

August 13, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
Office of Court Administrator  
PO Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

We write in support of Municipal Judge Steven B. Bolstad's application for appointment to the Eighth Judicial District, to replace Judge Greg Pinski on the District Court. Judge Bolstad has the breadth of experience to transition into this position with relative ease, and his demeanor and ethics make him a perfect choice for this succession.

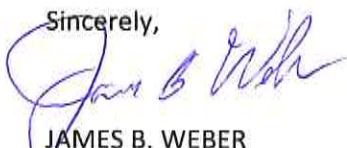
Steve was born and raised in Great Falls, graduated from the Great Falls Public School system, and has served in the County Attorney's office and in Municipal Court; therefore, he understands the community dynamics and already has many professional colleagues throughout Cascade County. He appreciates the value of working long hours and working hard in physically challenging conditions, having been a firefighter with the USDA, Forest Service in his early years. For these reasons, Judge Bolstad values every person who enters his courtroom, whether they work in manual labor or in a plush office setting. His rulings are fair and decided by the proven circumstances and the law, and not influenced by a person's status in the community. His undergraduate degree in education and seven-year teaching assignment in public schools near Red Lodge, MT shaped Steve's leadership in the courtroom – he researches the facts, demands respect for the law, coaches those whose lives he can positively influence, and controls his courtroom with wit and decorum. He is level-headed and responds to adversity with firmness, tact, and compassion. Steve's unique experience practicing Indian law as a young attorney gave him insight into the familial culture of Montana's tribal nations, an important element of the District Court.

Even more important, Steve's time working as a deputy Cascade County Attorney has provided him insight into the caseload faced by a District Court judge. He realizes the complexity and diversity of the cases that would come before him and is well-prepared to research and rule on serious matters facing the judiciary. Judge Bolstad has proven himself a good listener, an attribute often missing in our times.

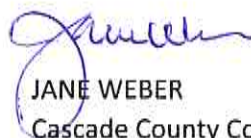
Finally, Judge Bolstad fully comprehends and daily practices the fine balance between rehabilitation and punishment. This delicate line can be difficult to walk, but Steve has mastered the art and has served our community well when ruling on matters in Municipal Court or in previous years when prosecuting a case as a Deputy County Attorney.

For these reasons, and because Steve is truly a good man with a good heart, we wholeheartedly endorse his selection to replace Judge Pinski on the District Court bench. We stand ready to answer any additional questions you may have about Judge Bolstad's impeccable character and worthiness for this assignment.

Sincerely,



JAMES B. WEBER  
U.S. Department of Labor (retired)



JANE WEBER  
Cascade County Commissioner

24 August 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter as an endorsement for Steven Bolstad for District Court Judge. I am a police officer for the Great Falls Police Department and have been an officer for 26 years. My current position is the Municipal Court Bailiff and Warrants Officer. I have held this position for 14 months. In that time I have been in court whenever Judge Bolstad has been there and I have witnessed him perform as a judge. I have seen many different aspects of Judge Bolstad and how he deals with the extremely varied individuals that appear before him. These range from our numerous "frequent flyers" to those that are appearing before a judge for the first time. Judge Bolstad treats them all equally. He starts each person with a clean slate, unless of course they are seeing him for an issue with an on-going case. Even when the person before him is being unruly, or rude, he will usually send them back into the hallway outside of the court room or into the back room for a few minutes. Then when he sees them after a few minutes, he starts fresh and gives them the opportunity to act appropriately. If they do, Judge Bolstad acts as if this is the first time he is seeing that individual.

Steven Bolstad is very compassionate and he realizes that the best answer for many individuals is to find out what is the root of their issues with the law and try to address that instead of just handing down fines and/or jail time. If a person is working, he knows that putting them in jail may cost them their job and may cause that person to spiral further down into criminal activity. He is willing to give people extra chances as long as they are actively trying to better their lives. However, if they fail to take advantage of the extra chances Judge Bolstad gives them, he doesn't hesitate to send them to jail. He is not soft on crime and when he tells someone they will go to jail the next time they are arrested, or they fail alcohol monitoring, or fail to complete required classes, etc. he sticks to his guns and puts them in jail.

Judge Bolstad also is continually improving his knowledge and keeps current on legal issues. He has discussions about legal issues with both prosecution and defense attorneys.

Because of these attributes, I believe Steven Bolstad is the right person to fill the vacant District Court Judge position. He is compassionate, steady, approachable and most of all, fair. He is ready to step into the position and will be a great addition to the District Court.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Brooks". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Bill Brooks  
Master Police Officer  
Great Falls Police Department  
Badge #182

August 19, 2020

Judicial Nominations Commission  
Montana Supreme Court  
C/O Lois Menzies

Honorable Members of the Judicial Nominations Commission:

I have known Steve Bolstad for many, many years. We actually first met when we were in high school involved in Key Club International. He was a great leader even in his early years. Leadership and service to his community come naturally to him. A perfect example of this is the years he spent as a teacher.

I have watched Steve faithfully serve Great Falls in his position as City Municipal Court Judge for the past 6 years. As his volume of service on the bench speaks to why he is qualified to serve as District Court Judge, I feel compelled to mention why I personally believe he is the best person to serve in that capacity.

As a business owner I have had employees that have appeared in his court. I have first hand witness to his passion for the rights of victims, as well as his ability to keep a contemplative, open mind while judiciously weighing all facts from a disciplined and objective point of view with those that appear in his court.

I also have witnessed his outstanding character and commitment to his community through his involvement with the Great Falls Police Citizens Academy. He volunteers his time to take community members through all aspects of the court room from his position on the bench to explain what rights the victims of crimes have. He facilitates discussion of alternatives to fines and incarceration for those that appear in his court to the reasons for sending offenders to jail. He is truly a dedicated public servant.

Steve Bolstad is a well-respected member of our Community here in Great Falls, as well as a person of outstanding character and flawless integrity. I firmly believe that he is the most enlightened choice for the District Court Judge position.

With kindest regards,

Sandra Johnson-Thares, CHA  
Owner  
Big Sky Development Enterprises, Inc.  
O'Haire Motor Inn

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Monday, August 24, 2020 8:55:16 PM

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**From:** Heather Wharram <someonesnotlikeme@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2020 2:48 PM

**To:** MT Supreme Court,

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Judge Bolstad

To Whom it May Concern;

I would like to send in my sincerest support for him to get the nomination, he's been a wonderful Judge in our Municipal Court. I have been one of his defendants a few too many times lol But I always found him sincere and fair in every way and always helpful in every way to help those of us need the help and not hurt by vindictive "pre-judgemental" haha Judges. He's wonderful always usually a smile and warm calm demeanor, personable yet is able to make you understand why you probably shouldn't have done the thing you know you did

I really hope he wins he would be the best fit for this area of our court system!

Sincerely,

Heather Fahsholtz-Wharram



## Cook, Kevin

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**From:** Menzies, Lois  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 7:51 PM  
**To:** Cook, Kevin  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad

**From:** Hammontree, Nathan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 9:56 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** Judicial Nomination

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

Judge Steven Bolstad has been a mentor and a very reliable and professional advisor to myself and many other Judges in the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction in Montana. It is, therefore, my privilege to write this letter in support of his appointment to the Eighth Judicial District Court of Montana. Judge Bolstad's knowledge of the law and it's application in the judicial system is invaluable to this position. His professionalism and character are undeniably exemplary.

*Nathan Hammontree*

Nathan Hammontree  
Judith Basin County Justice Of The Peace  
PO Box 339  
Stanford, MT 59479  
Office: 406-566-2277 x117



LAW OFFICE OF  
**MEGHAN  
LULF  
SUTTON** PLLC

P.O. Box 533  
410 Central Avenue, Suite 306  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
Phone: (406) 771-7477  
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meghan@suttonlawmt.com

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August 27, 2020

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

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to recommend the appointment of either Steve Bolstad or David Grubich to the Eighth Judicial District Judge seat. I believe that these two candidates, among the several who have applied, are head and shoulders more qualified than the rest. Either would be an excellent choice to fill the vacancy, and urge you to select from the two of them. In my opinion, what sets these two candidates apart is their commitment to public service, their breadth of life and legal experience, and their compassionate nature.

I know and respect several of the other applicants, but do not believe they possess the same qualifications. Quite candidly, as a left-leaning, outspoken progressive woman, I'd love to be able to write on behalf of a female candidate. However, I do not believe this commission should elevate gender politics over the inherent qualifications.

***Judge Steven Bolstad***

I have known Steve for approximately 23 years. We first met in the Fall of 1997 as first-year law students at the University of Montana School of Law. Steve and I both eventually ended up practicing law in Great Falls, Montana. Steve worked as a County Attorney, and later (currently) as our Municipal Court Judge. As such, I have worked both across from and in front of him. I believe Steve has a firm grasp on Constitutional issues specifically affecting criminal law, and treats litigants with respect and fairness. While I do not always agree with his rulings (as I am a criminal defense attorney), I have always felt like he has considered the arguments I have advanced and given both sides a fair shake. I know that Steve is community-oriented: he unsuccessfully lobbied for years for me to join a civic service organization of which he was a part. You can tell a lot about Judge Bolstad's character because his staff seems to really like and respect him.

Prior to entering law school, I learned from social conversations with Judge Bolstad that he had worked, among other things, as a public school teacher. He was extremely proud of the fact that he made his students memorize the County Seat of each Montana County. Steve is a proud (almost) lifetime Montana resident, and just a good and honest human being. I considered him among my group of friends in law school (although I did not attend Griz games with him, for the

record). Reading through his application, I wholeheartedly agree with his assessment about his integrity being important: several years ago, Steve took me to task when he disagreed with language I had used in the conclusion section of a brief which criticized the State's actions. My mother, also a public school teacher, freely used words like "asinine" and, as a young attorney, I never realized the inflammatory nature of the word. Steve made sure that I did. However, we were able to mend fences fairly quickly and successfully resolve the case (which involved over 200 misdemeanor counts) without the need for trial.

***Judge David Grubich***

Our Standing Master, Judge Grubich, would also make an excellent judge. Prior to obtaining the Standing Master position, I knew Dave primarily through service on the Board of Directors of the Cascade County Law Clinic. (We specialized in different areas of law, so I never had an opportunity to evaluate him as a practitioner. However, the Judge's reputation among the members of the Bar was impeccable. I've never heard anyone relate an instance of Dave being disrespectful or losing his temper with other members of the bar or litigants.) Judge Grubich was very invested in the Board's mission, access to justice, and was not just a passive participant. In reviewing Dave's application, I was struck by the breadth of his life experience, including service to his country and experience as a law-enforcement officer.

I'm always hesitant to recommend former law enforcement officers, or attorneys who only have exposure to civil practice, to the bench because I find that they often bend over backwards to rubber-stamp the State's action, or are hesitant to make any legally correct, albeit unpopular, decision. (For example, years ago, a District Court Judge ruled in my client's favor suppressing a coerced confession, which resulted in the dismissal of a deliberate homicide charge. I've always respected her, a former prosecutor, for that.) I don't have that concern with Judge Grubich; I honestly believe he is fair, and very capable of understanding the sometimes-complex nuances of Constitutional issues. Prior to ascending to the bench, at our annual Cascade County Bar Dinner Dave was always at the forefront of either the comedy (and I use that term loosely) portion or actively soliciting funds for the law clinic through our "raise the gavel" fundraiser.

I've appeared and argued in front of Judge Grubich dozens of times. He's not always ruled in my favor, but I appreciate his thoughtful, conscientious decision making. His even-keel approach is much appreciated in hotly contested, emotional, and sometimes downright nasty custody hearings. I appreciate that he makes timely, decisive rulings and does not make litigants wait weeks for a ruling. Dave is organized, highly intelligent and empathetic.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a recommendation for these two excellent candidates. Because you have two extremely qualified individuals, selecting our new Eighth Judicial District Court Judge is a task I do not envy.

Sincerely,



Meghan Lulf Sutton  
Attorney at Law



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](mailto:bmclaughlin@mt.gov) \*\*

Re: Professional Reference (Hon. Steve Bolstad) -- Mont. 8<sup>th</sup> Jud. Dist. Court Vacancy

Dear Commission Members:

Please consider this correspondence in support of the application of the Hon. Steve Bolstad for nomination for appointment as a District Court Judge in the upcoming vacancy in the Montana Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County. In my various capacities in the legal profession over the years, I have known and observed Steve to be an excellent practicing lawyer and judge in the various capacities in which he has served.

In my 14-year tenure as a state district judge in the Montana Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County, I frequently observed Steve prosecute a wide variety of felony criminal cases and various other matters of state and local concern within the wide scope of duties of Montana county attorneys. Both in my prior tenure as a district judge and now on the Montana Supreme Court, I frequently have and continue to review Steve's work as the Great Falls Municipal Court Judge. I know Steve to be highly respected as a Municipal Court Judge in the local legal and law enforcement communities and in the Great Falls community at large.

Steve is an exceptional, highly-competent and experienced judge of the utmost personal and professional integrity. He has a proven blend of expertise, wide-ranging experience, integrity, fair and reasoned judgment, balanced demeanor, and professionalism which will well-serve the citizens of the State of Montana as a District Court Judge in the Montana Eighth Judicial District in Cascade County. 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



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

Dear Committee Members,

I am glad to have this opportunity to support the application of Judge Steven Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District Court of Montana.

My name is Steven Fagenstrom. I was born and raised in Cascade County, I spent 10 years in Portland Oregon obtaining my law degree and practicing law before returning home in 1995. I practiced law in Oregon and Montana for 20 years before becoming the Cascade County Justice of the Peace in 2007.

I have known Judge Bolstad since 2003 when he was working as a Deputy County Attorney for Cascade County. As Defense Counsel I represented Defendants in misdemeanor cases with Judge Bolstad as the prosecuting attorney. I found him to be a fair and just litigator who could be counted on to represent the State's and the Public's interests while still respecting the rights and dignity of an accused citizen.

When I became Justice of the Peace, Judge Bolstad continued to demonstrate the characteristics of fairness and justice that allowed the Court handle cases in a timely manner. As a judge I found Judge Bolstad's plea negotiations to be more than reasonable to all parties involved and I do not recall ever needing to alter or deviate from the recommendations made in the plea agreements submitted by the parties. In Court, Judge Bolstad demonstrated the highest level of professionalism and integrity, even when dealing with the most difficult of cases, attorneys or litigants.

When Judge Bolstad became the Municipal Court Judge for the city of Great Falls he also became one of the Judges of the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. In Montana the Limited Courts handle the vast majority of the Court cases. According to The State of the Judiciary report from Chief Justice Mike McGrath, dated January 24, 2019, there are approximately 1000 new cases filed in Montana Courts every day, 360,000 per year. The Courts of Limited Jurisdiction handle about 300,000 of those cases. the remaining matters are filed in the District Courts. Great Falls Municipal Court has one of the

largest caseloads in the State. Judge Bolstad has effectively managed this heavy caseload single handedly. It is noteworthy that a second Judge has been approved for the city, but to date only Judge Bolstad is on the bench.

The Eighth Judicial District has long been considered as one of the most over worked districts when considering caseload. Two additional Judges are recommended for the District, but there is no assurance that the legislature will provide for these positions in the near future. Therefore, it is important that the next appointed Judge be able to step into the position with the ability to immediately perform the duties of the Judge. Judge Bolstad has experience in handling the large caseload of the Great Falls Municipal Court. He will be more than capable of immediately handling the caseload of a District Court Judge.

Judge Bolstad has the legal knowledge and experience necessary to perform the duties of a District Court Judge. Limited Court Judges attend mandatory judicial training twice per year and are tested shortly after taking the bench and then every 4 years thereafter. Judge Bolstad is one of the educators for the new judges. He has been instrumental in insuring that the Judges in Montana are well prepared and able to server the citizens of this state. Judge Bolstad's abilities as an educator are excellent, no doubt due in part to the fact that, prior to his legal career, Judge Bolstad was a teacher in public schools. Judge Bolstad has shared his extensive legal knowledge with every current Limited Court Judge in this state, and via the social media he continues to educate judges on an almost daily basis.

