John E. Seidlitz, Jr.

Phone (406) 727-1431

Fax (406) 452-9933

September 17, 2020

Hon. John Brown
Ms. Janice Bishop
Mr. Karl Englund
Ms. Elizabeth Halverson
Mr. Hal Harper
Mr. Lane Larson
Ms. Nancy Zadick
Judicial Nomination Commission

VIA E-MAIL
lmenzies@mt.gov

RE: Nominee – Gregory Lee Bonilla

Dear Commission:

I wish to submit a comment on the proposed nominations to replace Honorable James Reynolds in the First Judicial District. I have practiced law for 39 years. In the course of my practice I have been associated with three former members of the Judicial Nomination Commission. I have been extremely impressed by the past work of the Commission. However, I have not ever submitted a recommendation prior to today.

I wish to submit my support for the application of Gregory Bonilla. I began my practice on the Hi-line, in the Twelfth Judicial District and Ninth Judicial District. I had the opportunity to practice in front of some excellent judges. What impressed me in my early practice was the dedication to impartiality I observed in the 80s.

I wish to support Greg because I believe he brings the appropriate judicial temperament. Great has the background of a practicing attorney, which I believe is essential for the District Court.

It is almost impossible to appreciate the variety of cases a District Court will preside over, unless the Judge has the prior experience in a variety of areas. Greg has certainly practiced in almost every type of law which he will be expected to oversee.

Judicial Nomination Commission
June 10, 2020
Page 2

As a practicing attorney it is so helpful to have a court familiar with the intricacies of the particular practice. Lawyers can select their cases, judges do not have that luxury. They must be capable of addressing every type of legal position in front of them. I believe Greg will bring that temperament to the bench.

I have known Greg almost from the beginning of his practice. I would support the proposition he is, and has always practiced, to the highest ethical standard. This is not a statement which can be offered for all attorneys in our practice, sadly. I believe he will raise the level of practice before him.

Good luck with your selection.

Sincerely,



John E. Seidlitz, Jr.

JESJ:tlo

CHRISTENSEN FULTON & FILZ, PLLC

19 36th Street West, Suite 3, Billings, Montana 59102-4303

John R. Christensen
Angus B. Fulton*
Timothy A. Filz*
Patience A. Llewellyn*

Tel 406-248-3100
Fax 406-248-7908
christensen@cflawfirm.net

*LL.M. Taxation

September 22, 2020

Via Email Only

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

RE: Gregory Lee Bonilla
Judge James Reynolds' Position

Dear Lois:

I am writing to offer my support for Gregory Lee Bonilla relating to his application for the position of District Court Judge for the First Judicial District to fill the seat to be vacated by Judge James Reynolds. Having been a former District Court Judge as well as an applicant for a vacant seat on the Montana Supreme Court, I am familiar with the process and understand the importance of honest and candid comments from the members of the Bar as well as the public.

I have learned through experience that to be an effective District Court Judge, the Judge must have the temperament and ability to address a multitude of varying disputes which comes before the Court, many times in the same day. I have learned that the combination of patience and ability to learn new law are the most important characteristics a judge needs to fulfill his role as a general jurisdiction Judge.

First, patience together with a calm demeanor while on the bench, provides litigants with a sense that their case, whatever it may be, is important to the Court and the Judge is listening to their concerns. With the increase of pro se litigants, at times it will be difficult to remain patient and allow litigants to fully tell their story, especially when time is short. The highest compliment a Judge can receive following a contested hearing is when both parties feel that the Court listened to them.

The second characteristic which I believe a District Judge needs to possess is an ability to learn. No matter what area of the law an attorney practiced prior to assuming the bench, there are volumes of statutory law which the broadest of practices would not cover. Additionally, there is the case law developed by the Court including the Montana Supreme Court and the Federal Court system. Though many cases which come before a

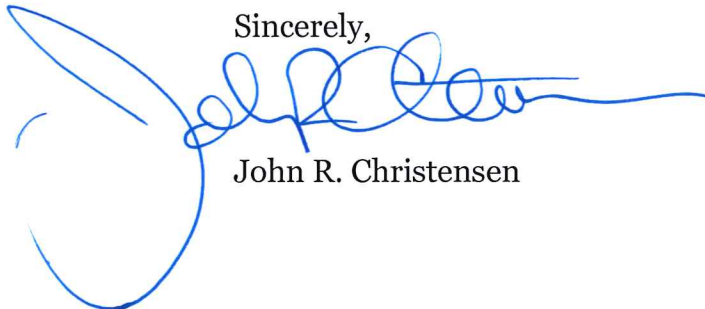
District Court are “routine” in the sense that the Court is familiar with the law being discussed, more often than not, there will be areas of the law with which the Court has no familiarity at all. In those cases, it is essential that the Judge be a “legal scholar.” Beyond reading counsel’s brief, it may require the Court to independently research areas which the Court believes are relevant, and in which the Court is not familiar.

I believe Mr. Bonilla has those qualities to serve as an effective District Court Judge. Mr. Bonilla is thoughtful, even handed, even tempered when dealing with counsel and parties associated with a case. I recently became involved with Mr. Bonilla through MACo defending a very contested water rights case which generated significant emotion on the part of the parties. Mr. Bonilla exhibited common sense, offered options which were reasonable to resolve the issues while still maintaining professional relationships with not only our clients, but opposing counsel.

Mr. Bonilla is also a legal scholar. He is knowledgeable of the law, thoughtful, and can write in such a manner that his decisions will be clear and concise to give concrete guidance to not only the attorneys appearing before him, but also the parties. Mr. Bonilla has gained a reputation of being diligent, forthright and highly competent. Those are the types of qualities which he would carry over to the bench.

Mr. Bonilla epitomizes what I believe are the best qualities of a prospective Judge, he is knowledgeable of the law, he commands respect of the judicial process, and he maintains a professional relationship with all who he deals with. It is without hesitation I recommend and support Mr. Bonilla in his application for the position of District Judge for the First Judicial District to fill the seat to be vacated by Judge James Reynolds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John R. Christensen', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the left.

John R. Christensen



Law Offices of
MICHAEL J. GEORGE, P.C.



September 22, 2020

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

Re: First Judicial District Judgeship Vacancy (Lewis & Clark County)

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for Gregory Bonilla for the position of District Judge for Montana's First Judicial District. Greg has the experience, expertise and temperament to be an outstanding district judge.

I've had the pleasure to know Greg personally and professionally over the past 24 years. Greg had just graduated from law school and was starting his legal career at the Smith Walsh Clarke & Gregoire law firm in Great Falls when we first met. I quickly came to respect both the quality of his legal work and his tireless work ethic.

I have followed Greg's career over the years and observed his excellent work for both the Cascade County Attorney's Office and as a respected litigator for the Montana Association of Counties. Greg is widely respected for his legal work in all of these arenas.

In addition to being a talented, hard-working and experienced lawyer, Greg has a calm, even temperament and possesses a sincere respect for our justice system. I have no doubt that Greg will bring all of these important qualities to work each day as a District Judge for Lewis & Clark County.

For all of the above reasons, I support Greg Bonilla's application for this judgeship without reservation and respectfully urge the Commission to submit Greg's name for consideration by Governor Bullock. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael J. George

Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County Commissioner
215 South 4th St.; Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

September 22, 2020

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

Re: 21st Judicial District Court Judge appointment

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission Members,

It is my honor to recommend Mr. Gregory Bonilla for appointment to the bench of the 1st Judicial District. It is my privilege to know and have observed his work ethic, dedication and focus. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Bonilla since his employment with the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) Defense Services in 2009. I place very high value on his advice and opinion. He has served the counties statewide with distinction. He is trusted for his thoughtful, well-researched and considered advice on all legal matters.

Mr. Bonilla has excellent communication skills and is extremely reliable. He has consistently demonstrated that he is a person of high moral character and integrity. Greg is respected professionally by his peers and clients. His diverse legal background makes him an excellent choice to serve on the bench. He volunteers his personal time to help others in need and is a committed husband, father and coach.

Greg Bonilla's demeanor coupled with his diverse legal background and experience provides a depth of knowledge I am confident will benefit the judicial system. If there is any additional information I can provide to assist you in making your decision, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Respectfully,

Greg Chilcott,
Ravalli County Commissioner

cc: files

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 2:06:27 PM

From: Matthew Johnson <mathew@mtlegalcounsel.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 2:07 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nomination Committee in support of Gregory Bonilla

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

Dear Commission members,

I am writing in support of Gregory Bonilla being appointed the next Judge for the 1st Judicial District Court.

I have worked with Greg on various civil cases since 2009 when he started at MACO. He demonstrates many qualities of an ideal judge including intelligence, being fair minded, professional, considerate, and approachable.

Greg is fully capable of handling the caseload of a Judge with the First Judicial District and would be an excellent addition to this District.

Sincerely,

Matt Johnson

--

Mathew Johnson

Law Office of Mathew Johnson LLC/ 1085 Helena Avenue / Helena, MT 59601/ Phone 406-442-3625

This communication is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential or otherwise exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient or the employee or agent responsible for delivering this communication to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender by return email and telephone at [\(406\) 442-3625](tel:4064423625) (collect), and delete the email.

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 9:57:25 PM

From: Dennis Jupka <djupka@mtcounties.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 11:26 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment for Gregory Lee Bonilla

I have known and worked with Gregory Bonilla for 12 years. I am a claim adjuster for MACoPCT handling all types of claims for the counties of Montana. Gregory defends the counties against lawsuits brought against the counties. I am a conservative and consider Gregory to be a moderate. Even though we don't always agree on liability and value of a case, he never lets his biases enter in his decisions. He uses prior court decisions, Montana Code Annotated and common sense to evaluate a case. In criminal cases he would apply the law accordingly and fairly. Gregory is extremely ethical in everything he does. I believe these are qualities that are needed for a District Judge to fairly discharge his duties. If you would like to contact me, you can reach me at 431-1018.

Dennis Jupka.

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: steph@bigskylaw.com
WWW SITE: <http://www.bigskylaw.com>

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

Attorneys at Law

September 24, 2020

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

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov]

*Re: Candidate Gregory Bonilla
Position of District Court Judge, First Judicial District*

Dear Commission Members:

I write to endorse the selection of Gregory Bonilla for the First Judicial District. Mr. Bonilla has a broad-based background and the temperament to be an exceptional district court judge. I am familiar with Mr. Bonilla's work both while he was in private practice in Great Falls and as counsel for MACO.

I have been in private practice working in Great Falls since 1996. I am familiar with Mr. Bonilla's exceptional work at Smith, Walsh, Clarke & Gregoire. Mr. Bonilla handled a variety of civil matters in various venues and proceedings, many involving complex issues. He is a person of integrity, always diligent, well-prepared and has a great work ethic. His practice evolved further at MACO and has prepared him well for the position of district court judge.

Moreover, Mr. Bonilla has an exceptional temperament and disposition for handling the daily rigors of being a district court judge. He is amiable and personable, easy to talk to and has the social skills to handle a variety of matters involving people of all backgrounds and walks of life. He is a leader among his peers. The First Judicial District and community of Helena will be well-served to have him as district court judge.

It is with much enthusiasm that I support Mr. Bonilla's candidacy for this important position.

Sincerely,
SMITH OBLANDER & MEADE, PC


Stephanie A. Oblander

LAW OFFICE OF ANDREW I. HUFF

2601 BROADWAY ST.

HELENA, MT 59601

Ph: (406) 551-9120

Cell: (406) 465-7623

aihuff@msn.com

September 24, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission
Office of the Court Administrator
Helena, MT 59620-3005
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

re: Gregory Bonilla, 1st Judicial District

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

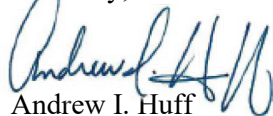
It is my pleasure to submit this letter supporting Mr. Gregory Bonilla in his application to fill the seat vacated by First Judicial District Court Judge James Reynolds. I first met Mr. Bonilla in 2017, in his capacity as managing counsel for defense services at the Montana Association of Counties. Mr. Bonilla was acting as opposing counsel in litigation I had filed against a county government.

While it is uncomplicated to obtain letters of support from friends and colleagues, obtaining a letter of support from a former opposing counsel could, I imagine, be a trickier proposition. However, I write this letter of support without hesitation. Mr. Bonilla was an extremely tough advocate for his client, but at all times professional, civil, responsive, ethical and thorough. If appointed, he would bring the same professionalism to the bench.

Mr. Bonilla's legal background also uniquely qualifies him for a seat in the First Judicial District Court. The First Judicial District is located at the center of state government in Montana. As such, judges in the First Judicial District must be expert in the law of state and local governance. As counsel for MACo, Mr. Bonilla brings considerable expertise in MAPA, labor and employment law, law enforcement liability, the duties and obligations of elected officials, and civil rights matters. He also has experience as both a prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney. Due to his breadth of relevant experience, there will be no need for Mr. Bonilla to learn on the job.

I strongly recommend Mr. Bonilla for appointment to the open seat in the First Judicial District. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Andrew I. Huff



Adrian A. Miller
2812 1st Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101
www.sullivanmiller.com

September 23, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
Via e-mail

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of Gregory Bonilla as an applicant for the 1st Judicial District Court Judge vacancy. I have known Greg most of my life, and I believe that Montana would be lucky to have him as a district court judge.

Greg lived in Fort Benton while I was growing up there. His wife, Audra, taught me middle school and high school English. Greg was the only lawyer that I knew well in my small town. I always thought his easy-going demeanor was a stark contrast to the fire-breathing lawyers that I saw on television. I didn't realize then that a hallmark of a good attorney is not being deliberately combative.

By the time I went to law school, Greg had moved to Helena. In a strange twist of fate, he remained in my life. I left for law school newly engaged to his nephew (through Audra), who is now my husband. During my first years of practice, I called Greg when I had questions about procedural rules, ethical rules, or even how to react when opposing counsel was being a jerk. In short, Greg helped teach me how to practice law, something that is difficult to learn in law school.

Even though we lost Audra to cancer my first year of practice, Greg and I have maintained a familial relationship. I still call him when I need practice advice, even if it's just to rant about opposing counsel being a jerk. He always takes the time to listen, and his mentorship has been invaluable in my career. I think most of us recognize that we need more mentorship in our profession, particularly for young attorneys. It is not easy to take time out of a busy schedule to help others, but Greg always did.

Greg has consistently approached legal practice in a collegial manner. He believes that attorneys should treat each other with professionalism and courtesy, even when handling a contentious case. Those values are reflected in his practice and in his advice to me throughout the years. Greg's character is well suited for the bench, and I hope the commission will strongly consider his application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Miller', with a stylized, cursive script.