In addition to teaching fellow Judges, Judge Bolstad is a valued member of the Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. I am also privileged to serve on the Commission. This commission is comprised of representatives for judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, the court clerks, the Montana Magistrates, the public at large and the Montana Supreme Court. The Commission's main function is to set curriculum for the Limited Court Judges, facilitate and oversee the instruction of those Judges and to address any training issues or deficiencies that are identified between the mandatory training programs. Judge Bolstad's extensive legal knowledge is invaluable to the commission and he is highly regarded by the other members.

I have nearly 35 years of legal experience as attorney and judge. In that time I have heard some people in the legal community express the opinion that cases in the Limited Courts do not have the same level of importance as a case in District Court. This perception is false and is a disservice to the entire

judiciary. I have learned that the general public does not distinguish between the District and Limited Courts. And there should be no perceived distinction. Although dollar amounts or criminal penalties may be larger in District Court, the Constitutional rights and applicable legal principles are the same, and to the litigants, their individual matters are of utmost critical importance regardless of which Court they are standing in. Judge Bolstad also believes that every litigant in Montana expects and is entitled to the same level of judicial expertise, temperament, demeanor and professionalism no matter the Court setting. In my opinion Judge Bolstad can stand toe to toe the best of the Judges in our state and his commitment to our trade is second to none.

In addition to being the Court of general jurisdiction, the District Court is an appellate court for the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. I believe that an applicant who has practiced in the limited jurisdiction courts and adjudicated cases in those courts should be given more consideration than a person who has seldom or never appeared in those forums. As noted above, the Limited Jurisdiction Courts are where the majority of the litigation takes place, and those Courts have their own unique rules and procedures than many attorneys do not know. Judge Bolstad had extensive knowledge of the rules and procedures in all of the Courts of this state.

Another important factor for consideration in the selection of the next District Court Judge is the candidate's electability in future elections. It is important that the person who is appointed has the support of the population and that the person can serve in more than just an interim basis. Judge Bolstad has the support of this community as demonstrated by his reelection to his current position. As I have stated above, the general population does not distinguish between the levels of judgeship. The public have, by electing Judge Bolstad, shown in the past that they support him as judge. He has strong community support that will serve him well in a contested election. It is my opinion that no one will run against him if appointed, and many will seek to have him run if he is not.

Finally, the more I have come to know Judge Bolstad, the more amazed I am at the things he has done in his life. I do not pretend to know everything about him, but I know he has held positions anywhere from the simple life of a sheep herder to that of a revered teacher. In our time together we have traveled to many different places in Montana. He seems to know someone in almost every town and city of our state and it is a common occurrence when we are together in another town to have someone who knows Judge Bolstad join us and pick up a conversation, treating him as a cherished friend. These life experiences and social relationships have given Judge Bolstad broad social foundation and a strong

sense of community that keeps him grounded and serves him well as a person who must administer justice to the members of the community. He can relate to the people whom he serves.

I do not believe that you will meet a better candidate for the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Sincerely

Steven T. Fagenstrom  
Cascade County Justice of the Peace



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

Dear Commission Members,

Thank you for this opportunity for me to support the application of Judge Steven Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District Court of Montana.

I have known Judge Bolstad since 2014. I met him at a training/certification for the lower court judges. Judge Bolstad was one of the "Boot Camp" training judges for new judges such as I. I was immediately impressed with his knowledge of the law and further impressed with his approach to fairness and rehabilitation of defendants. Judge Bolstad has the integrity and experience to be the newest Eighth Judicial District Court Judge.

By appointing Judge Bolstad to the position, it will be a seamless transition as he is a Municipal Court Judge and thus a court of record. He will readily and immediately understand the appeal process from the lower courts let alone more than able to handle his own cases. He has the knowledge to immediately handle both civil and criminal cases.

Judge Bolstad is also a member of the Commission of Courts of Limited Jurisdiction and thus constantly assisting with not only training lower court judges but also court clerks. I have stood side by side Judge Bolstad teaching several classes and his innate ability to explain the law to classes let alone "simplify" the understanding of the law amazes me. He has the ability to communicate with anyone at any level, this is an art commonly lost in the legal world. All the students review of Judge Bolstad are the highest.

As the Justice of the Peace and Lewistown City Court Judge, I often see defendants who have interacted with Judge Bolstad, and the common thread of their conversation with me is Judge Bolstad is "fair".

Lastly Judge Bolstad understands the scourge of addictions and has and will understand how to communicate about the disease of addictions with defendants. He knows what he has in his ability to help guide a person to sobriety to become a better citizen.

In choosing Judge Bolstad for Eighth Judicial District Court Judge please remember these simple words I have referencing Judge Bolstad:

Integrity  
Service  
Respect  
Honesty  
Community  
Family  
Experience  
Sincere

Thank you for your time.



Kelly Mantooth

Fergus County Justice of the Peace  
Lewistown City Court Judge



Samir Aarab, Attorney  
sfaarab@bolandaarab.com

Caitlin Boland Aarab, Attorney  
cbaarab@bolandaarab.com

August 28, 2020

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

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

We write in support of Municipal Court Judge Steven Bolstad's application to fill the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship vacancy occasioned by Judge Pinski's resignation.

We have had the pleasure of practicing in Judge Bolstad's court for three years. In that time, we have found Judge Bolstad to be compassionate toward our clients, fair in his application of the law, and decisive in his rulings. We have won motions and arguments and trials in front of him, and we have lost. But every time we appear in his courtroom, we know that our clients will get a fair hearing and that their case will be decided on the facts and the law, and not on the Judge's prejudices or biases or past experiences with the client. We believe Judge Bolstad has the right temperament to be a respected and effective district court judge.

Thank you for considering our perspective.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Caitlin Aarab'.

Caitlin Boland Aarab  
BOLAND AARAB PLLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Samir F. Aarab'.

Samir F. Aarab  
BOLAND AARAB PLLP

## Cook, Kevin

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**From:** Menzies, Lois  
**Sent:** Monday, August 31, 2020 8:13 PM  
**To:** Cook, Kevin  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad

**From:** Jensen, Larry  
**Sent:** Monday, August 31, 2020 10:59 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** Steven Bolstad 8th Judicial District Court recommendation

I would like to add my name to the list of people recommending Judge Steve Bolstad for 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. I have been a Justice of the Peace for 10 years and getting to know Steve professionally has helped me grow as a judge. I have found him to be impartial, informed and most importantly his knowledge of the law impressive as I have researched many of the laws and rulings he has quoted. Most importantly he is willing to share his knowledge and his common sense approach to the law is good fit for the judicial system in the state of Montana.

*Larry W. Jensen  
Sheridan County Justice of the Peace  
100 W Laurel Ave  
Plentywood, MT 59254  
406-765-3409*



Joel M. Thompson  
Attorney at Law  
1241 Lewis Ave.  
Billings, MT 59102  
September 3, 2020

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

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I submit this letter in strong support and full endorsement of Steven Bolstad for District Court Judge for the Eighth Judicial District.

I have known Steve for approximately 17 years. I worked with Steve for 7 years when we were both Deputy Cascade County Attorneys in Great Falls. I knew him to be a thoughtful and highly ethical prosecutor. I was delighted when he took over as City Court Judge because I knew he had the temperament, skill, empathy, intelligence, and fairness necessary for that job. I believe his tenure there has borne that out.

Likewise, when I discovered that Steve had put in his application for District Court Judge, I immediately knew I would be writing a letter of support. Steve is motivated by a genuine sense of public service, and his application to this District Court position – I am confident to say – is based solely in his desire to expand the scope of his service. Steve is not motivated by ego, ambition, power, or prestige. He would be an excellent addition to the Eighth Judicial District Court. I am proud to know him and his wonderful wife.

I highly recommend Steve Bolstad for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/Joel M. Thompson  
Attorney at Law

Mr. Thomas M. McKittrick  
511 - 4th Avenue North  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
September 2, 2020

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

Dear Committee:

My name is Thomas M. McKittrick. I served over thirty years as a District Court Judge, in and for the Eighth Judicial District, Great Falls, Montana. From this vantage point, I write this letter in complete support of Municipal Court Judge Steven B. Bolstad's application to be appointed to the Eighth Judicial Court.

I have known Judge Bolstad for approximately seventeen years, and have found him to be a highly intelligent and affable member of our community. He is a Great Falls, Montana native, educated in our local public schools. His father was a Great Falls fireman. His mother was a nurse, who worked in one of our local hospitals, and then as an office nurse for Dr. John T. Molloy.

Upon graduation from college, he became a teacher, and a coach in all sports. After six years as an educator, he enrolled in the University of Montana School of Law, now known as the Blewett School of Law. While in law school, he joined the Native American Law Students Association, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Judge Bolstad has a strong sense of giving back to his community, and this desire to serve continues to this day. His wife works as a counselor at Neighborhood Works Great Falls, and he volunteers whenever possible to assist that organization. He also volunteers his time to the Drug Take Back Program in Great Falls, and to the Weed and Seed Program, to assist in the effort to reduce crime in Great Falls.

Immediately after graduating from law school, he went to work for the Elk River Law Firm in Billings, Montana, representing Native Americans and tribes in all Montana courts. He gained experience in general civil litigation and personal injury litigation, while in Billings.

I first met Mr. Steve Bolstad after he was hired as a civil attorney for Cascade County. After a period of time, he transferred to the criminal side, and became a prosecutor. During his tenure with Cascade County, which lasted approximately eleven years, Mr. Bolstad appeared in my courtroom on numerous occasions. He was always well prepared, always on time, and his motions, pleadings and answers were promptly filed. Although he was tenacious, he was, without fail, respectful to the court, litigants, witnesses and attorneys. Steve Bolstad knows his way around the courtroom.

Judge Bolstad's character and honesty are above reproach. If appointed, I am certain he will base his deliberations on the facts of each case, apply the appropriate law to those facts, and thus reach a just decision. He will not favor or disfavor a litigant based on race, color, creed, gender, or sexual orientation. He will be very fair and unbiased judge.

Judge Bolstad has been a Municipal Court Judge for approximately six years. During that time, he has proven to be a good listener. He is patient and respectful to all people appearing in his courtroom. He is able to control his courtroom under often stressful conditions, with restraint and without overreacting. He recognizes that good people sometimes make bad decisions, and that some people continue to make bad decisions. He is unafraid to hold defendants accountable when justified. He is able to identify arguments cloaked in studied ambiguity, which is often the hallmark of a weak and losing position. His record of service and representation of minorities is indicative of a good person with empathy for all people.

Judge Bolstad has faced a crushing caseload in Municipal Court. He is diligent and works hard to keep his docket current. This experience and work ethic will serve him well in the Eighth Judicial District, which is an extremely busy court. He has already proven that he is a talented, capable judge, who enjoys his work. He is collegial, and will work well with the other District Court Judges. He definitely is electable!

Judge Bolstad is a credit to his family, his community and his chosen profession. I am recommending him without reservation, and I urge this honorable commission to receive his application with favor, and forward his name to Governor Bullock for appointment as the next judge in Department A of the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Respectfully,



Thomas M. McKittrick  
District Court Judge (Retired)

## Cook, Kevin

---

**From:** Menzies, Lois  
**Sent:** Friday, September 4, 2020 11:44 AM  
**To:** Cook, Kevin  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad

**From:** Shaw, Cody  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 2, 2020 8:34 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** Judicial Nomination Commission- Bolstad

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Cody Shaw, I was elected Justice of the Peace for Pondera County in 2019. I have not only been through “New Judge Training,” where Judge Bolstad was an instructor, but also attended conferences with him twice a year. When coming into the position of Justice of the Peace having a Mental Health (Counseling) and Probation and Parole (Law Enforcement) background, I was not sure how I would fit in the Judicial world with a different view of people than most. I was thankful that Judge Bolstad was one of the first people that I meet. He welcomed me with open arms and made me feel very confident that my background would not hinder but only a benefit in becoming a Justice of the Peace. We have spent hours talking about “thinking outside of the box” when it comes to sentencing individuals as well as seeing people as individuals, where they come from, and understanding them. I have worked for several years in the District Courts and several District Court Judges and County Attorneys. I have supervised over a hundred individuals on felony probation, addiction, and mental health issues being a common factor. I have found that when a Judge sentences an individual based



on their individual needs and situation, the individual has a much higher chance of success. Judge Bolstad is the type of person who will make the best decision for the community and each defendant. Judge Bolstad has been a fantastic mentor to myself and many other Judges in the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. He has always had time to answer any questions I have had while on the bench. If the 8th Judicial District court is lucky enough to have Judge Bolstad sit on their bench, he will become an invaluable member of that district just like he has with the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction.

Thank you for your time.

# Great Falls *Police Protective Association*



P.O. Box 451  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
(406) 771-1180  
Tax I.D. # 47-1913343

RE: Great Falls Police Protection Association Endorses Steven Bolstad for 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge

The Great Falls Police Protective Association would like to take this opportunity to announce our endorsement of The Honorable Judge Steven Bolstad in his bid to be elected as the next 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge.

The GFPPA has had the opportunity to work with Judge Bolstad during his tenure as the City of Great Falls Municipal Court Judge and also when he served as a Deputy County Attorney with the Cascade County Attorney's Office. Judge Bolstad is strong proponent of public safety and individual rights and has displayed an unwavering commitment to upholding Montana State Law and the US Constitution.

The GFPPA, as a body, can speak to Judge Bolstad's strength and diligence in protecting the most vulnerable members of our community, while maintaining his personal commitment to the ethics of his profession.

This endorsement comes with careful consideration; following a question and answer forum open to all GFPPA members and a ballot process. The endorsement of Judge Bolstad was passed by this body a majority vote and we wish him well in his efforts in the upcoming appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie Cunningham".

Katie Cunningham

GFPPA President

Sheila Rice  
913 3<sup>rd</sup> Av N  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
406-868-7933  
[sheilaricemt@outlook.com](mailto:sheilaricemt@outlook.com)

September 4, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
Office of Court Administration  
Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Nomination of Steve Bolstad

Members of the Commission:

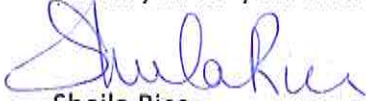
I write in support of the nomination of Steve Bolstad to the position of Eighth Judicial District Judgeship. I have witnessed Steve in his role of Municipal Court Judge many times and have marveled at his skills of applying the law fairly and equally. His demeanor in court is admirable, often in the face of anger and disappointment. He works with the defendants to achieve workable plans for fines and assessments; at the same time, letting them know that they must fulfill their part of the agreement or face the consequences.

Steve's experience in the Cascade County Attorney's office gives him valuable grounding in the operation of the District Court, with an understanding of caseload and administrative functions. I find him achieving the balance between assisting the defendant in their return to productive society and understanding that the punishment must fit the crime. Steve is a good listener, taking in all sides of a discussion and he is very aware of Native culture and complexity.

Beyond his role as Municipal Court Judge, Steve is involved in his community, having volunteered at NeighborWorks Great Falls many times for a variety of community events and projects.

Please call or email if you have any questions or would like me to expand on any of these points. I believe that Steve would make an excellent District Court Judge.

Thank you for your time

  
Sheila Rice

FLATHEAD COUNTY JUSTICE COURT

Eric Hummel  
Justice of the Peace  
Paul Sullivan  
Justice of the Peace



Flathead County Justice Center  
920 South Main St. Suite 210  
Kalispell, Montana 59901  
(406) 758-5643

September 3, 2020

Montana Judicial Nomination Commission  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Steve Bolstad

Dear Commission Members:

I write this letter in support of Judge Steve Bolstad's consideration for district judge of the Eight Judicial District.