Adrian A. Miller

Michelle M. Sullivan and Adrian A. Miller
Attorneys at Law
michelle.sullivan@sullivanmiller.com
adrian.miller@sullivanmiller.com
Phone: 406.403.7066

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 uazh@uazh.com,
Website <http://uazh.com>

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

September 23, 2020

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

VIA EMAIL ONLY

RE: First Judicial District Judge Position – Gregory Bonilla

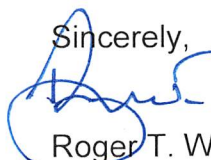
Dear Commission:

My last day submission endorsing Greg Bonilla as the next Judge for the First Judicial District in no way diminishes my enthusiastic support for him. I have known Greg since his private practice days in Great Falls, more so during his time as a Cascade County Deputy Attorney, and more recently when I served as outside counsel for the Montana Association of Counties, Greg being in charge of its Legal Department.

Greg's eclectic body of practice and experience especially lends itself to the matters he will see on his docket in Lewis and Clark County. I am certain that Greg will manage his case load and courtroom in a prepared, fair, and confident manner, and with the same ease and courtesy that reflects his personality.

I ask that Greg be given the utmost consideration for the position and ultimately that his name be passed to the Governor for appointment.

Sincerely,



Roger T. Witt
rtw@uazh.com

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

Dear Ms. Menzies,

I understand Public Comments are appropriate for applicants seeking appointment to fill the seat of retiring District Judge James Reynolds.

I write to endorse Mr. Gregory Bonilla as an applicant for this position.

I have known Greg upwards of 20 years.

He is an Honest and Compassionate Man.

His commitment to family is Profound.

Greg's first wife Audra passed from Cancer a few years ago. Greg's commitment and love for this woman during their time together was truly a "Love Story".

Since Audra's passing, Greg has raised their son Grayson to be a wonderful young man.

Grayson is in his first year of college and is attending on both Academic and Athletic Scholarships.

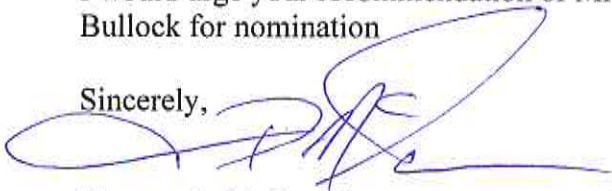
Professionally, his education and work experience demonstrate his commitment to being an attorney, well informed, with full commitment to Justice.

His compassion towards others uniquely positions him as a just and honest and very capable of making difficult decisions.

These attributes, coupled with his compassion for others, demonstrate Greg's potential to be an extraordinarily successful and respected leader in the Helena Community.

I would urge your recommendation of Mr. Greg Bonilla to Governor Bullock for nomination

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. McGree', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Thomas P. McGree Sr.
100 Sawmill Road
Montana City Station
Clancy Mt 406-442-7335

**Mark F. Higgins
387 Carol Drive
Great Falls, MT 59405**

September 23, 2020

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: Gregory Bonilla/First Judicial District Court Judgeship

Dear Members of the Commission:

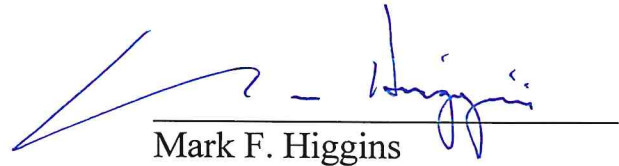
It is with considerable enthusiasm that I write this letter in support of the appointment of Gregory Bonilla as a Judge in the First Judicial District Court. I have interacted with Greg in numerous capacities throughout our legal careers, and have always found him to be exceedingly competent, hardworking, and highly ethical.

Let's begin with this: Greg is just plain smart. That may sound a bit clichéd, and of course there is considerable intellect throughout the list of candidates for this appointment. This is by no means a knock on the State of Montana, where I have lived my entire life, but the mere fact that Greg was able to even get accepted into Cal/Berkley to attend law school, much less excel there, speaks volumes about both his cerebral aptitude and his work ethic. As a member of the legal team at the Montana Association of Counties, which Greg manages, I am amazed day after day with how he quickly grasps seemingly complex legal issues, analyzes them, and then even recalls precise precedent that applies to the issue. This is certainly what all lawyers should want in a Judge before whom we are practicing. Given the caseload in this District, it would be nice to know that the appointment of someone with Greg's obvious ability will significantly reduce the learning curve.

In addition to his significant legal ability, Greg's capacity for dealing with people would be a great asset for a District Court Judge. You could expect from

this gentleman firmness when that is appropriate, but also compassion when that is absolutely necessary, as he makes decisions that sometimes make or break a citizen's existence. Given the widely varying caseload of our Montana courts, Greg's legal background, filled with both weighty criminal and civil matters, would serve both he and his constituents well. Frankly, it seems doubtful that there could be many other, if any, lawyers with such a considerable diversity of legal experiences. I am confident that our sitting Judges throughout the state would agree with the assessment that a diverse legal experience is a huge asset for any Judge.

Obviously, the decisions facing the Commission are difficult ones, and I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your willingness to serve in this vital capacity. I am confident that you will be guided in your deliberations by a sincere desire to advance the cause of justice in this great state. Let me close by again stating that moving this gentleman's name along in the appointment process will, in my humble opinion, be a great stride in that direction. Thank you.



Mark F. Higgins

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 9:57:49 PM

From: Jason Sorenson <jason@casneinc.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 12:34 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vacancy for 1st Judicial District Court

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of Mr. Gregory L. Bonilla filling the First Judicial District Court vacancy. Since we practice different professions, I would like to speak primarily to Greg's character and his ability to relate to a variety of people at many different levels.

I met Greg over five years ago at church. We were both part of a group that was reading/studying the same book. I quickly learned that Greg was an integral member of this group and greatly valued. Because we live in an imperfect world where struggles exist and pain is present, it wasn't uncommon for group members to reach out for help and advice. Greg was undoubtedly a group member who would listen intently and readily put himself in "their shoes". His responses were always full of wisdom, they were judicious and caring, and most of all... they were insightful. Greg has a talent/gift for seeing situations in a different light that many others initially fail to see. I have always been impressed by Greg's ability to reach people where they are.

In my experience, Greg is a man of utmost character. We the people would benefit immensely from Greg Bonilla as a District Court Judge. Please recommend Mr. Bonilla to our Governor, thank you.

Respectfully,

Jason A. Sorenson, PE
Senior Engineer
CASNE & ASSOCIATES INC.
(406) 443-1656

Tara DePuy, Attorney at Law, PLLC

PO Box 222
Livingston, MT 59047

(406) 223-1803

attorney@riverworks.net

(406) 222-7865 (fax)



September 24, 2020

Via Email Only: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

Re: Support for Nomination of Gregory Bonilla – 1st Judicial District Court Judge

Dear Commission:

I support the nomination of Gregory Bonilla for Judgeship on the First Judicial District Court. Greg is an outstanding candidate with the experience and demeanor necessary to be a competent and thoughtful judge.

I have known Greg through my work with the Montana Association of Counties for the past eleven years. Greg's experience before working for the Montana Association of Counties, coupled with his magnitude of experience in defending counties in all aspects of the law, gives him the breadth of knowledge required to be a district court judge. It is rare that a judicial candidate has both extensive experience in criminal law and civil law and understands the intricacies of litigating in both.

Greg is steadfast in following the law and does so in a calm, compassionate manner which will carry over to the bench. Please pass his application and name on to Governor Bullock for appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tara DePuy".
Tara DePuy



GARLINGTON | LOHN | ROBINSON

MONTANA'S ATTORNEYS SINCE 1870

September 26, 2020

VIA EMAIL & FIRST CLASS MAIL

Judicial Nomination Commission - mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

P.O. Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Application of Gregory L. Bonilla for First Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Commission Members:

I was honored to have been asked to submit a letter of reference on behalf of Greg Bonilla, whom I have known and with whom I have had dealings for many of my years of private practice.

I have participated in mediations with Greg, both as counsel and as a mediator. I have represented local Montana governments alongside Greg as a result of our joint work for the Montana Association of Counties (MACo). His experience in defending local governments in a variety of contexts is extensive. He is rightfully held in high regard by many local governmental officials and county attorneys. I have attended MACo CLEs in which Greg has served as a speaker. He is an excellent teacher, as evidenced by his background before and after law school.

In each instance in which I have been involved in a matter with Greg, I have found him to be vigilant, knowledgeable, creative, empathetic, ethical and professional. More importantly, he is an attorney with a large heart, a great sense of humor and a substantial thirst for justice. His consideration of issues is done in a manner that exemplifies what I believe should be the goal of each Judge – namely, accomplishing justice without discrimination of any sort. He neither develops nor carries grudges. He is diligent, a necessary attribute for all attorneys, especially judges. He is kind and genuinely wants to do what is right.

In my dealings with Greg, he consistently displayed a keen understanding of the legal and procedural issues that have arisen. He works well with others and is an excellent, articulate speaker.

I learned a great deal about Greg upon reviewing his application for the judgeship position. His application reveals life experiences that have shaped him into a talented and humane man. I was unaware of, but impressed by, much of his interesting background. His education and career experiences reflect a well-rounded individual who can be proud of his consistent dedication to professionalism. Greg's character is strong and solid. He is a family man, a husband and father.

3046008

Judicial Nomination Commission

RE: Application of Gregory L. Bonilla for First Judicial District Judgeship

September 26, 2020

Page 2

He brings valuable life tools to the bench.

The First Judicial District and the citizens of Montana will benefit by Greg's appointment and service as a Judge. Without qualification, I urge you to appoint him. I will gladly supplement this letter upon request.

Respectfully,

GARLINGTON, LOHN & ROBINSON, PLLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Wagner', is written over the printed name.

William T. Wagner, individually and not for the firm

Direct Line: (406) 523-2556

Cell: (406) 370-9247

Email: wtwagner@garlington.com

WTW:wtw

Bill Bronson
733 – 32nd Avenue NE
Great Falls, MT 59404
Telephone: (406) 799-9373
E-mail: bill.bronson@bresnan.net

September 26, 2020

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

**RE: Application of Greg Bonilla,
Montana First Judicial District Court Judge**

Dear Commission Members:

I am pleased to recommend Greg Bonilla for consideration as a finalist/nominee for the position of state district court judge for the Montana First Judicial District Court.

I have known Greg for approximately twenty years. We practiced together for a time when I was *of counsel* to the Smith, Walsh, Clarke and Gregoire law firm in Great Falls, which he had recently joined as an associate. He assisted me with some of my litigation caseload. After I left the Smith, Walsh firm, we continued to work together from time to time on cases, and I have maintained contacts with him over the years once he affiliated with the Montana Association of Counties (MACO) legal department.

During my 37 years of practice, which began with a clerkship with a Montana Supreme Court Justice, I learned about qualities that make for a good judge, including, but not limited to, excellent legal skills, an even temperament, the ability to make timely decisions, a capacity for listening carefully, and not taking oneself too seriously. Greg embodies all these good qualities, and more.

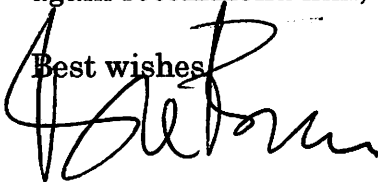
Greg displayed a level of maturity as an attorney even in the earliest years of law practice. He was both intelligent and diligent, and remains so to this day. He never shied away from handling a difficult situation, and showed early promise as a litigator. Some young attorneys require close supervision for a few years. Not Greg—he demonstrated the capacity to handle major depositions as well as critical court appearances within a short time after commencing practice. I have always been impressed by his willingness to take on different aspects of the law, and get out of the usual “comfort zone” that frequently characterizes many attorneys. This capacity for successfully taking on major challenges convinces me he would make a swift and thorough adaption to the rigors of the judicial bench.

He was also quick to understand that sometimes, well-written briefs and reasoned arguments do not always carry the day. Greg is intelligent and insightful; some of his opponents over the years did not share those qualities. Yet, he learned that you will lose more than your share of battles, sometimes to attorneys not as well prepared. Greg learned to accept this reality with grace and patience—skills a good trial judge needs every day.

A few years ago, while developing a successful law practice, a diversity of experience, and an excellent reputation, Greg had to face a new challenge—one that not many young men have to face: the long illness and eventual death of his lovely wife, at an early age. This was a painful period in his life, made more difficult by the fact that he was left to raise their young son, on his own, for some time. Fortunately, Greg had the capacity to cope with this tragedy, and adjust to a new life. I don't know if I could have accomplished as much, if confronted with the same situation. A judge who has experienced more than the usual share of personal hardship in his or her life is oftentimes better equipped to understand similar hardships facing litigants. His experiences here will serve him well as a district judge.

I know of few people who, based on experience, talent, and temperament, are ready for service as a district judge if called upon for the task. Greg Bonilla is ready. I again recommend him, without hesitation, for your favorable consideration.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bill Bronson", written over the words "Best wishes".

Bill Bronson

*Cathy Watson
Montana Association of Counties
2717 Skyway Dr. Suite F
Helena, Montana 59601*

September 25, 2020

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


Dear Members of the Commission:

I write this correspondence to offer my support for Gregory Bonilla's nomination for appointment as a District Court Judge in the First Judicial District.

I have worked with Gregory as a legal assistant for four years and find him to be exceedingly patient. As a manager of Montana Association of Counties Defense Services, he is taxed with administrative duties in addition to his litigation duties and still finds time to explain cites, legal procedures and answer questions. He is well organized, prepared and efficient, providing his work products to me for finalizing and filing, well in advance of the last seconds of the day; skills needed to juggle the case load of a judge. As a result of those skills, his brief "drafts" look more like a final product than a draft.

Outside of the standard skillsets and qualifications required for the bench, he has more than average knowledge of the "techy" side of computers, networking and, in general, an understanding of application functions, a real asset in these times.

For these reasons, I strongly urge this Committee to forward Gregory Bonilla's application to Governor Bullock for appointment in the First Judicial District.

Sincerely,

Cathy Watson

Maureen H. Lennon
1459 Wilder Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

September 25, 2020

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

Dear Members of the Commission:

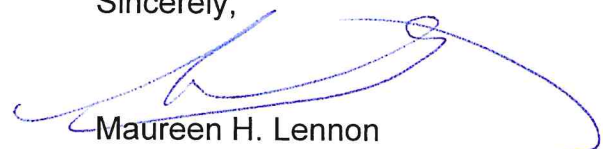
I have had the good fortune to work with Gregory Bonilla for more than eleven years and am delighted to write this letter in support of his appointment as a District Court Judge in First Judicial District.

Gregory is a brilliant lawyer. His legal arguments, both written and oral, are thoughtful, persuasive, and trustworthy. Gregory is well-prepared and hard-working, a colleague who is always generous with his support no matter how heavy his own workload may be. He makes the duties of litigator, manager, and coworker appear effortless, when we all know they are anything but. While Gregory's experience in the practice of law is extensive, he remains interested in and willing to accept challenges that expand his knowledge and competency in the practice of law.