I have known Steve since 2016, when he served as my training judge following my appointment as Flathead County Justice of the Peace. He knows the law and teaches it well. Although I did not appear before him as a practicing attorney, I have had the opportunity to observe and listen to his presentations at six judicial training conferences. Judge Bolstad has consistently displayed the knowledge, ethics, and demeanor I would expect from a district judge. Please give him the utmost consideration.

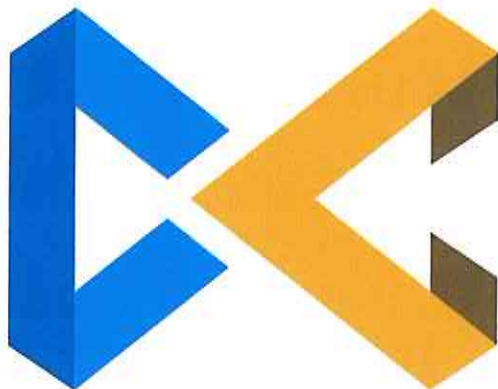
Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "EHL", is written over the typed name.

Eric Hummel  
Justice Of The Peace, Dept. 1

cc: Steve Bolstad



# CAPPIS CONSULTING & TAX LLC

September 2, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this to express my support for Judge Steve Bolstad to replace Judge Pinski. I have looked at the people that have expressed an interest in the position and know most of them in some fashion or another. I believe that all of them do will in this position in their own right. However, I believe that Judge Bolstad would be the best choice out of these candidates to fill this position.

His overall experience and his ability to listen and see both sides of an argument make him an excellent candidate for this position. I have known him for over 35 years and have always found him to be honest, forthright, and above reproach. He takes his work seriously but not himself. He would be a great asset to the community in this position and as such I wholeheartedly endorse him for this position.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Cappis, C.P.A.



August 31, 2020

Montana Judicial Nomination Comm.  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Steven Bolstad endorsement

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to endorse Steven Bolstad as the next 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge in Cascade County.

As former Cascade County Treasurer/County Superintendent of County Schools, I worked closely with Steven for a number of years as he served as Deputy Cascade County Attorney.

During our time with Cascade County, Steven and I worked through a wide variety of situations in areas ranging from property tax issues/foreclosures, personnel issues, school hearings and motor vehicle issues. Frequently, the issues I worked with Steve on were challenging, and at times, emotional due to the nature of the concern. Steven has always demonstrated professionalism, understanding, honesty and holds high regards to his moral standards.

Steven Bolstad would be a great choice to serve as the next 8th Judicial District Court Judge for Cascade County. If you should have any question, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jess Anderson  
(406) 453-6068

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

PO Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

This letter is in support of Steven Bolstad for Eighth Judicial District Judge. We have known Steve personally for some 20 plus years and have always found him to be a man of integrity. His honest, straightforward approach towards the law is impressive. His history as an educator and later as a defense and prosecuting attorney has only strengthened his abilities on the bench. Compassion and fairness are evident in all interactions that he has with everyone. His appointment would be a positive asset to the County, the State of Montana and the judicial institution. We, therefore, wholeheartedly endorse Steven Bolstad for the position of Eighth District Judge.

Respectfully,

Sally Rodibaugh

Michael Fahley

406-839-0944

mfahley@q.com

September 8, 2020

To: Judicial Nomination Commission:

Re: Bolstad, Steven Brian

I would like to take this opportunity to nominate Steven Brian Bolstad for the Eight Judicial District Court Judge Vacancy, Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana.

I was privileged to be introduced to Mr. Bolstad in 2009 while I was employed with the State of Montana, Department of Corrections, as State Probation and Parole Officer, in Great Falls, Montana. Mr. Bolstad at that time was working for the Cascade County Attorney's Office and handled numerous of my Court disciplines while I was employed specifically the Pre-Sentence Investigations and Report of Violations.

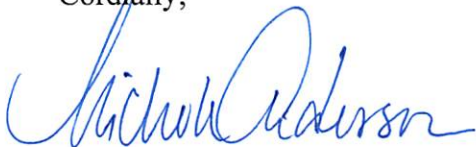
Mr. Bolstad a true leader in my opinion because he always taken the time to explain the legal guidelines when questions arose during authoring pre-sentence investigations. Mr. Bolstad was open to working with the criminal population and trying to keep them in the community, if their violations were not significant, and did not warrant custody time. Mr. Bolstad was in my eyes was a well-rounded attorney that had the experience and guidance when it came to educate new hires either with the County Attorney's Office or Probation and Parole Office to excel in their careers.

In 2014, Mr. Bolstad started his new endeavor as the City Municipal Judge here in Great Falls, Montana. I have been privileged to watch him on the bench while City Court is in operation. Mr. Bolstad continues maintains the balance of holding people accountable for their actions and having compassion when they are before him. I have witnessed this firsthand in my new career as a Federal Probation Officer here in Great Falls, Montana. I currently supervise criminals in the community whom when appear before Mr. Bolstad, report back they were "held accountable, but it was fair."

If Mr. Bolstad would be appointed to serve as an Eight Judicial District Court Judge, I have no qualm that he would not be a true leader for Cascade County. Mr. Bolstad has a knowledgeable legal system background, the upmost integrity when upholding the law, he continues to communicate with the law enforcement agencies, he continues to hold people before him accountable, he promotes public safety, and he shows compassion when needed. Mr. Bolstad would be an asset to the citizens of Cascade County.

If there are any further questions, please feel free to call.

Cordially,



Nichole Anderson  
United States Probation Officer  
125 Central Ave West, Suite 120  
Great Falls, Montana  
406-217-6192



# CASCADE COUNTY

*State of Montana*

Telephone: (406) 454-6915 Criminal Department

(406) 454-6904 Civil Department

FAX: (406) 454-6949



*Joshua A. Racki*

*County Attorney*

*121 Fourth Street North – Suite 2A*

*Great Falls, Montana 59401*

September 8, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Lois Menzies

Office of Court Administrator

P.O. Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Judge Steve Bolstad, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Application

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

I am writing you today on behalf of Judge Steve Bolstad. I first met Judge Bolstad fifteen years ago. Back then I was a brand new prosecutor and Judge Bolstad was the Justice Court prosecutor I was replacing. He took me to my first court appearances and shepherded me through my first few weeks as a prosecutor.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has one of the busiest criminal calendars in the state. As the only municipal court judge in Great Falls Judge Bolstad is used to a packed court docket. His experience being a busy municipal court judge will be a great asset to him as a busy district court judge.

The key to being a good judge is impartiality. The rules of law must be imposed without regard to who the litigants are or what positions they take. Judge Bolstad shows his neutrality and fairness in each of his rulings. This trait is one of the most important qualities a potential judge must possess and Judge Bolstad possesses this trait in spades. When appearing in front of Judge Bolstad every attorney knows they will get a fair shake.

It is a great honor that I recommend to the Judicial Nomination Commission Judge Bolstad for appointment as the new District Court Judge for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.

Respectfully,

A blue ink signature of Joshua A. Racki is written over a horizontal line.

Joshua A. Racki  
Cascade County Attorney

Doug Mahlum  
Lieutenant  
Great Falls Police Department  
P.O. Box 465  
Great Falls, MT 59403

**September 10th, 2020**

**Montana Judicial Nomination Commission**

c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of Court Administrator  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Dear Commission Members:

This letter is to provide my resounding support for of the Honorable Steve Bolstad to be nominated by your committee and appointed by Governor Bullock to the Judgeship vacancy in the Montana Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County.

I have known Steve Bolstad since 2003 when he began working for the Cascade County Attorney's Office. During Steve's service with the Cascade County Attorney's Office he prosecuted several cases I had investigated as a detective with the Great Falls Police Department. Steve and I worked closely together on two especially difficult homicide cases that both went to trial and convictions obtained. Both cases were very complex and tough to prosecute. As was the norm, Steve handled these cases with the utmost professionalism. As a prosecutor, Steve would never accept evidence provided by investigators as "gospel", but vigorously challenged us to make sure the evidence was of the highest standard. In meeting with victims, Steve was always compassionate and comforting.

As explained in his application, Steve went on to become the City of Great Falls Municipal Court Judge, where he currently serves. Steve has absolutely transformed this court into a court of professional compassion and accountability. I have never known Steve to be one to sit idly. His drive to establish a successful Mental Health Treatment Court within Municipal Court is proof of this. It was not something he had to do, but because of his compassion for his fellow citizen, he accomplished this. In all cases he presides over he treats each critical piece of the court, Defendant, Defense Counsel, Prosecutors, Bailiff, Jury, Court Staff, and Witnesses with the utmost respect and because of this he's earned the respect of all those who've been before him in his court room.

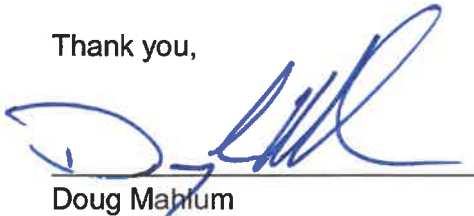
Most importantly, Steve is absolutely one of the most fascinating people I have ever met during my 19-years of law enforcement. His extremely vast life experiences have shaped him into an outstanding professional. Steve is not only a lifelong citizen of Montana, but was born and raised here in Great Falls. He was raised by public servants who clearly instilled in him the life of service to others.

Steve's compassion for mankind and his own humility are beyond reproach. Steve thrives in the life of a public servant. The position of District Court Judge is a leadership role within any community in Montana. This is a role that Steve is prepared to take on and one that he will excel in. He will never allow bias or prejudgment to impact his decisions from the bench. He will always treat anyone who would be before him with the utmost respect and courtesy. He truly is an individual that is educated and experienced on all aspects of not only our community but also our state. I know him to be an informed decision maker and he draws from not only his vast legal knowledge, but also from his own life experiences, and his understanding of people from all backgrounds in life.

In closing, Steve Bolstad would be an excellent choice to serve as the next Judge for the Montana Eighth Judicial District, Cascade County. Steve has proven himself to have extraordinary personal and professional integrity. He is an accomplished legal professional who always carries himself with humility and has the utmost passion for our community.

I highly recommend Steve Bolstad be nominated for appointment by Governor Bullock.

Thank you,



Doug Mahlum



# Great Falls Fire Fighters

## International Association of Fire Fighters Local # 8

PO Box 7256  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
Phone: 406-868-2643

September 9, 2020

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

RE: Steven Brian Bolstad, applicant for the Eight Judicial District.

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

On behalf of the 64 members of the Great Falls Fire Fighters IAFF Local 8, I am submitting this letter of support for Municipal Court Judge Steven Brian Bolstad for his nomination to the Eight Judicial District.

Judge Bolstad is a native Montanan and was born and raised in Great Falls and graduated from the Great Falls Public School System. Steve has served with the Cascade County Attorney's office and is currently the Municipal Court Judge for the City of Great Falls. While working in these capacities, Steve has developed a strong understanding of the community in which he lives and serves and has proven to be dedicated to his positions.

Steve has a strong work ethic starting early in his career as a fire fighter with the US Forest Service. He has a solid understanding of labor relations as his father was a Great Falls Fire Fighter and a member of IAFF Local 8 and Steve himself has been a proud Union member.

For the reasons stated above, the Great Falls Fire Fighters IAFF Local 8 is honored to endorse Steven Brian Bolstad for the nomination of Eight Judicial District Court Judge.

Respectfully submitted,

David Van Son  
President; IAFF Local 8

# Bieler

William R. Bieler, Esq.

## Law, P.C.

# BL

P.O. Box 1350  
216 Main Ave. North  
Choteau, Montana 59422

Phone: (406) 466-5755  
Fax: (406) 466-5754  
bielerlawpc.com  
Email: wrbieler@3rivers.net

September 11, 2020

(SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL)

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

RE: Steve Bolstad

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

Please accept this unsolicited letter in support of Steve Bolstad being nominated as the next Cascade County District Court Judge.

I have known Mr. Bolstad for over twenty years. We were in law school together, though not in the same class. I have never been in his Court, and have never had a case with or against him. I know him only on a social level, and admittedly have not seen him in a couple years. However, people of Mr. Bolstad's character rarely change. He has the personality and demeanor to be a terrific district court judge. He is compassionate, humble, smart, self deprecating, and conscientious. He also has a good sense of humor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

BIELER LAW, P.C.



William R. Bieler, Esq.

WRB/jaj

# BLAINE COUNTY JUSTICE COURT

Blaine County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 1266  
Chinook, Montana 59523  
(406) 357-2335  
FAX: (406) 357-2361

---

JIM L. DOYLE  
Clerk of Justice Court

PERRY W. MILLER  
Justice of the Peace

CINDY DENNIS  
Court Compliance Officer

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

September 14, 2020

Dear Commission Members:

It is a pleasure to write this recommendation for Judge Steven Bolstad. Steve is currently seeking nomination to the Eight Judicial District Court bench, recently vacated by the Honorable Greg Pinski.

A short introduction of myself, I am Perry W. Miller, I am the Blaine County Justice of the Peace and serve as Judge in the Chinook and Harlem City Courts, I have been on the bench for 28 years. I currently serve as the Chairperson for the Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction.

I have known Steve Bolstad for many years and through many of his life endeavors'. He is an extraordinary person. His integrity, commitment, dedication, and demeanor are of highest standard in Judicial service. His impartiality and fairness are self-evident in his work, and a glowing representation of our independent judiciary.

I have had the privilege of working side by side with Judge Bolstad as a judicial educator. His knowledge of the law in all matters civil and criminal is exceptional. He is a requested instructor, and an excellent researcher when matters need further clarification. He never fails to present all avenues with equal enthusiasm which gives credit to his integrity and impartiality.

I have stood proudly with Judge Bolstad before the Montana Legislature on many occasions as he advocates to our Legislators for an independent judiciary and judicial discretion. His oratory is eloquent, informative, and well founded. He represents the judiciary in the highest standard.

Steve Bolstad possesses all the Judicial attributes and character that the Commission could possibly seek in a District Court Nominee. However, Steve Bolstad comes with yet other intangible qualifications. The 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has become very innovative in the administration of Justice with the implementation of Drug Court, DUI Court and Veterans Court. The Judges in this District go the extra mile to establish the principals of restorative justice. Steve Bolstad currently presides over one of the highest volume courts in the state. His work ethic is unmatched. He is understanding of the people and situations that come before him. All are treated with respect and dignity. They leave his court knowing they have been treated fairly.



Steve Bolstad is also active in his community to the degree that his canons allow, as is obvious by the local support that he has garnered during his tenure on the bench.

Steve's passion for the people of Montana, the Law, and the Judicial interaction with the people, make him the premier candidate for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court nomination.

Respectfully Submitted,

Perry W. Miller  
Blaine County Justice of the Peace



# LIBERTY COUNTY

STATE OF MONTANA  
LIBERTY COUNTY JUSTICE COURT

HOLLY FREDERICKSON  
Justice of the Peace

JEANNIE FAUERBACH  
Clerk

September 8, 2020

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

To the Esteemed Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of the application of Steven Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District position vacated by Judge Pinski. I have been acquainted with and worked with Judge Bolstad for the past 6 1/2 years, since his appointment as the Judge for City of Great Falls.

Judge Bolstad is a brilliant jurist who is fair, insightful and works diligently to ensure that defendants are treated equitably and that every person's constitutional rights are upheld.

I have also had the pleasure of serving on the Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction with Judge Bolstad. He well serves the Commission both as a Training Judge and as a member of the Legislative Committee. I have the privilege of being the Chief Training Judge who oversees a training committee of several judges. We are responsible for an initial audit of each new judge's office and their initial training. Judge Bolstad is a remarkable trainer. He has the ability to put "nervous new judges" at ease and answer their questions while encouraging them to put the law first. Additionally, Judge Bolstad has presented on several topics for the semi-annual COLJ training. His ability to present to his peers carries both confidence and exceptional knowledge of both Montana law and the role of a judge.

Judge Bolstad's moral character is above reproach and his courtroom demeanor and knowledge of the law are exceptional.

Yours truly,

  
The Honorable Holly Frederickson

# McKITTRICK LAW FIRM, P.C.

D. PATRICK McKITTRICK  
TIMOTHY J. McKITTRICK

STRAIN BUILDING



D. Patrick McKittrick  
636 Carol Dr.  
Great Falls, MT 59405-3712

September 8, 2020

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

Re: Montana Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy  
Steve Bolstad

Dear Commission Members:

I support Steve Bolstad's candidacy for the vacant 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Judge's position.

I have known Steve for many years. He has the integrity and competency that more than qualifies him for this important position.

Steve has a passion for the law. He has the judicial temperament to be an outstanding judge.

Finally, Steve has recently been recently reappointed to the all-important Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction.

Thank you for your favorable consideration of Steve's application.

Very truly yours,



D. Patrick McKittrick



# HOYT & BLEWETT PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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

September 9, 2020

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

Email: [lmenzies@mt.gov](mailto:lmenzies@mt.gov)  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

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

Re: Honorable Steven Bolstad Letter of Support

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

My name is Anders Blewett, and I am a partner at the law firm of Hoyt and Blewett PLLC in Great Falls, Montana. I am writing to voice my support for the appointment of the Honorable Steven Bolstad to the judicial vacancy in the 8th Judicial District created by the retirement of the Honorable Gregory Pinski.

I have known Judge Bolstad for over a decade. Judge Bolstad was appointed to the Montana Legislature in 2007. During the brief time he served in the Legislature, Judge Bolstad earned a reputation as a problem solver who was open-minded and could work well with others. I first met Judge Bolstad in 2007 when we were both running for the Montana Legislature. During the 2007 campaign, I frequently interacted with Judge Bolstad out on the campaign trail and at the Democratic campaign headquarters. Judge Bolstad ran a very strong campaign. After working all day for the Cascade County Attorney's Office, Judge Bolstad would knock on doors each night until dark and then campaign all weekend long. While he narrowly lost the election, his hard work and dedication stood out from the pack and nearly got him elected in a very challenging legislative district.

From the time I met him, Judge Bolstad has always distinguished himself as a caring, compassionate, and even-tempered leader in our community. Even during the throes of a hotly disputed legislative campaign he always managed to keep a light heart and maintain positivity. As a Judge, he has continued to distinguish himself as an impartial jurist who exhibits the highest level of professional integrity.

Judge Bolstad is a dedicated public servant with a proven track record in the law. He has a

The Montana Judicial Nomination Commission  
September 9, 2020  
Page 2

well-rounded legal background that has prepared him to handle the large work load in the 8th Judicial District. I strongly recommend that the Judicial Nomination Commission appoint Hon. Steven Bolstad to be the next State District Court Judge for the 8th Judicial District.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anders Blewett".

Anders Blewett

AB:jj

August 31, 2020

Montana Judicial Nomination Comm.  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Steven Bolstad endorsement

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to endorse Steven Bolstad as the next 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge in Cascade County.

As former Cascade County Treasurer/County Superintendent of County Schools, I worked closely with Steven for a number of years as he served as Deputy Cascade County Attorney.

During our time with Cascade County, Steven and I worked through a wide variety of situations in areas ranging from property tax issues/foreclosures, personnel issues, school hearings and motor vehicle issues. Frequently, the issues I worked with Steve on were challenging, and at times, emotional due to the nature of the concern. Steven has always demonstrated professionalism, understanding, honesty and holds high regards to his moral standards.

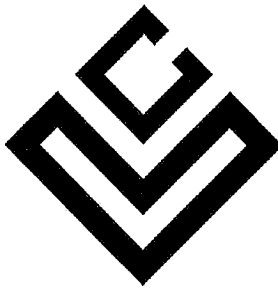
Steven Bolstad would be a great choice to serve as the next 8th Judicial District Court Judge for Cascade County. If you should have any question, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jess Anderson", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Jess Anderson  
(406) 453-6068





**LAIRD COWLEY** PLLC  
— ATTORNEYS AT LAW —

September 14, 2020

*VIA EMAIL TO MTSUPREMECOURT@MT.GOV AND U.S. MAIL*

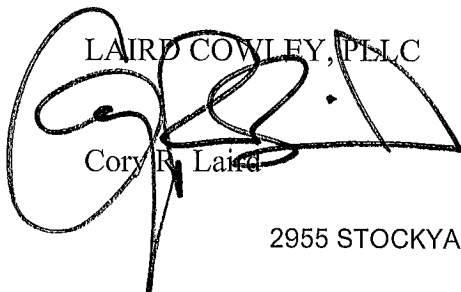
Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of Court Administrator  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Dear Montana Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing to recommend Steve Bolstad for the judicial appointment to the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Montana. I have known Steve for more than 20 years and can personally attest to his character, legal acumen, and passion for justice. Steve and I were classmates in law school, starting together in the fall of 1997. We became quick friends—mostly because of Steve's personality and love for the law was contagious. Steve could find interest in even the most tedious subjects. Put simply, the law and the opportunity to work within the legal system mattered to Steve—more than it did to most. I'm happy to say that for Steve, these things matter today as much as they ever have.

As an attorney, Steve worked tirelessly to advance the interests of Native Americans in Southeast Montana. After returning home to Great Falls, Steve sought the position of Municipal Judge handling hundreds of cases per year, all the while with a smile on his face. I have spoken to many attorneys, parties, and law enforcement agents who have appeared in Judge Bolstad's Court. Every one of them recounted stories about Judge Bolstad's fairness, kindness, and professionalism. Regardless of his decision, these people felt that he always listened to the testimony and considered the evidence fairly and rendered a decision honestly. That is exactly why Judge Bolstad should be appointed to the Bench in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. He has worked his entire life for this opportunity. And, if appointed, he will make Cascade County a much better place. I wholeheartedly recommend Steve Bolstad for this position and happily endorse his nomination.

Yours very truly,

  
LAIRD COWLEY, PLLC  
Cory R. Laird

September 15, 2020

Sent via email: [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

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

**RE: Nomination of Steve Bolstad for Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy**

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to provide my recommendation to the Judicial Nomination Commission regarding Hon. Steve Bolstad. I highly recommend Steve as a candidate for the District Court judgeship for the Eighth Judicial District Court in Cascade County, replacing retiring Judge Greg Pinski.

I have experience working with Steve while he was practicing with the Cascade County Attorney's Office. He demonstrated excellent legal and interpersonal skills. He understands the role of a lawyer and judge. His perspective as a sitting Municipal Judge will be of great benefit to him for the District Court position.

Steve would be an excellent jurist for Cascade County. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ben A. Snipes

BAS:mcw



**JEFFREY S. FERGUSON LAW OFFICE, PLLC**  
Attorney at Law

---



July 29, 2020

Steve Bolstad  
Municipal Court Judge  
P.O. Box 5021  
Great Falls, MT 59403

RE: Position for District Court Judge, Eighth Judicial District, Department A

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a sole practitioner, practicing law in Great Falls, MT. I have had the privilege to participate in a number of cases before the Honorable Municipal Court Judge, Steve Bolstad.

I have found Judge Bolstad to be incredibly cordial and also extremely knowledgeable. Doing cases in front of Judge Bolstad generally proceeded very smoothly and fairly.

I think Judge Bolstad would be an extraordinary District Court Judge and we would be lucky to have him as our District Court Judge here in the Eighth Judicial District, Department A.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very Sincerely,

---

JEFFREY S. FERGUSON  
Attorney at Law

JSF/df

July 30, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to my attention that Judge Bolstad is interested in filling the position available upon Judge Pinski's resignation in October 2020.

I have had occasion to become acquainted with Judge Bolstad as a recipient of his fair judgment. I am a retired professional residing in our community since 1973. After my retirement my PTSD from service in Vietnam became a significant problem as well as my bipolar diagnosis. For unknown reasons I found it difficult to stay on my medications resulting in behavior which led to my appearance in Judge Bolstad's court where I was held accountable along with fair judgment. I was also a graduate of the Veteran's Court. Upon my graduation Judge Bolstad was a guest at the ceremony which was a wonderful gesture of his continuing support and care.

I whole heartedly support Judge Bolstad for the upcoming position of District Judge.

Respectfully,

Marvin Harris

620 Park Garden Rd

August 19, 2020

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Steve Bolstad for Cascade County District Court Judge. I have been part of the criminal justice system for twenty-five (25) years and have know Steve since he started his career.

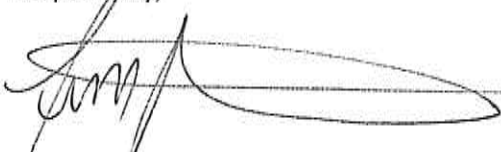
I first started working with Steve Bolstad at the Cascade County Attorneys Office during his time there. I work with him a significant amount to times on cases. During that time, he was always extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Steve when working cases took into consideration the Defendant and the victim. In the end Steve's biggest concern was community safety. I watched Steve Bolstad work hard on cases and show the pure love he had for his job.

When the opening came to be the Municipal Court Judge Steve moved on to that job and did that job just as well. Steve was willing to work with the Offender's to attempt to keep them in compliance, but when they seem to become a risk to the community he would not have any issue placing them in custody.

At all-times Steve Bolstad's chief concern was the safety of the community of Great Falls. I think that Steve Bolstad would be a large asset to the District Court and would be fair and just. I think Steve would excel as a District Court Judge.

I would support Steve Bolstad to be the new District Court Judge in Cascade County. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 406-788-0062

Respectfully,



Tim Hides.



August 24, 2020

To Whom it may Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Steven Bolstad for Cascade County District Court Judge. I have worked in Corrections and Judicial Systems for over thirty years and have always been impressed by the professionalism, compassion for all parties involved and safety not only for victims but for all living in the community that he has served.

I started working with Steven Bolstad when he was working with the County Attorney's Office. He displayed knowledge of all cases he was involved with but also talked lane men language so all present in court could understand. Steven Bolstad always showed respect to all involved in the case but also to the opposing lawyers and their clients, clerks and the Judges.

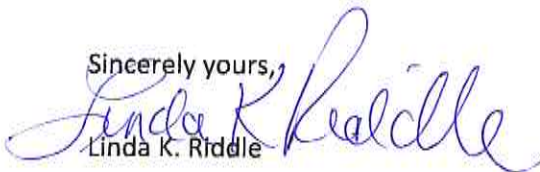
When Steven Bolstad was appointed and later elected as the Municipal Court Judge, I obtained a clerk job at Municipal Court and was impressed how with all the trial (both Judge and Jury), Open Court, on call at Cascade County Detention Center for arraignment on weekends or working with the CCDC on getting less violent inmates out to ease the stress on Detention Officers or make any room they needed, Steven Bolstad took it on head on and always was fair and just for all involved. He was always available to help out of town Judges with questions and always would help anyway possible.

Steven Bolstad has experience needed to fulfill this District Court Position. Steven Bolstad has taught as a Teacher, been a Lawyer, worked with both Cascade County and City Attorneys in all aspects and has been a prominent voice in the Judicial System, and I know he could make a difference for Cascade County as becoming a District Court Judge.

Steven Bolstad has worked well with every age group and race. He went out of his way to understand and make sure somebody with Mental Issues understood their rights and what was happening at the time of the plead.

If you have any questions or would like further explanation of anything stated, please feel free to contact me at 406-403-6627.

Sincerely yours,

  
Linda K. Riddle





## **CASCADE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Jesse Slaughter – Sheriff | Cory Reeves – Undersheriff

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3800 Ulm North Frontage Road, Great Falls, Montana 59404 406.454.6820 [cascadecountymt.gov](http://cascadecountymt.gov)

Governor Bullock,

I would like to endorse the Honorable Judge Steve Bolstad for the open 8<sup>th</sup> District Court seat on the bench. I have known Judge Bolstad for over a decade and he has vast experience as prosecutor and a City Court Judge.

One thing of note is that Judge Bolstad served as a Legislator as well. Judge Bolstad is likely the only person I know who has served in all three branches of government. This is key, due to the complex constitutional issues he will face as a District Court Judge.

Judge Bolstad already has a great relationship with all of the current judges in the 8<sup>th</sup> district. His even keeled personality combined with a tireless work ethic will make him a perfect fit.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse Slaughter", written over a horizontal line.

Sheriff Jesse Slaughter

11 September 2020

The Honorable Steve Bullock  
Governor State of Montana  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Bullock:

I am writing in support of Steven Bolstad's appointment as a District Judge. I am sure you have his resume and know that he is qualified. I do not know Judge Bolstad personally; however, I can speak to his general reputation and my experience as a juror in his courtroom.

I have never heard a derogatory remark about Judge Bolstad, although I have heard positive comments from teachers about him. The comments range from how he treats the jurors and prospective jurors, to the overall feel of the court room. Every person, whom I have spoken with, has said they have felt appreciated and supported.

My experience in his courtroom was a positive one. I was the foreman of the jury in a DUI case. The testimony in the case took a little longer than expected, and our deliberation was going to take us past the normal duty hours. Rather than have the jury return for another day, Judge Bolstad fed us and let us deliberate to resolution of the case. Being able to continue to resolution was much appreciated by the jury members. We were treated very well, and Judge Bolstad was very appreciative and making certain that the jury understood this. I am not an expert in legal matters, but the trial ran smoothly, and from my perspective, everyone received impartial treatment. I know that this is what a judge is supposed to do, but it is important that someone says this.

Judge Bolstad will be an excellent choice for District Judge. He will be a credit to the bench and continue to be an asset for the Great Falls community.



Bob Griffith  
President, Great Falls Education Association

# Olson Law Office, P.C.

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417 Central Avenue, Johnson Building , Fourth Floor  
Great Falls, Montana 59401

**KENNETH R. OLSON**  
Attorney At Law

Telephone: 727-6263  
Facsimile: 727-6264

July 23, 2020

Mr. Steven Bolstad  
#2 Park Drive South  
Great Falls, MT 59401

Re: Recommendation for Appointment to District Court Judgeship in Eighth Judicial District  
Court

Dear Commission Members:

I have been advised that Steve Bolstad, presently the Great Falls Municipal Court Judge, intends to submit an application for the District Court Judgeship soon to be vacated by the resignation of Greg Pinski. Mr. Bolstad asked me if I would support his application. I told him I'd be honored to do so.

Personally, I've been practicing law in this State since 1974. I've had the privilege to practice in front of a lot of judges in all Courts in Montana. I've been in contact with lots and lots of prosecutors as well during that time.

I was first introduced to Steve Bolstad when he was a Deputy Cascade County Attorney where he served from 2003 to 2014. I had many opportunities to have contact with Steve as a prosecutor. I got to know him personally as well as professionally. In my view the two sides of a lawyer are inextricably connected. Steve Bolstad is a good, honorable and amiable person. I've observed him bring those good qualities to his employment as a professional prosecutor. He did his job thoroughly and fairly with constant respect for the people he dealt with. Be they opposing counsel, defendants, witnesses or court officials. He was a top-notch professional. He brought the best of his fine personal characteristics to his role as a professional prosecutor.

In 2014 when the Municipal Court Judge position became available to be filled, Steve decided to apply. I believed he would be an excellent candidate and supported his application. He's now served our community in that capacity for 6 years.



In my practice I've had regular contact with the Bolstad Court. Steve's handling of that position is what I expected it to be. He is very fair and understanding to defendants and defense counsel. I've also observed him dealing very fairly and respectfully with citizens who've appeared in his Court without counsel. Steve has a good understanding of the law. He fairly considers legal motions by both sides. And, above all he's fair, respectful of all who come before him, and judicious in his decision making.

In trials, he is fair. He allows parties to fully and fairly present their cases-in-chief. And he applies his knowledge, experience and good common sense to his rulings. I've never, as a practicing attorney, believed that any decision he's made, even those negative to my own client, was not made in a fair fashion.

Steve Bolstad has the judicial temperament, the background and experience in the law, and the understanding of people in a general sense, to be a very fair and outstanding District Court Judge. It is with pleasure and confidence in this fine man that I give my wholehearted endorsement to his application.