In my 31 years of practice, during which I have worked alongside some of the finest lawyers in Montana, I can say without hesitation that Gregory is among the best. Intelligence, humanity, commitment, and an even temperament are among the many qualities Gregory brings to the practice of law and would bring to the bench.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with this Committee and sincerely urge its members to forward Gregory Bonilla's application to Governor Bullock for the District Court Judge vacancy in the First Judicial District.

Sincerely,



Maureen H. Lennon

To the Judicial Nomination Commission:

In response to your call for public comments on 1st Judicial District Judge applicants, I would like to recommend Gregory Lee Bonilla. I first became acquainted with Greg when he began service with the Cascade County Attorney's office in 2001 as Chief Civil Deputy. At the time, I was serving on the Cascade County Zoning Board of Adjustments and the Cascade County Planning Board. As such, we had numerous occasions to talk and work together. I was most impressed with Greg's "even handedness" in dealing with issues that arose during that time. He carefully studied pertaining Montana Statutes before making thoughtful recommendations to both Boards.

I also had occasion to work with Greg at the Montana Fire Training School's annual Staff and Command course from 2005 to 2018. He and I were invited presenters to groups of 30-40 fire personnel from around Montana. Greg showed his adeptness at handling impromptu legal questions and problems from class participants. His knowledge of local government law and its workings is impressive.

In summary, I think Greg Bonilla would be a superb candidate to serve the remainder of Judge James Reynold's term.

Respectfully and Sincerely,

Leonard Lundby

From: Sanford Green

Sent: September 25, 2020

To: MT Supreme Court

Subject: [external] Gregory L Bonilla

Dear members of the Judicial Nomination Commission

I have known Greg for about ten years. Four of those years we served together on our church board. Greg was a great asset to the board with his insight and ability to think outside the box. His legal knowledge was invaluable to the church as we dealt with child safety, security and other church issues. It was a pleasure working with him as he is a great team player. His integrity and character is beyond reproach. As a single parent raising a son, I watched as he worked at being a parent and still doing his job. He is a very caring and loving dad. . As a friend, he is always ready to lend a listening ear and give encouragement. I would highly recommend him to the Governor for District Court Judge.

Respectfully,

Sanford A. Green

54 Greenwood trail

Clancy,mt

STATE OF MONTANA
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

Robert J. Whelan
District Judge
Department No. II

Silver Bow County Courthouse
155 West Granite Street
Butte, Montana 59701
(406) 497-6420
Fax (406) 497-6358



September 25, 2020

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

Re: Reference for Greg Bonilla

Dear Nomination Committee:

I am honored to support Greg Bonilla for appointment to the First Judicial District Court.

I have known Greg for over 30 years. We met while attending economic classes and while on staff at the University of Montana. It was there that I first witnessed Greg's outstanding work ethic, keen intellect, and sense of personal responsibility as he worked to independently finance his education. We remained close as Greg went on to practice law and grow his family. Over the years, I watched with deep admiration as Greg supported his wife during a prolonged illness and as he raised their son following his wife's passing. Through his adversity, Greg displayed patience, humility, and compassion, traits that will serve him well as a district court judge.

Greg brings the same character and integrity he displays in his personal life to the legal profession. As an attorney, I had the opportunity to work opposite Greg. Greg was thorough, well-prepared, reasonable, and reasoned. He is respectful to all parties at all times. Greg possesses a calm demeanor and is tactful and courteous while firmly advocating for his clients. Greg has years of experience and a varied legal background. He is well-versed in respective areas of the law, and he has considerable litigation experience.

I hold Greg in highest personal and professional regard. He demonstrates appropriate objectivity, ideal personal conduct, judicial temperament, and a sincere wish to serve his community. I urge you to consider submitting Greg Bonilla's name to Governor Bullock for appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Whelan", followed by a long horizontal line.

Robert J. Whelan

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Jerry Collins <collinscohen@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 3:24 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support:

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

This letter is in support for Gregory Bonilla candidate to be a judge in the 1st Judicial District. Gregory is the MACo Attorney that is helping with a case that is over a dispute involving a road in our county. Gregory and I have been in contact with each other either in person, by phone or email for over a year with this case. As a County Commissioner, Gregory has always taken the time to help me when explaining what he needed in documents or minutes of meetings or just my recollection of what was said at our meetings when this road was being discussed. His calm demeanor helped to keep me from getting frustrated when I would think I had found what was needed but that wasn't enough and when visiting on the phone or in person he would ask questions to help me run things through my mind to get me to remember some detail.

I feel Gregory would make an excellent judge with his experience dealing with a variety of cases and the different courts he has been in front of including the Supreme Court. Also when getting his law degree he went out and worked with law firms to gain knowledge and hands on experience.

I know the Montana Association of Counties Defense Council is an excellent firm and to be the manager that firm would be an honor as I know some of the other attorneys and the expertise they have dealing with the many and complex issues that counties can be involved in.

Again this letter is in support of Gregory Bonilla to be Judge in the 1st Judicial District.

Edward G. (Jerry) Collins
Garfield County Commissioner

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows 10

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2020 12:13 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Betty Cagle <bettycats@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 2:12 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] First Judicial District Court Judicial Vacancy

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

Re: Reference letter for Gregory L. Bonilla

Dear Commission Members:

It is a privilege to write a letter of recommendation for Gregory L. Bonilla, an applicant for Judge for the First Judicial District Court.

I was lucky enough to work for and with Greg for several years as a legal assistant, watching his expertise grow from an associate to a seasoned trial attorney. His brilliant ability to identify and argue the issues of any case is beyond compare. I believe his even-tempered nature will allow him to focus on the issues at bar.

I highly recommend Greg and am confident he would be an extraordinary asset as Judge.

Sincerely,

Betty A. Cagle

3100 29th Street N.E.

Great Falls, Montana 59404-6036

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2020 12:13 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Clark, Daniel <daniel.clark@montana.edu>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 2:07 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reference Letter for Greg Bonilla

September 25, 2020

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

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

It is my privilege to submit this letter of support for Gregory Bonilla and urge the committee to pass along his name to the Governor to be considered for the 1st Judicial District. The Montana State University Local Government Center partners closely with the Montana Association of Counties where Greg has served as the managing partner of their legal division. For over 10 years I have worked with Greg in various capacities as I have provided training and technical assistance services to Montana's counties, MACo's Property and Casualty Trust and MACo as an organization. I have found Greg to be very professional in his demeanor and consistently demonstrates sound judgement and clarity of the law and its purpose in providing order and structure to our governing institutions. He makes an effort to understand the challenges and context of the situations where he is asked to provide advice and counsel.

I have known Greg for many years and have seen him act as a teacher, a mentor, and an advocate for the law and he is quite adept at understanding the nuances of each role and their application. I have had the opportunity to partner with Greg in providing training to newly elected county officials and appointed board members. Greg has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the laws that regulate Montana's open meetings, citizen participation, code of ethics and the statutes governing Montana's counties and special districts like water, sewer, fire and libraries. He is patient, thorough and practical in his training and explains the purpose and intent of the law and how it is applied. I have found Greg to be very credible and competent in his legal judgement and advice to Montana's local government officials. His local government experience will be particularly helpful for a judge in the Montana 1st Judicial District where cases are routinely filed. He is level headed and demonstrates a style and temperament that is ideal for a judgeship.