That you for your consideration of this endorsement. If there are any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kenneth R. Olson

KRO/lh

ELIZABETH A. BEST  
District Judge

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



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

**DISTRICT COURT  
EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

July 29, 2020

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

Re: Eighth Judicial District - Dept. A

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

This judicial district needs a judge who is humble, thoughtful, unafraid of hard work, and compassionate toward the least powerful among us. This is to encourage your serious consideration of the application of Judge Steven Bolstad. I have known Steven for over 10 years. I first came to know him as a deputy Cascade County Attorney. In my interactions with him, he was always pleasant, professional, and sincere. He treats people, regardless of their station, with courtesy and decency. He was highly regarded as a prosecutor and as a county civil lawyer. He also works hard.

After I took the bench, I have had many opportunities to work and collaborate with Judge Bolstad on efforts to get a pretrial supervision program off the ground in Cascade County. Steve is refreshingly one of those people who calls 'em like he sees 'em. He cuts through chaff that invades every meeting and gets to the heart of the issue with clarity. He has never succumbed to black robe fever. He clearly sees his judicial position as an opportunity to make things better. While he runs an efficient courtroom and manages a staggering caseload by himself, he maintains good humor, and treats parties, lawyers, and staff with sincere courtesy and respect.

Remarkably, despite his busy docket, he added another job and successfully launched a Mental Health Court, which has already had good outcomes for people who frequently find their way into the criminal system because of mental



ELIZABETH A. BEST  
District Judge

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



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

**DISTRICT COURT  
EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

health challenges. This undertaking reflects one thing that has always been apparent to me about Steve: he has a big heart.

Steve is thoroughly familiar with the criminal system in Cascade County and can hit the ground running. He has long courtroom experience as a prosecutor and knows how to manage a courtroom from the bench. He has civil experience, and has important relevant experience with ICWA, which impacts nearly every YINC case in this County. This experience, importantly, was earned by working for the Crow and other tribes. He would require little introduction with that significant part of our caseload. For areas in which he lacks experience, he can make up for it with his work ethic. Judge Bolstad has not lived his life as a resume builder. Instead, he has simply devoted himself to justice for all.

I strongly encourage you to favorably consider Judge Bolstad to fill the vacancy in Department A in this District. He would be welcomed as a team player who cares about substance, not gloss. Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth A. Best".

Elizabeth A. Best  
District Court Judge



# Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council

2929 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, Suite 300, Billings, Montana 59101

Ph: (406) 252-2550

Fax: (406) 254-6355

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September 9, 2020

Email: [bmclaughlin@mt.gov](mailto:bmclaughlin@mt.gov)

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

RE: Support for Judicial Nomination for Eighth Judicial District

Dear Judicial Commission:

We write this letter in support of Steven Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship. The Native American community has not usually weighed in on state judicial appointments but due to recent events we feel that we are compelled to voice our support for a candidate.

In our world we have seen the devaluation and degradation of Native American people in this state become commonplace. This injustice has transferred over to the judicial system and has made the appointments to the bench even more important.

We have reviewed the applications and have decided to put our support behind Steven Bolstad. Mr. Bolstad has had a long career of public service. As a practicing attorney, Steven Bolstad represented an Indian Tribe and Indian people. His areas of expertise included Indian child welfare and dependency & neglect, and criminal law. Mr. Bolstad has also been a prosecutor and stood for and protected victims of crimes. He also has served as a magistrate judge and been elected to two terms, which speaks to his commitment to the judicial system.

Unfortunately, the law in this state has played a role in devaluing the lives of Native Americans. We want to change this now. While the past wrongs cannot be undone, we can recognize the unfairness and elect judges who can administer justice and support rules in a way that brings greater racial justice to all. Given Mr. Bolstad's background, we feel that he would be the best candidate to address systematic injustices.

For these reasons we support Steven Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District Judgeship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald Gray", written in a cursive style.

Gerald Gray, Chairman  
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council

# HOYT & BLEWETT PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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

September 15, 2020

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

Email: [lmenzies@mt.gov](mailto:lmenzies@mt.gov)  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

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

Re: Honorable Steven Bolstad Letter of Support

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

My name is Anders Blewett, and I am a partner at the law firm of Hoyt and Blewett PLLC in Great Falls, Montana. I am writing to voice my support for the appointment of the Honorable Steven Bolstad to the judicial vacancy in the 8th Judicial District created by the retirement of the Honorable Gregory Pinski.

I have known Judge Bolstad for over a decade. Judge Bolstad was appointed to the Montana Legislature in 2007. During the brief time he served in the Legislature, Judge Bolstad earned a reputation as a problem solver who was open-minded and could work well with others. I first met Judge Bolstad in 2007 when we were both running for the Montana Legislature. During the 2007 campaign, I frequently interacted with Judge Bolstad out on the campaign trail and at the Democratic campaign headquarters. Judge Bolstad ran a very strong campaign. After working all day for the Cascade County Attorney's Office, Judge Bolstad would knock on doors each night until dark and then campaign all weekend long. While he narrowly lost the election, his hard work and dedication stood out from the pack and nearly got him elected in a very challenging legislative district.

From the time I met him, Judge Bolstad has always distinguished himself as a caring, compassionate, and even-tempered leader in our community. Even during the throes of a hotly disputed legislative campaign he always managed to keep a light heart and maintain positivity. As a Judge, he has continued to distinguish himself as an impartial jurist who exhibits the highest level of professional integrity.

Judge Bolstad is a dedicated public servant with a proven track record in the law. He has a

The Montana Judicial Nomination Commission  
September 15, 2020  
Page 2

well-rounded legal background that has prepared him to handle the large work load in the 8th Judicial District. I strongly recommend that the Judicial Nomination Commission appoint Hon. Steven Bolstad to be the next State District Court Judge for the 8th Judicial District.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anders Blewett".

Anders Blewett

AB:jj



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

**RE: Public Comment on 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge- Letter of Support for David Grubich and Against Steven Bolstad**

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing this letter in support for David Grubich for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge. I also write this letter to inform the Commission that I do not believe Steven Bolstad is the right person for this important job. The Cascade County community has a long history of having independent district court judges that possessed the right temperament, value and integrity so the rule of law was respected in an ever-changing legal environment. David Grubich will be able to continue that legacy.

I had the pleasure to write to this Commission two years ago regarding the Hon. Kaydee Snipes-Ruiz in the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. I currently work at the Montana State Office of Public Defender, Region 3, in Great Falls, Montana as an attorney. I represent clients in felony criminal cases, dependent neglect cases, juvenile and involuntary commitment cases in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. As a practicing attorney in 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, I feel I have an obligation to write this even if it has negative repercussions on my practice because of the importance this position has.

**Why in support of David Grubich:**

I have had the pleasure of practicing in front of David Grubich in his capacity as the Standing Master for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. I have always been impressed with Standing Master Grubich's judicial temperament. Standing Master Grubich never gets too high or too low with the parties. He does not let prejudice, passion or anger rule his thought process. Standing Master Grubich takes the facts and the rule of law to decide his decisions. I will admit that the first time practicing in front of Standing Master Grubich during an initial appearance, I was skeptical that his previous experience with law enforcement would slant his thinking and not give my client a fair shake. I found the opposite to be true. I have personally witnessed him treat attorneys on both sides of a case with respect. If he is chosen for the position, I know he would carry that same mentality as a district court judge.

Standing Master Grubich truly understands the Cascade County community. His experience handling family law and dependent neglect cases is going to be a real benefit in those caseloads. As this Commission is probably aware that Cascade County has one of the highest filings per capita of dependent neglect cases in the State of Montana. Those cases typically have families that face systematic barriers to achieve an amicable resolution. Standing Master Grubich is the person that already has a pulse on the hurdles Cascade County families face.



Standing Master Grubich also has the requisite experience to handle the Cascade County civil litigation case load that often gets put on the back burner. Standing Master Grubich will not ignore these cases and will be able to effectively handle complex civil litigation. His years of experience working at Ugrin, Alexander and Zadick, P.C. gave him a wealth of experience of handling broad array of civil litigation issues. I have the utmost confidence he will be able to handle these types of cases as judge.

The other real benefit to Standing Master Grubich being the district court judge is that he already regularly assists the other district court judges and appears to have a good working relationship with all of them. I believe he will be able to effectively work with the other judges on calendaring, logistical, local rules and other issues that arise when multiple judges are in a district. As a litigator that is often in Court four days a week in all four departments it would be frustrating to me in recent years when the judges would appear to be in squabbles over certain issues. It would negatively affect my legal practice because when the judges would be in disagreement, I would be in a difficult position of either having to be in two places at once or not truly understanding what trial had priority when they both were scheduled for the same day. Standing Master Grubich will collaboratively work with the other district court judges to avoid these issues.

#### **Why not in support of Steven Bolstad:**

I will admit I know very little personally of Steven Bolstad. However, I have a lot of reservations about him being able to handle this position if appointed. My experience practicing in Great Falls Municipal Court is fairly limited as I have mostly practiced in District Courts in the Hi-Line and in 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court but I have had plenty of colleagues that have practiced in front of him. I have also appeared for my colleagues in Great Falls Municipal Court a couple of times. My experience in front of Judge Bolstad has been negative.

My impression of Judge Bolstad is that he is a former prosecutor that has carried that over to the bench. He also appears to let passion, prejudice or anger come to his thought process. I do not believe he has the judicial temperament to handle this position. I have had colleagues tell me in recent years how he has threatened contempt or yelled at them in an attempt to bully or embarrass them, as public defenders, from making good faith arguments.

I personally appeared as stand-in counsel not too long ago in Great Falls Municipal Court for initial appearances. There was a female client that had multiple allegations/cases dealing with petty misdemeanor theft. Judge Bolstad decided to set an aggregate bail amount at \$45,000 per prosecutor request. I challenged the Court on that bail. I argued in good faith using the bail factors in MCA § 46-9-301 and set forth an example of the unreasonableness of that bail because at the time I was representing a client on more serious felony allegations in District Court that did not have a bail amount that high. Judge Bolstad preceded to lose his temper, threaten me with contempt and forbid me from speaking further. He then set unreasonable release conditions prohibiting this female from essentially any convenience, retail or grocery store in Great Falls, MT.

I also have regularly had clients that I represent on a felony that will be released on their own recognizance for that case but still will be incarcerated on a Great Falls Municipal misdemeanor case. The reason is because he set an unreasonable bail amount that the client could not afford. It has been on charges as small as disorderly conduct, driving offenses or petty theft. I am very worried what he is going to do with indigent people on more serious allegations if he becomes the District Court Judge.

He also regularly poses with Great Falls Police Officers for photos for the Great Falls Police social media pages. The appearance seems to allude to the fact that he unabashedly leans in that direction. It becomes even more apparent with his writing samples he has provided this Commission. They are all orders denying defendant's motions. Other practitioners in the criminal defense bar have informed me that is par for the course for Judge Bolstad. I believe that calls into question whether he can truly be an independent and fair judge for very serious criminal cases.

**Concluding Remarks:**

I appreciate the time the Commission took to read my public comment on these two candidates. I truly believe that David Grubich is the right person for appointment as the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge.

Sincerely,

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

Daylon Martin  
Attorney of Law  
Office of the State Public Defender

# HOINES LAW OFFICE, P.C.

401 3rd Avenue North  
P.O. Box 829  
Great Falls, Montana 59403-0829  
Tel: 406.761.0996  
Fax: 406.761.3856  
office@nathanhoinelaw.com

NATHAN J. HOINES

September 14, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of the Court Administrator  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to publically comment in support of Steven Bolstad to replace Judge Pinski for the Eighth Judicial District Judge seat. I have know Steve for more than 30 years. I met Steve when he was a student at Montana Statue University in Bozeman. Steve was well respected in college and was always kind and courteous. After graduating from college, Steve became a teacher and coach. He had great success and respect of his fellow teachers, students, and athletes.

I have been practicing law in Great Falls since 1991. I have a general practice with in emphasis in criminal law. I had many cases with Steve when he was a deputy county attorney in Cascade County. I found him to always be prepared and always had a reasonable approach when evaluating his cases. In my dealings with Steve, he was overly fair, but at the same time, he could be tough as a prosecutor. I also observed Steve in trial and he demonstrated exceptional trail skills.

I have also personally observed and appeared in front of Steve since he has been the Municipal Court Judge. Myself and my office have numerous where we represent the defendants in City Court. Judge Bolstad does a remarkable job as a city court judge. He is organized, and it is incredible that he can handle more than 10,000 cases that go through city court in a year. I believe Steve is fair and reasonable. I have seen him show extreme compassion for the citizens of the City of Great Falls that have come before him. I have also seen him deal out punishment when it was deserved.

I have tried numerous cases in which Judge Bolstad has presided over. He did an outstanding job in his interpretation of the law and his knowledge of the rules of evidence. It is essential for the judge to understand the rules of evidence in order to give a citizen a fair and impartial trial. Judge Bolstad has done this during his tenure as the Municipal

Judicial Nomination Commission  
September 14, 2020  
Page 2


Court Judge.

Judge Bolstad has also done an exceptional job in handling the difficulties with the COVID-19 situation in Cascade County. Judge Bolstad has been very flexible with the Cascade County Detention Center and has bent over backwards to accommodate the inmates in order to make sure they are protected, but allowed their due process under the law.

I highly recommend Steven Bolstad for appointment of the Eighth Judicial District Judge position. The citizens of Cascade County need a hard working individual that has the experience and background to be a remarkable judge. I believe Steven Bolstad would fit Cascade County's needs.

Sincerely,

HOINES LAW OFFICE, P.C.

By   
Nathan J. Hoines  
Attorney at Law

NJH/ab

September 14, 2020

Montana Judicial Nomination Commission

c/o Beth McLaughlin, Court Administrator

P.O. Box 203005

Helena, MT 59620

**\*\*via Email\*\***

Dear Commission Members:

Please consider this letter my personal support of Judge Steven Bolstad for the vacancy in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Cascade County. I have had the pleasure of working with Judge Bolstad during his time at the Cascade County Attorney's Office and then after his appointment as the sole Municipal Court Judge for the City of Great Falls.

During my 18+ year career in law enforcement, I worked personally with Judge Bolstad on a number of cases during his tenure at the County Attorney's Office. During this time, I noted him to be consistent, fair, and relentless in his casework. He took the time to work with me and was always willing to discuss the disposition of cases, especially when they went different than I would have expected. As a young officer, he helped me learn the process of what transpires after law enforcement involvement. He really helped me appreciate the criminal justice system as a whole system, and not just the part we play on a daily basis. This education would help me immensely in the long run, as having a broad view has greatly helped me get to where I sit today, and oversee the cases I do.

When Judge Bolstad took over the position in Municipal Court in 2014, I was thrilled to see him advancing his career. I have had countless trials, hearings, and other appointments in his court. I have watched as he helped TPO petitioners work their way through the judicial process, when they were terrified to even show up for court. I have seen him have mercy on an offender when they can't make ends meet to pay their fines, and be firm with offenders who have taken advantage of his generosity. He established a mental health component to his court, to help treat the underlying issues for the problems people face, instead of simply taking actions at face value. I know Judge Bolstad fairly and consistently applies the law, without concern for his personal beliefs and feelings. I have no doubt Judge Bolstad would continue to be compassionate, fair, and consistent, if given the opportunity at the District Court level.

In addition to what is listed above, I also believe Judge Bolstad possesses two additional important qualities, which most people will never see if they didn't know him well. Judge Bolstad is responsive. I have called him in the middle of the night, countless times, because we needed a warrant issued. He has always been there for us, and even at 0300 hours, he is smiling and laughing with us. Secondly, Judge Bolstad possesses innate leadership. When his court staff was short-handed, I watched as he was personally helping his staff by stuffing envelopes for jury questionnaires, so they could be sent



out. I have found he is willing to do whatever is needed to achieve the mission of the Court, no matter how menial or inconvenient it may seem.

The Great Falls Police Protective Association recently voted to endorse Judge Bolstad, which is a high bar to meet with the GFPPA. Everyone has their own reasons for their vote, but mine is simple. I have found that I may not always agree with Judge Bolstad, but I can always respect his decision. This is because it is fair, made with the overarching mission in mind, and rooted in solid interpretations of law. In my opinion, this alone makes an excellent judge, in addition to everything else I have mentioned.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Rob Beall", is written over a horizontal line.

Sgt. Rob Beall

Supervisor, Investigative Services Bureau

Great Falls Police Department

(406) 455-8547

Donny Gerhart  
Master Police Officer (RET.)  
Great Falls Police Department  
Great Falls, MT 59403

September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Montana Judicial Nomination Commission**

c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of Court Administrator  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005  
[mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Dear Commission Members:

This letter is to show my support for Judge Steve Bolstad to be nominated and appointed to the vacancy in the Eight Judicial District Court of Montana.

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Steve Bolstad since 2003 when he became employed with the Cascade County Attorney's Office. I was a Narcotics Detective with the Great Falls Police Department and several of my cases were assigned to Steve for prosecution in District Court. I witnessed the work ethic and dedication Steve has by the numerous hours he would put in on cases and be available for consultation. Other detectives and I would arrive in his office and Steve would accommodate our questions and provide us with his knowledge to assist on some very complex and in-depth investigations.

I worked with Steve as a member of the Great Falls Weed and Seed Steering Committee and saw his passion and dedication to the citizens of Great Falls. Steve would advocate for programs and supplies that would help improve neighborhoods and reduce criminal activities in high crime areas of the city. Steve treasured being a native of Great Falls and his knowledge of the history of the city would provide the Steering Committee with invaluable insight on projects. Being from Great Falls also, I was impressed with the pride Steve showed in helping with the improvements the Weed and Seed Steering Committee were making in the community.

In January 2016, I was assigned as Bailiff and witnessed how Steve handled the duties as Municipal Court Judge. The compassion and selflessness that I saw Judge Bolstad display to individuals appearing in front of him made a huge impact on me and my career. Judge Bolstad showed that taking a few minutes to

understand the circumstances that resulted in a person being involved with the legal system, helped with determining a solution to not only the crime committed but also to the defendants ability to correct their actions. Judge Bolstad would routinely celebrate with defendants when they accomplished life improvements and goals. In one instance, Judge Bolstad interacted with a juvenile male who continually found himself in court on mostly minor infractions. Judge Bolstad knew he came from a broken family and had very little adult supervision. Instead of dealing only with the issues involved with the crimes committed, Judge Bolstad took a parental position and would encourage him to enroll in school, find a job and become responsible for his actions. I saw this juvenile come into court just to be able to tell Judge Bolstad how he paid off his restitution or that he was selected to give a speech at group counseling. This type of empathy is evident in his interactions daily with people.

Throughout my 26 years in law enforcement, I had the pleasure of working with some of the most highly professional and dedicated people in not only Great Falls and Montana, but throughout the western United States. I have to say that Steve Bolstad stands out as a person who will not only do the job as District Court Judge but will transform the way people view their experiences with the court.

I personally and professionally recommend that Governor Steve Bullock appoint Steve Bolstad to the Judgeship vacancy.

Thank you for considering my recommendation,

Donny Gerhart

Christine King Counseling, PLLC  
LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR & MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST

September 7, 2020

State of Montana  
Montana Judicial Branch  
Judicial Nomination Commission  
C/O Beth McLaughlin  
PO Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

RE: Hon. Steven B. Bolstad, nominee for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judgeship Vacancy (Cascade County)

Dear Mr. Harper, Ms. Bishop, Hon. John C. Brown, Mr. Larson, Ms. Halverson, Mr. Englund and Ms. Zadick:

I am moved to offer my support for Judge Steven Bolstad, who has been nominated for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judgeship for Cascade County. I have worked as a counselor in Cascade County for 22 years, recently moving to Missoula County, where I continue a private practice.

I am acquainted with Judge Bolstad through my clients, many of whom have passed through his court, either as victims, witnesses or defendants. I can tell you that though he upholds strict standards, my clients enter his courtroom with confidence knowing they will get fair treatment. Recently a young female client, who was in a bit of trouble, spoke to me about her fear of having to go to court. I advised her that the Judge would help her through her predicament, even if she had to pay a fine or do some jail time. She said, "I know, that is what I heard." Later, she felt restored by the experience and when she went back to court to report to him about her progress, he said, "I am proud of you," and meant it. That moment was everything to this young woman, who was pretty much on her own and up until then, largely disenfranchised by society. The Judge's approach has been especially effective for my Native American clients, who feel he is sensitive to their cultural influences. Judge Bolstad has the heart of a social worker in his efforts to help clients come up with lasting solutions to their problems. He speaks to them with respect and reassurance, while maintaining the authority of his position. We are so fortunate to have that combination of attributes in the Judiciary. He will bring his experience and credibility as a Municipal Court Judge and lifelong Montanan to the District Court.

Thank you for this opportunity to add my support to your selection process.

Sincerely,



Christine M. King, MSC, PsyD, LMFT, LCPC  
706 Kensington Avenue  
Missoula, Montana 59801

September 16, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of Court Administrator  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005  
Email: [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Re: Steve Bolstad Letter of Support

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

My name is Drew Blewett, and I am a partner at the law firm of Hoyt and Blewett PLLC in Great Falls, MT. I am writing this letter in support of Steve Bolstad respectfully requesting that the Judicial Nomination Commission strongly consider him for Montana State District Court Judge in Cascade County. I first met Steve thirteen years ago when I started practicing law in Great Falls and have always found him to be a person of sound character and great integrity. Throughout the course of Steve's twenty year legal career, he has gained invaluable experience working as a general practitioner, a deputy county attorney at the Cascade County Attorney's Office and serving as the Municipal Court Judge in Great Falls. This broad spectrum of legal experience has provided him with a unique perspective that lends itself well to serving as a State District Court Judge where he would be responsible for making important and sometimes life-altering decisions for people in Cascade County.

During his time working as a deputy county attorney at the Cascade County Attorney's Office, Steve tried multiple jury trials and dozens of bench trials. Few attorneys around the State can say the same. Needless to say, his track record confirms that he is more than prepared to take on the challenges inherent in serving as a State District Court Judge.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly endorse Steve Bolstad for State District Court Judge in Cascade County and hope that the Judicial Nomination Commission takes into careful consideration his twenty years of legal experience in making its decision.

Sincerely,

Drew Blewett  
Attorney  
Hoyt and Blewett PLLC



**Bill Bronson**  
**733 – 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE**  
**Great Falls, MT 59404**  
**Tel: (406) 799-9373**  
**E-mail: [bill.bronson@bresnan.net](mailto:bill.bronson@bresnan.net)**

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](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

**RE: Application of Hon. Steven Bolstad,  
Montana Eighth Judicial District Court Judge**

Dear Commission Members:

I am pleased to recommend the Hon. Steven Bolstad, current Great Falls Municipal Court Judge, for consideration as a finalist/nominee for the position of state district court judge for the Montana Eighth Judicial District Court.

By way of background: I have been a practicing attorney for 37 years, and just recently retired from full-time law practice. In addition, I serve as the part-time executive director of the Cascade County Law Clinic, a non-profit corporation working with the local district court to find attorneys willing to handle cases for low-income residents in the county on a *pro bono* basis. I also served for 12 years as an elected member of the Great Falls City Commission, stepping down in December 2019. During my career, I have had the opportunity to get to know and work with Judge Bolstad on a personal level. He is well qualified for service as a state district judge.

During my 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, an even temperament, the ability to make timely decisions, a capacity for listening carefully, and not taking oneself too seriously. Judge Bolstad embodies all these good qualities, and more.

During my tenure on the City Commission, my colleagues and I made the decision in 2014 to appoint Judge Bolstad to the Municipal Court Judge position. The City Commission patterned its selection process after yours, requiring written applications and letters of support. We then committed to a rigorous personal examination of the applicants. Although we interviewed several fine candidates, Judge Bolstad unquestionably stood out. He offered a combination of appropriate legal experience and personal characteristics that compelled a finding he was ready for this new career. He had the knowledge and experience in the fields of civil and criminal law, but he also demonstrated a calm demeanor, a pleasant personality, and a sense of humility. The decision to appoint him was unanimous.

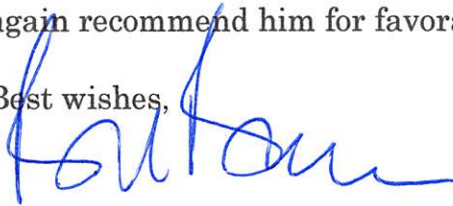
Since his appointment, Judge Bolstad has handled the responsibilities of his court extremely well. Although my law practice did not involve municipal court work, my duties as a city commissioner required that I familiarize myself with the judge, his operations, and his needs. I found that he managed a burdensome docket in a timely and efficient manner, without sacrificing the rights of the parties. When he began to see that many offenders were in his court because of mental health problems, we discussed the need for a mental health diversion program, for which he then developed a plan, obtained funding, and followed through with implementation. When he concluded after about five years on the bench that the City might need another judge position, at least part-time, he did his homework, and prepared a convincing argument to the City Manager and the Commission to fund this new position. This was significant, as due to financial pressures, only one or two new programs can be funded by the City every fiscal year.

During my time on the Commission, as well as in my legal practice, I came to learn how widely respected Judge Bolstad is among his peers. During the 2019 legislative session, Judge Bolstad asked me to assist he and other judges of the limited jurisdiction courts with testifying against a bill that, if passed, would likely hamper their work as judges. When I appeared before the State Senate Committee to testify, I had occasion to speak to some of the city court judges and justices of the peace who testified with me. All of them were highly complementary of Judge Bolstad, and they spoke of him as one of the best of their group. They were particularly complimentary of his service as an educator to his fellow judges.

Likewise, whenever I have appeared before some justices of the peace in various parts of Montana, they all tell me of their admiration for Judge Bolstad, and always want me to extend their regards to him for his service to the judiciary. Trust me: judges are never really obliged to say kind words about another judge. The support for him is heartfelt.

When you convene to begin your evaluation and decision-making process, you will have several highly-qualified candidates before you. I know and respect all of them. Judge Bolstad is unquestionably in the top two or three of that group. I again recommend him for favorable consideration.

Best wishes,



Bill Bronson

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

300 4th Street North  
P.O. Box 2608  
Great Falls, MT 59403-2608  
Telephone (406) 727-8466  
Toll Free (888) 707-8466  
Fax (406) 771-8812  
E-Mail [laalaw@me.com](mailto:laalaw@me.com)

September 16, 2020

**VIA FED EXPRESS AND E-MAIL: [bmclaughlin@mt.gov](mailto:bmclaughlin@mt.gov)**

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Beth McLaughlin  
Office of Court Administrator  
301 S. Park, Suite 328  
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Letter of Recommendation for: Steve Bolstad, Michele Levine, David Grubich

Dear Commission Members:

During the last 45 years practicing law in Great Falls, we have had numerous district court judges.<sup>1</sup> Some of these people were well-respected lawyers who had extensive broad-based experience before ascending the bench, while others did not.

What distinguishes the good district court judges was not their broad experience in the practice before ascending the bench. Rather, what distinguishes the good district court judges is how they used the extraordinary power of their offices.

Prior broad professional experience is not in itself a predictor of how one will perform as a district court judge. However, prior experience does give one an indication of how prospective judges will use the power of their offices. But there are other means to determine how one will use the power of their offices. How one treats the service providers in their daily lives can be a good indication of how one will use power. And how prospective judges have used whatever power they have in their jobs often provides a good indication of how they will use judicial power.

None of the people in this applicant pool have prior broad professional experience that will enable one to assess how they will use the power of judicial office in the manner in which it is supposed to be used. Other than the personal recommendations that accompany their applications, we have no idea how they will use their judicial power.

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

I am acquainted with three applicants who have power and who have used it in a measured, proper way. For this reason, these applicants should have their names passed on to the governor for his consideration.

1) **Steve Bolstad** presently serves as a city court judge. The people who appear in his courtroom have been charged with engaging in publicly irresponsible behavior. These people are often the weakest and least powerful citizens among us. Yet, Steve treats the people in his courtroom with respect, humanism, and without cynicism. That is a hard thing to do in his job.

2) **Michele Levine** presently serves on Cascade County's zoning board. Regulatory boards, generally, are apt to be controlled by the interest that the board seeks to regulate. In the case of zoning boards, the real estate and development industries regularly appear before zoning boards; and as a result, zoning boards typically end up promoting the interests of the real estate and development industries. It is hard for regulators not to align their interests with the interests they are regulating, because the regulated interest constantly appears before the board. Yet, Michele has consistently resisted this pressure while serving on the Cascade County Zoning Board. This is a hard thing to do in this job.

3) **David Grubich** presently serves as the district court special master for family law matters. This job often involves making decisions in contested child custody matters in which neither side or only one side is represented. Decisions that are wrong in this context can have lifelong devastating consequences to the children who are the victims in these broken unions. David recognizes the importance of these decisions. This is a hard thing to do in this job.

Thank you for consideration of this letter.

Very truly yours,



Lawrence A. Anderson  
LAA/teb



Judicial Nominations Commission Montana Supreme Court  
C/O Lois Menzies  
VIA EMAIL ONLY

September 17, 2020

Honorable Members of the Judicial Nominations Commission:

It is with great honor that I recommend Steve Bolstad for the open position in the Eighth Judicial District Court. I have no doubt, if appointed, Judge Bolstad will continue his public service in the same way he has as the Municipal Court Judge.

I met Judge Bolstad in April of 2019 as a newly appointed Municipal Court Judge in Helena. He was and continues to be my training judge. From my training I observed Judge Bolstad to be fair, honest and passionate about his role as Municipal Court Judge. He takes pride in his role in the Mental Health Court and the changes he is making in the community. Judge Bolstad has a deep understanding of addiction and mental health issues that arise in many of the criminal cases he sees in his community.

Judge Bolstad participates at every level of the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction, from the Commission to training he is invested in making the judiciary, at all levels, an educated and respected profession.

Judge Bolstad would take the bench in District Court ready to make the commitment to serve the Eighth Judicial District Court with integrity, compassion and fairness to all that appear in front of him.

Thank you,

Judge Anne Peterson  
Helena Municipal Court  
228 Broadway  
Helena, MT 59601

# GRAYBILL LAW FIRM, P.C.

300 4<sup>th</sup> Street North • PO Box 3586 • Great Falls, Montana 59403

Benjamin R. Graybill

Telephone: (406) 452-8566  
Toll Free: (866) 452-8566  
Telefax: (406) 727-3225  
E-mail: [brg@silverstatelaw.net](mailto:brg@silverstatelaw.net)

File No.

September 16, 2020

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

Re: Montana Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy

Dear Commission Members:

I support Steve Bolstad to fill the Eighth Judicial District judgeship vacancy.

Steve is the only applicant with judicial experience. I have observed Steve in the Great Falls' Municipal Court. He administers the Court with a firm hand, exhibiting calm and a well-honed capability for handling a large docket. Steve is respectful of the lawyers who appear before him, he accepts defendants and litigants for who they are, and does not take an imperious attitude toward them. He does not brook impertinence toward the Court; he is efficient, practical, fair, and humane.

Steve also has substantial experience with all facets of criminal law based on a long career as a criminal prosecutor in the Cascade County Attorney's Office. He has tried complex criminal cases. He understands what is at stake for both the defendant and the State. He will be ably and efficiently administer the Court's criminal docket, opening up time to get to the civil docket to move those cases in a just and deliberate manner. At the same time, however, Steve will not take short cuts; has deep respect for due process and will make sure that all criminal defendants and the State receive a fair trial.

Steve is scrupulously honest. He has the integrity and the compassion to ensure that all persons who appear before him are assured their legal right to a fair outcome in his court, and also their moral right to be valued as human beings deserving of his consideration and who solemnly impose on him the responsibility of achieving a just result.