For these reasons I urge the Commission to carefully consider Greg's application for recommendation to the Governor.

Sincerely,

Dan Clark

Dan Clark
Director
MSU Local Government Center
Culbertson Hall 235-A
P.O. Box 170535
Bozeman, MT 59717
Office: 406-994-6694
FAX: 406-994-1905
email: daniel.clark@montana.edu
Website: msulocalgov.org [msulocalgov.net]

The Montana State University Extension
is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference
Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Paul Feuerstein <paulf@helenafirstassembly.com>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 10:00 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vacancy for 1st Judicial District Court

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

I heartily recommend Mr. Greg Bonilla to you for nomination to the Governor as a District judge for the Montana First Judicial Court.

I have been a Pastor and friend to Greg for over a decade. We have served together on a Board. Greg and I have known one another in both private and public settings. I had a front-row seat in watching Greg navigate the passing of his wife Audra and single parenting thereafter. He made his way through both with uncanny grace and gentleness.

Greg is a man of high character. He is smart, judicious, and compassionate. As a decision-making peer, he has proven to be calm, balanced, and impartial. He has a keen ear for listening and wisdom in determining a way forward. As a friend I find him to be loyal and truthful.

I understand what a serious position you hold in this process. Thank you for considering Greg Bonilla and for your service to the great state of Montana.

Sincerely,

Paul Feuerstein
Senior Pastor
Helena First Assembly
(406) 442-6851

Cook, Kevin

From: Menzies, Lois
Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Cook, Kevin
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla

From: Jason Strouf <j.strouf@co.custer.mt.us>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 9:33 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gregory Lee Bonilla

Dear Commission Members,

I would like to recommend that you nominate Gregory to the Governor for appointment to fill Judge Reynold's position. I have had the opportunity to work with Gregory on numerous occasions. As a Trustee for the Property Casualty Trust administered by MACo I have witnessed Gregory's performance. He exhibits a strong aptitude to identify the merits of a case and explain the case in a manner that as a Trustee, I could make an informed discission as a member of the Trust. Gregory is direct and succinct in his communication as an attorney. I have not found Gregory to be anything other than honest and accurate in all of his interactions with myself.

Sincerely,

Jason Strouf
Custer County Commissioner
MACo PCT Trustee
MACo 2nd VP

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 8:09:31 PM

From: Connie Hawkins <coloconhaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 11:14 AM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Gegory Bonilla Endorsement

September 28, 2020

RE: Gegory Bonilla Endorsement
Position of District Court Judge, First Judicial District

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

It is my pleasure to offer my unreserved recommendation for Greg Bonilla as a District Judge nominee. I have been fortunate to know Greg Bonilla for well over 10 years after making his acquaintance shortly after transferring to Helena for my job with AAA. Greg's family was one of the first families I met upon my arrival and I felt very fortunate to have met such wonderful down to earth people. I have gotten to know Greg over the years through our kids' shared interest in 4-H, soccer, cross-country, youth church group activities, barbecues, band, and community activities.

Greg consistently displays a great deal of integrity and dependability. He is conscientious, courteous, and supportive. He has an excellent rapport with people of all ages and always demonstrates a positive demeanor and outlook. Per usual, he is ready to roll-up his sleeves at a moment's notice and ready to pitch in to help with a 4-H project or any other activity.

Greg's demeanor and solid character make him a perfect choice for this nomination. It has been a pleasure to know Greg and I highly recommend him for this appointment. If you have any questions, please contact me at 303-946-6917 and I will be more than happy to address any questions you may have.

Thank you for this consideration.

Respectfully,

Connie Pollard
Helena, MT

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 8:10:21 PM

From: Kamryn Freeman <kamrynfreeman77@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 1:52 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment for Gregory Bonilla

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

I would like to write in support of my stepdad, Gregory Bonilla, for consideration to his application for the First Judicial District Court Judge vacancy. Usually, I am a person who does not like to write letters because I feel that I am not very good at it. However, I really appreciate this opportunity.

Before Greg came into me and my mom's life, my stepbrother had lost his mom to cancer, and Greg was a single parent. My stepbrother is committed to his faith in the Lord, grew up with a devotion to reading, is a very self-disciplined achiever, and is now going to college on a cross country running scholarship. My mom raised me as a single parent as well, and our experiences have been a little less conventional. Our blended family has four very different personalities and two differing heritage backgrounds. For each of us, it really is my stepdad that brings all our quirks together. He laughs a lot at even the smallest things. It is hard not to be in a good mood when he is around and telling his dumb jokes.

One thing I often heard from teachers, relatives, and literally everyone including my mom, was how difficult and crazy teenage girls are to handle. I cannot say that I did not fit that mold, but Greg never treated me that way. He always listened and offered help about how to handle things. He is supportive and has a calming way during times of stress. He has guided me through homework projects and eventually college and scholarship applications. No matter how indecisive I am or how dismissive others may be about my choices, Greg always insists that I can be whatever I set my mind to and that no matter what, he would be supportive. I am now no longer a teenager and just turned 20 last month. My future plans continually change and I have already made some irresponsible choices. I am accepting and working through consequences, which has not been easy for anyone. Greg remains as supportive as ever, but he is also solid firm about me being an accountable adult.

My stepdad would be an outstanding judge and not just because of the things I have said that he has been for me, but also because I see all the time how he becomes the leader for other people as well. He is applying to be a Judge, but he is the least judgmental person I know. He is so very giving of his time, and his patience is unbelievable. He is also no-nonsense when things go south, believe me. But, never has one of his ideas ever not been a good solution for everyone, from what I have seen.

Thank you for your service to this process and allowing the acceptance of my letter.

Sincerely

Kamryn Freeman
[406-229-0056](tel:406-229-0056)

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 8:11:24 PM

From: Oliver Goe <oliver@bkbh.com>
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 2:55 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] First Judicial District Judge Applications/Judicial Nomination Commision

Dear Commission, c/o Loise Menzies: I am writing in support of Gregory Bonilla's application to become the next judge for the First Judicial District. Greg's strong academic background and reputation for integrity coupled with his extensive experience as a practicing attorney clearly establish that he possess the legal depth, respect and work ethic required of a judge in the First Judicial District. I urge you to advance his application to the Governor for consideration.

Oliver Goe
Montana Bar No. 2819

From: [Menzies, Lois](#)
To: [Cook, Kevin](#)
Subject: Public Comment -- Bonilla
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 8:18:58 PM

From: Todd Wilson <toddwmontana@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 4:54 PM
To: MT Supreme Court,
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Judicial Nomination Commission/ Gregory Lee Bonilla

To whom it may concern

I Todd Wilson and my Wife Teresa Wilson, of Missoula MT. Would like to see that the courts would strongly consider Greg Bonilla for the open position that he is considered for at this time, we have been friends of Greg and his family for years and first came to know him in Fort Benton MT.

I would like you to know that he has always been community minded and he is a man of integrity. Please consider him for the position. I believe it will be one of the best decisions that could be made for position.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Todd and Teresa Wilson
252 N Travois
Missoula, MT 59808
406-621-3387

ROBERT STUTZ

1925 Highland Street, Helena, MT 59601 • 406-422-8265 • stutz@montana.com

September 27, 2020

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

Re: Public comment in support of Gregory Lee Bonilla

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

Having known Greg in both a professional and personal capacity for years, it is an honor to write and encourage you to forward his name to Governor Bullock as a nominee for the First Judicial District Court Judge position. Greg's depth of knowledge on complex legal issues always pointed me in the right direction when I sought his input, consistent with his reputation in the legal community as a highly respected attorney. Greg possesses the temperament, work ethic, and professional judgment to excel as a district court judge.

While there are many outstanding candidates to consider for the position, I strongly encourage you to include Greg on the list of nominees selected for further consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Stutz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Stutz
Attorney at Law

UGRIN ALEXANDER ZADICK, P.C.

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

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
#2 RAILROAD SQUARE, SUITE B
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Website <http://uazh.com>

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

September 28, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzies
Office of Court Administrator
mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

VIA EMAIL ONLY

RE: First Judicial District Judge Position – Gregory L. Bonilla

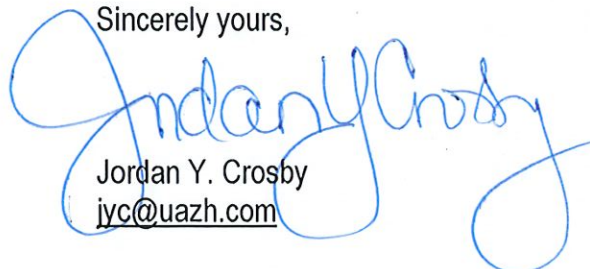
Dear Commission:

I am writing in support of Greg Bonilla to succeed the Honorable James P. Reynolds as Judge for the First Judicial District. I believe Greg is uniquely qualified for this position and request he be given strong consideration.

I first met Greg over thirteen years ago when I began working in private practice at the law firm of Smith, Walsh, Clarke & Gregoire. Greg was an associate attorney at the firm and I was always impressed by Greg's willingness to work with me, answer questions, and take the extra time it takes to introduce a new associate to the practice of law. My work as retained defense counsel through MACo Defense Services also allowed me the opportunity to work with Greg. In our work together, I found him to be well-prepared, professional, and respectful to the parties, opposing counsel, and the court.

Greg is hard-working, has a good temperament, and I believe his common sense and dedication to the pursuit of justice, make him well suited for the job. Please accept my support for Greg Bonilla as District Court Judge. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Jordan Y. Crosby
jyc@uazh.com

609 9th Ave SW
Great Falls, MT 59404
September 27, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Lois Menzles
Office of Court Administrator
PO Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Ladies and gentlemen:

My name is Deborah A. Keely. This letter is in reference to District Court Judge candidate Gregory L. Bonilla.

Greg was my boss at Smith, Walsh, Clark and Gregoire. While it's been some time since we worked together, I remember clearly Greg's work ethic, his professionalism, his fairness, his ability to work well with the attorneys as well as the staff; but most of all I remember Greg's innate ability to get any job done.

I would highly recommend Gregory L. Bonilla as a candidate for District Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Keely

September 28, 2020

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

We are writing in full support for the appointment of Greg Bonilla to serve as District Judge. Greg has been a family friend since our children were in grade school and we are thrilled that Greg has this opportunity.

We met the Bonilla family at a very difficult time in their lives as Greg's wife was losing her battle with ovarian cancer. Through this crisis, Greg proved himself to be a leader in his family and with his friends - helping all of us navigate our grief as he suffered greatly. Greg maintained an active relationship with his son and was ever-present at sporting events and activities. This also met that Greg would work late into the night. It was not strange to receive 1:00 am emails from Greg as he was working.

To this day, our family maintains a friendship with Greg and his family. We may not be as close a part of each other's lives, but we know that we can always rely on Greg to be there for our boys and for us. His leadership and work ethic will be a strong asset to the District Judge appointment.

Sincerely,

Tim and Heidi OBrien

Tim & Heidi OBrien
1711 Gold Rush Ave.
Helena, MT 59601
Ph. 406-465-2938
heidiguteshaobrien@gmail.com

**Elizabeth A. O'Halloran
716 Power Street
Helena, MT 59601**

September 27, 2020

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

RE: Application of Gregory Bonilla
First Judicial District Judge Vacancy

Honorable Members of the Commission:

Please accept this letter in support of Gregory Bonilla's application for appointment as District Court Judge in the First Judicial District for the State of Montana.

In 2013, I began working directly with Gregory when he was Managing Counsel at the Montana Association of Counties' Legal Services Division. Gregory was responsible for oversight of MACo litigation, which included complex cases in a variety of areas of law, as well as direct handling of his own cases. MACo defended counties and county officials in very diverse claims, affording Gregory experience in a broad spectrum of cases, with and against an equally broad spectrum of attorneys, judges, represented parties, and witnesses. Watching and working with Gregory in his capacity as a trial attorney was remarkable. It is obvious that Gregory's previous private and public experience in civil and administrative law informs his practice, which is methodical, unflappable and adapted to the unique needs of each case. His practice on behalf of governmental entities provides a keen understanding of the public trust and the gravity of having that trust conferred upon you as a public official.

As a member of the Montana State Bar for 26 years and a regular participant in civil litigation, I am confident that Gregory Bonilla's experience, demeanor, and personal philosophies are entirely consistent with Montana's expectations for its judges. Gregory's highly developed case evaluation skills will translate seamlessly to the bench and his propensity to efficiently manage an active, heavy case load will serve him well in the First Judicial District.

Judicial Nomination Commission
RE: Gregory Bonilla
September 28, 2020
Page 2

As a judge, I have no doubt that Gregory will undertake his judicial duties with a strong commitment to both the United States and Montana Constitution, with strength tempered by empathy and understanding of the impact of his decisions. He is an advocate, leader, and teacher with a strong understanding that delivery of fairness in the courtroom is what society expects, demands and deserves. No matter who I represented, I know I can count on fairness and deliberated decision-making from Gregory.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment. As a person who relies on fairness in the judiciary, I am grateful that a person of Gregory Bonilla's character is willing to take on the challenges of a judicial appointment. He will not disappoint.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. O'Halloran



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

September 28, 2020

VIA EMAIL TO: mtsupremecourt@mt.gov

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

RE: First Judicial District Court, Judicial Candidate, Gregory L. Bonilla

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am pleased to support Gregory L. Bonilla for appointment as District Judge for the Montana First Judicial District. I believe Gregory has all the qualifications to be an excellent Judge for all Montanans.

I have worked with Gregory on the opposite side in several cases in Cascade County and am familiar with his work with MACO. Throughout his career, I have found him to have superior analytical skills, sound judgment and considerable abilities in problem solving.

I recall a particularly difficult case with Cascade County that I am convinced was resolved efficiently because of Gregory's participation. He was thorough, well prepared, and applied his considerable skill set to that complex civil litigation matter.

I sincerely urge the Commission to submit his name to Governor Bullock for appointment.

Very truly yours,

Marra, Evenson & Levine, P.C.

Kirk D. Evenson

September 26, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

PO Box 203005

Helena, Montana 59620-3005

Re: Gregory Lee Bonilla, Applicant for 1st Judicial District Judge

Dear Honorable Judicial Nomination Commission –

I am writing this letter in not only support of my brother-in-law, Gregory Lee Bonilla, for the appointment to the Judge position in 1st Judicial District, vacated by the honorable Judge James Reynolds, but to also give you a bit of ‘the rest of the story’ regarding Greg.

You have his application and his successful qualifications speak for themselves. Bar none, you won’t find a better candidate to serve this position and ensure the fair and impartial process of law and justice for those who enter his courtroom. His passion for the law and the rule of law have driven his body of work for over 25 years. His mindset is of, and for, those who are before him. They have a voice and a time to be heard and he will acknowledge them and this right. His knowledge and depth of the justice system, his sense of reason and ability to apply the facts of law objectively as well as his stellar quality of both oral and written skills, is truly a judge for the 1st Judicial District.