Steve has the qualities to make an excellent district court judge.

Very truly yours,

GRAYBILL LAW FIRM, P.C.

By

  
Benjamin R. Graybill

BRG/bn

Senator Carlie Boland

1215 6<sup>th</sup> Ave North

Great Falls, MT 59401

July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

RE: Judge Steve Bolstad

Judicial Nomination Commission,

It is my honor to write to you regarding my friend, Steve Bolstad. I could not be more honored than to recommend and support Steve for the State Eighth Judicial District Court.

I have known Steve for over 10 years. I originally met Steve when he was serving in the State House of Representatives in 2007. I was amazed at his deep concern and passion for our community and the State of Montana. I was so impressed with his calm, fair, and caring demeanor, and always taking the time to listen to the issues before him. Because of his leadership I decided to run for office myself.

His serving in the legislature has served him well throughout his career. As a legislator he worked on passing laws and policies. As a judge he has had to implement those laws. Knowing both sides gives him a great perspective of our laws.

Steve has been a great friend and someone I could always count on over the years. He and his wife, Laura, have been an important part of this community for many years.

It is my hope, you will take into consideration, appointing Steve Bolstad to the State Eighth Judicial District Court.

Thank you for your consideration,

Senator Carlie Boland

September 17, 2020

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

Dear Committee:

This letter is in support of Steven Bolstad's appointment for District Court Judge in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. I began working at the Cascade County Attorney's Office in 2002, in the civil Department. I met Steve when he started at the Cascade County Attorney's Office in the Civil Department in 2003. I worked under him as his paralegal for several years and that continued even after we both moved to the criminal side of the office. He was a wonderful person and attorney to work with back then, and I have stayed friends with him since I left the Cascade County Attorney's Office in 2012. He was always available if I or any other staff member had a question or issue and is a very good listener. He is a great attorney and his work ethic is impeccable.

I have known Mr. Bolstad for over 17 years and whether it was a professional or social setting, he was always the one that people would flock to because of his friendly personality and his caring demeanor. I feel Steve would make a wonderful District Court Judge, in the sense that he is compassionate, but also knows when to lay down the law. With his background at the County Attorney's Office and as the Municipal Court Judge, I feel he would be the perfect candidate for District Court Judge.

Sincerely,



Danna Gerhart

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Thursday, September 17, 2020 8:39:54 PM

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**From:** Eric Feaver <efeaver@mfpe.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 17, 2020 9:46 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendation for Appointment to 8th Judicial District Court

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

By this email, I urge the Judicial Nomination Commission to carefully consider Steve Bolstad's application to fill the vacancy in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.

I have known Steve for a number of years. As a teacher and then later as a deputy county attorney, Steve was a member of my union, now the Montana Federation of Teachers. On occasion I worked directly with Steve on union matters . . . and worked with him in a different context when he served as a state legislator for a short period of time.

Steve has the kind of experience that definitely qualifies him for a judgeship. Montana educated, teacher, deputy county attorney, union member and leader, legislator, community volunteer, and now a Great Falls municipal judge. I like that.

And I like Steve's demeanor: poised, in command, thoughtful, empathetic. I believe he is perfectly disposed to be a first-rate district judge.

So, again, I urge the commission to give Steve your fullest consideration. I am pleased to make this recommendation.

Thank you.



Eric Feaver  
901 Flowerree  
Helena MT 59601  
[efeaver@mfpe.org](mailto:efeaver@mfpe.org)

Thomas J. Harrington  
10303 Royal Coachman Drive  
Missoula, MT 59808

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September 18, 2020

**SENT VIA EMAIL AND USPS**

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

Dear Montana Judicial Nomination Commission:

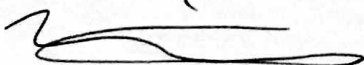
I am writing to recommend the appointment of Steve Bolstad as a state district court judge for the Montana Eighth Judicial District. Steve and I were law school classmates, and we have known one another personally and professionally for 23 years. Steve possesses the professional and personal attributes which are common among Montana's judiciary: judicial experience, trial experience, professionalism, intelligence, decisiveness, fairness, integrity, composure, compassion, humility, common sense, and impeccable character.

Steve has a unique blend of criminal and civil experience in both the private sector and the public sector. Following law school, Steve worked for a firm in Billings, where his practice primarily focused on representing Native American clients. In 2003, Steve returned to his hometown and shifted his professional focus to his passion: public service. Steve spent 9 years in the Cascade County Attorney's Office, where he gained extensive trial experience by handling a variety of criminal and civil cases. During this timeframe, Steve also represented Great Falls in the Montana Legislature as a member of the Montana House of Representatives. For the past 6 years, Steve has served as a Great Falls Municipal Court Judge. Steve's appointment as a district court judge is simply the natural progression of Steve's public service commitment to Great Falls.

Steve's unparalleled blend of professional experience as a trial attorney combined with his 6 years of experience as a judge make him the ideal candidate to fill the open judicial vacancy in the Montana Eighth Judicial District. With Steve's appointment, Great Falls will benefit because it will allow Steve to continue his tireless devotion to the community. The Bar will also benefit as a result of Steve's professionalism, fairness, and unquestionable integrity.

I endorse Steve Bolstad's application and recommend him for appointment as a state district court judge for the Montana Eighth Judicial District.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Harrington



# Billings Municipal Court

P.O. Box 1178  
Billings, MT 59103  
Phone: 406-657-8490  
Fax: 406-657-3075

**Sheila R. Kolar**  
**Municipal Court Judge**

---

September 14, 2020

Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship  
Office of Court Administrator  
% Lois Menzies  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Re: Steven Brian Bolstad

Dear Lois Menzies:

Please accept this letter as support for Steven Brian Bolstad and his potential appointment to the Eighth Judicial District Court. I have known Judge Bolstad for several years and find him to be more than an appropriate candidate for this judgeship. Judge Bolstad has been a practicing attorney and Municipal Court Judge for many years. He possesses the required demeanor to be a judge. He is intelligent, confident, reasonable, compassionate, honest and maintains high personal integrity. He has shown that he has the ability and willingness to work well with other attorneys.

In my opinion, Judge Steven Brian Bolstad is the perfect candidate for the appointment to the Eighth Judicial District Court Judgeship. It is with great pleasure that I endorse his efforts in this appointment.

Sincerely,

Sheila R. Kolar  
Municipal Court Judge  
Billings, MT

SRK: tp

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

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Jerome McCarthy, I am the current City Court Judge in Butte.

I would like to express my support of Judge Steve Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District Court of Montana.

I first met Judge Bolstad at the fall 2018 Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Conference. I had been appointed to the Butte City Court Judge position in July of 2018 to finish the term of a retiring Judge.

The conference started two days early for the new Judges. Judge Bolstad was one of several "Training Judges" on hand to help those of us that were, quite frankly, drinking from a fire hose.

Judge Bolstad showed a tremendous amount of patience and kindness, along with a great sense of humor as we worked through the training modules. Judge Bolstad is very approachable, knowledgeable and excited to share his vast knowledge of both the law as well as the Judiciary.

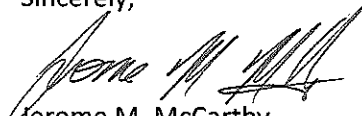
Judge Bolstad and I have become friends and he has continued to be a great resource.

Judge Bolstad has one of the busiest courts in the state, but always makes time to help and provide excellent direction.

Judge Bolstad has the experience, along with all the necessary qualities to best serve the citizens of the Eighth Judicial District Court of Montana. Judge Bolstad's reputation speaks for itself.

Your consideration of Judge Bolstad is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jerome M. McCarthy  
Butte City Court Judge

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: The Judicial Nomination Commission

Re: Recommending Steve Bolstad for the Eighth Judicial District Judge position

For nearly twenty-five years I was a Field Representative for the Montana Education Association - Montana Federation of Teachers (MEA-MFT), now increasingly organized into the Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE). As a union representative working central Montana, one of my proudest accomplishment was to organize the Cascade County Attorney's staff of attorneys into a local bargaining unit. Working with prosecutors who diligently and even doggedly strive to protect Cascade County residents was an eye-opening and very positive experience. The attorneys were all quite skilled and dedicated in their positions as they applied the laws to real people. Steve Bolstad was one of those attorneys and from that unionizing process I have come to proudly know him. Steve's time as a prosecutor and his later move into the city court as a municipal judge has been remarkable and seamless.

Since I have, over time, been in many courtrooms as a union rep, a witness, a juror, or simply an observer, I do have a sense of what characteristics make an effective judge. Steve Bolstad checks off all the necessary judicial skills with ease; he will be a great District Judge. My recommendation for his appointment to the Eighth Judicial District bench is without reservation.

As a county prosecutor, Steve always impressed me with his preparation for and adherence to the rules of the courts he was in. His reverence for the law and fairness of a courtroom has followed him into his current judgeship. He has a visible respect for the court's purpose and the fair rights of both prosecution and defense. And he is human; a wise human. I have watched him preside over cases full of people flawed and ill prepared, perhaps with truly ugly histories, yet he puts the law, the facts, and human dignity altogether to get the best possible results for all parties. I have seen Steve actually put unexpected smiles on accused faces as they leave the room feeling fair treatment.

I trust Steve to be a most effective judge as he pulls the law and the facts together and then adds hopeful humanity as well. He will do a terrific job; no question. If I can offer any useful information to this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Jerry Rukavina

300 24<sup>th</sup> Ave So

Great Falls, MT, 59405

406-459-2640, jrukavina48@gmail.com



**Kory Larsen**  
384 McIver Road  
Great Falls, MT 59404  
[prsctr@gmail.com](mailto:prsctr@gmail.com)

September 17, 2020

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

**RE: Steve Bolstad Nomination for District Court Judge – 8<sup>th</sup>  
Judicial District**

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

I am writing in support of Steve Bolstad. I practiced with Steve for several years at the County Attorney's Office and was co-counsel with him on several jury trials while we worked together. I have also appeared in front of Judge Bolstad in Municipal Court and have seen his demeanor and temperament on the bench. Steve's professional abilities and experience make him the best candidate for this position.

Steve has the wide range of legal experience necessary to serve as a District Court Judge. From my time working with Steve, I know his work ethic is second to none. Steve is an excellent legal writer and researcher. Prior to becoming a Deputy Cascade County Attorney, I was the Chief Prosecutor for the City of Great Falls and I am aware of the types of caseloads faced by District Judges and Municipal Court Judges. Steve likewise knows the caseload he is taking on at the District Court. Being a Municipal Court Judge has prepared Steve to take over a busy caseload. Because of his legal and judicial experience, Steve understands the demands placed upon a Judge better than any of the other candidates.

However, my support for Steve is not just based on our professional relationship. I have known Steve for well over a decade now and while work brought us together, Steve and I became friends as well as colleagues.

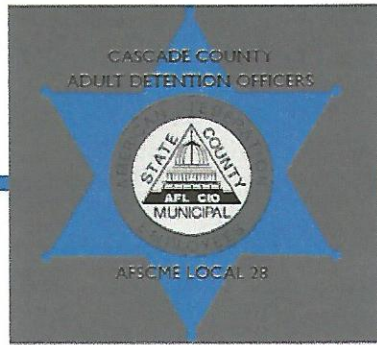
As a result of our relationship I know Steve has given of himself to our community in many ways on various boards and non-profit organizations. He serves on numerous boards and committees and helps make Great Falls, great. Steve believes in public service and wants to make our community better. Steve is generous to a fault, kind to all, very witty and seemingly tireless. These are all very important characteristics for a District Court Judge.

I believe Steve has the experience and temperament to be an excellent Judge. Please consider forwarding Steve's name to the Governor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kory Larsen', with a stylized, cursive-like flourish.

Kory Larsen



**Cascade County Detention Officers Local 28 of the American Federation of State, City and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Endorses Honorable Judge Steve Bolstad for the 8<sup>th</sup> District Judicial Court**

The Officers of the Cascade County Detention Facility are proud to endorse Steve Bolstad for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court.

As the current city judge, Judge Bolstad has extensive workings with the Cascade County Sheriff's Department and the officers of the bargaining unit, and has demonstrated time and again his commitment to the law, ethics, and managing the complex workings of the justice system.

Numerous times Judge Bolstad has made himself available 24 hours a day/7 days a week in his professional capacity to serve the County and immediate needs of the detention center and its officers and inmates. In his previous position as Cascade County Prosecutor, Bolstad demonstrated a nuanced and deep understanding of Montana State Law, Montana's Constitution, and the Constitution of the United States.

Based on his years of professional conduct with the Cascade County Detention Center's Officers, and an interview with membership and the Executive Board, Judge Bolstad has earned Local 28's endorsement with a majority body vote.

The undersigned Officers of Local 28 submit this public comment endorsement with our best regards for Judge Bolstad's appointment efforts.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President Zach Semenza

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President Darby Reardon

September 16, 2020

To the Honorable Judicial Nomination Commission,

I am writing a letter of support and recommendation for Steven Bolstad, current municipal court judge for the city of Great Falls, Montana. I met Steve through my position as the President/CEO of the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. I attended a meeting at which Steve was speaking on crime and the courts for a downtown business group one evening. I attended and asked several questions. As I was leaving, Steve asked me to hold on for a second. I didn't know Steve and hadn't met him before, but I waited and when Steve got a break, he introduced himself and shared with me that he knew my brother from college three decades earlier, who had died several years earlier from a drug overdose. I was impressed with Steve's memory and making the connection. Since then I have seen Steve in action in his courtroom as well as having invited him to speak to a Crimestoppers annual meeting we hosted in Great Falls in our Chamber Conference room.

Steve connects well with others, no matter if one is a CEO or a person charged with a crime in his courtroom. Steve treats all with the respect and courtesy each person deserves, no matter the position or behavior. Steve also is someone who is firm and fair in his rulings and has a good awareness of the circumstances, the law and how best to apply it – to each situation. He believes that all people should be treated professionally and works to balance the punishment with the crime as well as consideration of rehabilitation programs and efforts.

Steve has the experience necessary for the next district judge in the Eighth Judicial District. He taught school for several years, helped coach youth sports, and practiced Native American law in Billings before coming to his hometown of Great Falls.

We need judges today who are passionate about people, apply the law accordingly and correctly, with the ability to show both grace and mercy to those who are repentant and remorseful and can also see through to the heart and genuineness of those deserving. We also need judges who will be tough on those who continue, without regard to others or the general public, commit crimes against their fellow citizens and society and need to receive punishment and a fair judgment for their crimes. Steve fits all of these categories and has proven himself in the past 6 ½ years serving the city of Great Falls, the police department, working with prosecutors and defendants, and diligently and consistently applying the law with a limited amount of support staff with a huge case load.

I whole-heartedly recommend Steve Bolstad for your consideration and can assure you, that if you hire Steve, you will have hired the very best candidate for the position of district judge for the Eighth Judicial District!

Sincerely,



Shane Etzwiler  
President/CEO

Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

**GLACIER COUNTY JUSTICE COURT**

Carolyn Berkram, Justice of the Peace  
512 E. Main  
Cut Bank, MT 59427  
B.L. Martin, Clerk  
(406) 873-3631 phone

**CUT BANK CITY COURT**

Carolyn Berkram, City Judge  
113 E. Main  
Cut Bank, MT 59427  
Kim M. Czech, Clerk  
(406) 873-0131 phone

September 21, 2020

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

**Email To: [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)**

Re: Steven B. Bolstad – Montana Eighth Judicial District Court

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I write in support of my colleague and friend, Judge Steve Bolstad. Steve and I first met in approximately 2011 when I was the Glacier County Attorney and he a deputy in the Cascade County Attorney's Office. I was having a hard time hiring a deputy and Steve volunteered his assistance in the event of a crisis. A man of his word, I was out of town and called Steve to handle an emergency mental health commitment situation. Nobody volunteers for those cases, but Steve did not hesitate. He jumped in and handled it.