But I have promised to tell you ‘the rest of the story’ of Greg, as I know him, is decent, respectful and gentle-hearted man. Greg married my little sister Audra in the 90’s, proceeded to traverse through law school together and then moved back to Montana to my (our) hometown, Fort Benton so Audra could pursue a teaching career. They were blessed with a son and living a life in a small community, a gift they both wanted for their family as Greg too came from a small Montana town, Shelby. I won’t get into details on how the Longhorns ruled over the Coyotes in the Northern A and B Division back in the day as believe Greg would appreciate that I save that for a later time! As life would twist and turn, in 2007 Audra, at the young age of 39, was diagnosed with Stage IV ovarian cancer. Our mother had also been diagnosed with the same disease at the age of 50, only to pass away two years later at 52 when Audra was just a 7th grader at the time, myself a senior in high school. We knew this was a harrowing diagnosis. Greg and Audra educated and prepared themselves, against all odds, for the ensuing and agonizing medical surgeries, grueling treatments and challenging protocols. You see, Audra’s plight and fight wasn’t just her’s, it was also Greg’s. They both had to go through this, they both had to fight, and they both had to get to the other side. Audra’s cancer journey and trials were met with the greatest of love and support I have witnessed from a young husband. Greg never waived, not once, in his unselfish commitment to her care, continuous prayers through a shared faith, and his constant devotion to her needs that spanned through the following four years of her life before she passed away.

While I am not fully versed in all of the qualities your judicial nomination commission is seeking in this vacated judge position, but I can attest and assure you that you will not find a better person to ‘serve’ the law and ‘safeguard’ the interests of all those who would enter his court. God speed in your decision!

With great respect,

Wallis Morger Bryan

blackleafgroup@msn.com

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

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*Also admitted to practice in Oregon & Washington

FILE NO.

September 28, 2020

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

Members of the Judicial Nomination Committee:

I am pleased to write this letter supporting Greg Bonilla for appointment as a District Court Judge for the First Judicial District. I have known Greg for nearly twenty-five years. I first met Greg when he was hired as an intern by my former law firm. Greg did such a great job that we hired him as an associate attorney, not once but twice!

After Greg moved to Helena and joined MACO, I had the opportunity to work with him in a case that involved several defendants. Greg knew the law and was well prepared which prompted an early and economical settlement of the claims that were asserted against his client.

Greg is thoughtful in his decision making. He does not jump to conclusions. Greg has learned how to balance the demands of his career with the demands of family life. When Greg and I happen to see each other, the first several minutes of any conversation is spent updating each other on what our kids are up to. Greg takes great pride in being a lawyer but even greater pride in being a dad.

Greg has the experience, legal ability and temperament to be a successful district court judge.

Sincerely,

DAVIS, HATLEY, HAFFEMAN & TIGHE, P.C.

By


Stephanie A. Hollar

Mitchell A. Young
144 Wedgewood Lane
Helena, MT 59601

September 28, 2020

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: First Judicial District Court Candidate Gregory Bonilla.

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing to recommend Gregory Bonilla for appointment as a judge in the First Judicial District. I believe Gregory stands out in this field of qualified candidates.

I first met Gregory when I was the Lake County Attorney and he was representing Lake County in a civil suit. I was immediately impressed with his efforts to understand the factual nuances of the case and his ability to use those details to craft compelling legal arguments. His commitment to understanding the details of the case eventually led to a summary judgment ruling in favor of the County. While Gregory's skill as an attorney was obvious, I was equally impressed with his attentiveness to his ethical obligations toward the County. Gregory regularly and thoroughly provided updates on the progress of the case and any upcoming matters that required the County's input. His conduct inspired confidence that the County was receiving expert representation in the case.

Almost six years ago, I joined the firm in which Gregory is the managing partner. During our time working together, Gregory has consistently displayed the qualities which would make him an excellent judge. His breadth of knowledge regarding both civil and criminal law is enormous, and he can identify relevant legal issues instantly. He is a tireless worker who handles a large caseload yet always completes his work in a timely manner. As managing partner, he handles the administrative requirements of the firm seemingly without effort and certainly without drama. Gregory is eminently qualified to handle the legal and administrative requirements of a district court judge.

Finally, I believe Gregory has the perfect temperament to serve as a district court judge. In contested matters he is always prepared to defend his position and does so firmly without being overbearing. He remains even-tempered in the face of provocation and retains his sense

of humor under stress. Most importantly, he is always willing to look at all sides of an argument before making a decision. Any litigant appearing before Judge Bonilla would be assured of a fair hearing.

To reiterate, I strongly support Gregory's appointment as First Judicial District Court Judge. Although his appointment would be a loss for our firm, it would be an immense gain for the local bar. Thank you for the opportunity to offer my input.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Young



Montana Association of Counties

Serving Montana Counties Since 1909

2715 SKYWAY DRIVE, SUITE A, HELENA, MT 59602
(406) 449-4360 Fax (406) 442-5238
www.mtcounties.org

September 28, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission
c/o Beth McLaughlin
Office of Court Administrator
sent via email to bmclaughlin@mt.gov

Re: Letter of recommendation for Gregory Bonilla for First Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Ms. McLaughlin,

Please accept this letter of recommendation for Gregory Bonilla for the First Judicial District Judgeship. In the three years Gregory and I have worked together at the Montana Association of Counties, I have gotten to know him personally and professionally and believe he would be an excellent Judge. Gregory takes a commonsense approach to issues and always remains open minded. He also has an incredible sense of fairness, is passionate about the law and his clients, and his ethics are beyond reproach. In addition to the above, Gregory is humble and has great sense of humor, both which I believe would serve him well on the bench.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "McKenzie McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

McKenzie McCarthy
MACo General Counsel

September 27, 2020

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

RE: Support for Greg Bonilla for District Judge in the First Judicial District

Dear Commission members,

I urge your support of Greg Bonilla for District Judge in the First Judicial District. Greg worked for Cascade County during tumultuous times, assigned to the civil division for the County Commission, an office I held for 15 years. I don't think there was a more difficult job at the local Bar. Greg joined Dirk Sandefer and other capable lawyers in trying to negotiate the fractured relationships of the Commission. In every aspect of dealing with us, the civil division had to temper the ugliest imaginable discord into workable solutions for our constituents.

Imagine working for a board that didn't want to be in the same room with each other. That is what Greg walked into in 2001. He was up to the challenge, offering insight and never taking sides. That professionalism served him. Amazingly, with that backdrop, Greg was able to help us adopt a Code of Ethics. He earned our trust in negotiating a major environmental settlement that had hung over the County for decades.

Greg has at his core an unwavering work ethic. Imagine being asked to represent management when, his colleagues, the other Deputy County Attorneys' petitioned to unionize. He did this thorny and thankless job with professionalism. Greg was an excellent public servant. I was sorry to lose him to the private sector after six years.

It was his professionalism and knowledge of local government that caused the Montana Association of Counties to recruit him in 2009. I was active in that organization and I was glad that he was back helping county government. Now you have the chance to move him forward to the role that I believe he is most suited. Thank you in advance for your strong consideration of Greg and for your service on the Judicial Nominating Commission.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Beltrone".

Peggy Beltrone
5065 Flatwater Drive
Whitefish, MT 59937