Years later, I also had the opportunity to appear in front of Judge Bolstad in Great Falls Municipal Court. His calendar was grueling and while I waited for my case to be called, I observed how he treated his staff, counsel, and defendants with patience. He took the time necessary for each case – nobody was cut off.

Several years later when I became the Glacier County Justice of the Peace and Cut Bank City Judge, I was thrilled to walk in to training and see Steve. He answers questions from other judges daily by phone, email, and text. His experience covers not only criminal law, but civil as well. As recently as this past Saturday I texted him with a question and he responded within minutes. He is a wealth of knowledge.

Judge Steve Bolstad has shown he possesses the necessary judicial temperament and can manage large caseloads. I wholeheartedly recommend him to fill the vacancy in the Eighth Judicial District.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Berkram  
Glacier County Justice of the Peace  
Cut Bank City Judge





**Hill County Justice Court of Record  
Hon. Audrey Barger, Presiding**

**315 Fourth Street**

**Sarah Vigliotti, Jud. Admin. Asst.  
Krystyn Wickham, Jud. Admin Asst.**

**Havre, MT 59501  
(406) 400-2417 - phone  
(406)262-9441 - fax**

September 21, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
Office of Court Administrator  
P. O. Box 2003005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005

Re: Honorable Steven Bolstad

Dear Commission Members:

Twelve thousand, three hundred eighty-six. That's the number of cases filed in Great Falls Municipal Court in 2019. Last year Judge Steven Bolstad managed a docket consisting of five percent (5%) of all cases filed in 107 Courts of Limited Jurisdiction located throughout Montana.

Being a competent jurist takes thought, consideration, fairness, knowledge of the law, judicial temperament, ethical behavior, and dedication to living a lifestyle becoming of a Judge 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Judge Bolstad possesses all these qualities. A substantial showing of letters of support have been authored for him which extol his impressive credentials. I concur with them.

However, jurists rise from competent to excellent when they also possess the ability to organize, lead, supervise staff, use foresight, and exercise time and docket management. I humbly submit to you that successfully presiding over 12,386 cases in a year is a compelling fact supporting a finding that Judge Steven Bolstad is an excellent jurist. The legal maxim "justice delayed is justice denied" is critically important to the community a jurist serves.

Judge Bolstad is well-respected, poised and ready to bring his expertise to the position of Cascade County District Court and continue to serve the citizens of his County. He ran a successful campaign during which the citizens in his jurisdiction elected him to serve in his current capacity as the Great Falls Municipal Court Judge. His performance as a jurist has been tried and his fellow judges and the community he serves admire and respect him.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my letter and in giving the highest consideration to Judge Steven Bolstad's application for the open Cascade County District Court Judge position.

Hon. Audrey Barger  
Hill County Justice of the Peace

**Carol A. Bronson**  
Great Falls, MT 59404  
September 20, 2020

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

Sent via electronic mail to: [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to support Judge Steve Bolstad's application to be a District Court Judge in the Eighth Judicial District in Great Falls, MT. I am the Director of Community Initiatives at NeighborWorks Great Falls and have worked with him professionally for eleven years. I am writing this personally, not on behalf of NeighborWorks Great Falls.

I met Judge Bolstad in 2009, when he worked at the County Attorney's office and he served on the Steering Committee of the federal crime and neighborhood program called Great Falls Weed and Seed. In 2010, Judge Bolstad joined with NeighborWorks and a group of Great Falls residents to address the issue of prescription drug abuse. It was his innovative idea to create a "through the wall drop box" for people to drop off their prescription drugs 24/7, no questions asked. At that time, there were few ways for people to dispose of their unwanted or expired prescription drugs. Soon, the drop box at the Montana Highway Patrol was collecting more than a ton of drugs a year, more than any other location in the state.

As a Deputy County Attorney, he supported resident involvement in seeking community solutions for issues ranging from code enforcement to revitalization. Since he became a municipal court judge, he has spoken to multiple citizen groups, like Cascade County Neighborhood and Business Watch, about the judicial system. When NeighborWorks Great Falls spearheaded an initiative that focused on the intersection of criminal justice and healthcare, Judge Bolstad provided information that served as a background for that first year. He recently created the Mental Health Court to help people going through his court.

Throughout the eleven years that I have known him, Judge Bolstad has always been dedicated, hardworking, and deeply supportive of the community. Prior to taking my current position, I was a paralegal for twenty years, and through that had a great deal of interaction with the state district courts. Knowing what state court judges do, and based on my knowledge of Judge Bolstad, I know would make an outstanding and fair district court judge.

Sincerely,



Carol A. Bronson

September 15, 2020

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

Re: Montana Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy  
Steve Bolstad

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Judge Steven Bolstad for 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge in Cascade County.

I have had the privilege of working with Steve both professionally and personally. During my employment with Teamsters Local #2 I worked with Steve on many issues ranging from negotiations to solving labor issues. I represented the union employees and Steve represented Cascade County. Regardless, if we were in negotiations or trying to settle a grievance, Steve was compassionate, honest, and was always professional. Steve has always been a person that people respect and believe in.

It has been an honor to watch Steve's career grow over the years that I have known him. He has the courage, understanding and common sense needed to fill the District Court Judge position.

Steven's honesty and integrity make him a perfect candidate for the District Court Judge position.

If I can be of any assistance, please call me at 406-781-2457.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Max Hallfrisch". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Max Hallfrisch

Retired Business Representative Teamsters Local #2



September 14, 2020

I am writing on behalf of Judge Bolstad; In support of his possible appointment as a District Court Judge. I am an associate of the Center for Mental Health, PACT team (Program of Assertive Community Treatment) and with Judge Bolstad of the City of Great Falls Municipal Court. Together in partnership with other community partners, we have worked closely in the development of Mental Health Treatment Court and by doing so; Judge Bolstad has come to learn greater understanding of those with mental illness. This allows him to better serve the community of Great Falls and the county of Cascade.

Judge Bolstad is a person who wishes to create a stronger understanding between the community partners, law enforcement, and the community. This year our community, county, and state are facing a critical mental health crisis. This may mean many in our community and county with severe mental illness to be seen by the justice system in the near future, if this goes on.

I support his application for the District Court Judge position because if selected. It could mean saving a life of someone with mental illness. This can be achieved by selecting him for the position. So Judge Bolstad could continue to provide our community and our county with insight and understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Christianson", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**DAN CHRISTIANSON**  
PACT Licensed Addiction Counselor  
Office: (406) 727-4315  
Fax: (406) 7274318  
Email: DANIELC@center4mh.org

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Monday, September 21, 2020 8:50:28 PM

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**From:** Deboarah Porcarelli <dlporc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 21, 2020 9:22 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Steven Bolstad's appointment for the District Judge in the 8th Judicial District

September 21, 2020

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

Committee,

I am writing/emailing in support of Steven Bolstad's appointment for the District Court Judge in the 8th Judicial District. I met Steve in 1992 when he began teaching high school history for Belfry Public Schools in Belfry, Montana. I taught 4th grade in Belfry. Belfry is a small K-12 school district in south central Montana. Steve was a phenomenal educator bringing history to life for his students. He also had many extra curricular responsibilities. I admired the way he embraced his teaching and extra curricular responsibilities, always doing more and going above and beyond expectations. I know Steve's former students continue to stay in contact with him to this day. I think that is a true testament to his dedication and loyalty as an individual and former educator.

I have known Steve Bolsatd for almost thirty years. We were professional colleagues first, but what I cherish most is the lasting friendship we maintain. I have always followed Steve's career after he was an educator and admire what he has done and achieved. My husband and I moved to Great Falls in 2015 and we are happy to live in the same town as him again. I feel so fortunate to live in a community where we could have Steve as one of our District Court judges. His work ethic, dedication and integrity are what we deserve and need in Great Falls.

Sincerely,

**DEBORAH PORCARELLI**

1733 41st St S



Great Falls, MT 59405

[dlporc@gmail.com](mailto:dlporc@gmail.com)

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9:42:41 PM

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**From:** Molyneaux, Keith <Keith.Molyneaux@ssa.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 8:48 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Steven Brian Bolstad public comment (Eight Judicial District Judgeship Vacancy)

September 22, 2020

To Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission and Governor Bullock:

I first met Steve Bolstad in the summer of 1997 when we entered law school at the University of Montana. He quickly became a trusted friend and study partner, to me and many others, because he was intelligent, friendly, approachable, and hard-working. Everyone in our class knew and respected Steve within the first week. With the passage of years, I know now how rare it is to find someone like Steve—he worked very hard to include all, and his interest in others was quite genuine. He truly wanted to know how people around him were doing—he asked about their families, he asked how their classes were going, and he offered to help whenever necessary. He seemed to always have the time and will to help others, and that is why I believe he went on to become a great public servant.

Upon law school graduation, Steve worked in the same law firm with me in Billings for a few years. We toiled together on our first briefs to the Montana Supreme Court, we leaned on each other to find the courage to make our first arguments in District Court, and we spent many late nights together working to meet deadlines. I found him tireless, keen, jovial, and always aware of the task at hand. He offered criticism well, and he accepted suggestions to better himself. He was always reliable, and members of the firm frequently turned to Steve for help. We have since gone on to different employment fields, and even after 20 years have passed, he remains the best coworker (and friend) I ever had.

In short, Steve Bolstad would make an excellent District Court Judge. He is honest, tolerant, inclusive, helpful, courteous, and brave—he is not afraid to make a hard decision. He is also firm and not shy to tell one if their actions need adjustment. Indeed, I know of only two character flaws he has—his love of the Minnesota Vikings and the Montana State Bobcats. Other than those shortcomings, which most Montanans can overlook, I believe he would never disappoint us in the role of District Court Judge for the Eighth Judicial District.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Molyneaux  
Billings, Montana

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9:43:12 PM

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**From:** Allen Lanning <allenplanninglaw@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 12:45 PM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Judicial Nomination Commission c/o Lois Menzies re Steven Bolstad

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

Re: Application of Steven Bolstad

Dear Commission Members:

I have practiced in front of Steven Bolstad in his role as Great Falls Municipal Court Judge since 2014. More recently, I have also occasionally served as a substitute judge in his Court.

Based on my experiences with him in Municipal Court, and my knowledge of his previous work as a Cascade County Deputy County Attorney, I believe that he has the breadth of experience, judicial experience, and temperament to serve as a Montana district court judge. He is practical, empathetic with litigants and respectful of attorneys who appear before him, and able to handle a very significant caseload smoothly and efficiently. My legal experiences before him have been uniformly positive. In his current role, he not only dispenses justice evenly and promptly, but is able to analyze and improve the administration of justice systemically. The vision to assess the effectiveness of the system of justice as a whole is a valuable asset in a district court judge.

I believe Judge Boltad is qualified to serve as a district court judge and would be an asset to the 8th Judicial District if he were appointed to that position, I urge you to pass on his name to Governor Bullock for final consideration. Thank you.

Allen

--

Allen P. Lanning  
Law Office of Allen P. Lanning, P.C.  
300 Central Avenue, Suite 500

P.O. Box 544  
Great Falls, MT 59403-2049  
406 727-9270  
406 761-1406 (fax)

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**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9:43:48 PM

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**From:** Stacey Craig <sscraig66@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 1:04 PM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Judicial Nomination Commission

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

September 22, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to recommend Steve Bolstad for the position of Judge for the Eighth Judicial District. I have known Steve for 36 years. In this time he has been a great friend, (he was the best man at my wedding), godfather to my children, educator with pride, successful attorney and an awesome Municipal Judge. He is a very loyal, hardworking, and community minded individual. He takes his position very seriously and with great integrity. He would definitely be a great choice for this position.

His appointment would be a positive addition to the judicial system. I highly recommend Steve Bolsad to be nominated for appointment by Governor Bullock.

Sincerely

Stacey S. Craig  
Po Box 2413  
Colstrip, MT  
406-899-4942



**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9:46:23 PM

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**From:** Julie Bass <julie@lajcs.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9:17 PM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Eighth Judicial District court nominee

Judicial Nominating 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 the application of Steve Bolstad to serve as a judge in the Eighth Judicial District Court.

While working as a social worker for the state of Montana, on occasion I had to accompany youths to the municipal court. These particular youths had no court etiquette or real understanding of the laws they had broken. I witnessed Judge Bolstad's judicial temperament and decorum. Judge Bolstad cares for both the law and the people in his court room.

I have great respect for the Eighth Judicial District Court of which I spent many days attending Youth in Need of Care hearings. Understanding the complexity of the cases and the overwhelming number cases filed each year; I believe a seasoned judge is the best fit for the extremely busy Eighth Judicial District Court.

Steve Bolstad's judicial experience and diverse law background combined with his legal intelligence and professional and personal ethics is a stellar candidate to serve as judge in the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Sincerely,  
Julie Bass LCPC



(VIA EMAIL)

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

Dear Members of the Commission:

It is my pleasure to write to support the application of Steve Bolstad for nomination to the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court.

I first met Judge Bolstad in his capacity as a training judge for the courts of limited jurisdiction. Judge Bolstad's compassion and knowledge of the law were immediately obvious and over the past few years I have come to appreciate his counsel. Judge Bolstad is well-respected and has demonstrated professionalism as a municipal court judge. He would make a fine addition to the district court ranks.

Sincerely,

Alex Beal

Justice of the Peace, Dept. 1



THOMPSON PAINTER LAW P.C.

MEMBER-AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ESTATE PLANNING ATTORNEYS

Living Trust & Estate Planning Professionals

JAMES W. THOMPSON  
james@thompsonpainterlaw.com

SAM S. PAINTER  
sam@thompsonpainterlaw.com

MICHAEL C. YASENAK  
mike@thompsonpainterlaw.com

September 22, 2020

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

via email: [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)

Dear Commission Members:

I write to recommend my former colleague and long-time friend Steven Brian Bolstad ("Steve") for the position of District Court Judge for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Cascade County, Montana. Steve and I met in 1985 while attending Montana State University. Based on our respective blue collar upbringing, we quickly became good friends. Steve ultimately became a high school teacher first in Fromberg and next Belfry. I visited Steve on numerous occasions during his teaching tenure. While visiting, I had the opportunity to observe how well liked and respected he was, by parents and students, in both communities. As I understood it, Steve was demanding but compassionate and most important, fair. Frankly, I never heard a negative comment regarding Steve from parents, students, and fellow teachers. In fact, when Steve decided to attend law school, he was sadly missed by the community and students in Belfry.

Steve subsequently attended law school at the University of Montana School of Law from 1997-2000. We remained in close contact while he attended law school, and Steve worked for my firm as a summer intern. During his internship, Steve was assigned a variety of projects including but not limited to, code drafting, legal research and writing, and litigation support. Steve quickly became a valuable asset to my firm due to his commitment to hard work and production of excellent work product. After Steve finished law school and passed the Bar Exam in 2000, I immediately hired him as an associate attorney.

Steve worked as an associate attorney for my firm, Elk River Law Office, for three years. During those three years, Steve was primarily responsible to represent the Crow Tribe in Indian Child Welfare Act ("ICWA") cases in area State District Courts. Steve provided impeccable representation for the Crow Tribe and through his court work gained a reputation as a credible, hard-working, and honest, young attorney. In addition to ICWA, Steve assisted with numerous other areas of Federal Indian Law, including but not limited to code drafting, Tribal court training and assistance, and litigation. Steve's writing skills were superb and much appreciated during a time when litigation was substantial for my firm including a number of trials and subsequent appeals to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Montana Supreme Court.

Without Steve's dedication to hard work and research and writing skills, my firm would not have been able to handle the litigation workload.

I was fortunate to work with Steve for three years before he was recruited to return to his home town of Great Falls. Although it was hard to see him leave the firm and City of Billings, I knew Steve possessed a calling to provide public service for his beloved community. Steve left my firm in 2003. However, I remained in close contact with my friend and former colleague while he worked for the Cascade County Attorney's Office. In 2014, Steve contacted me and advised he was contemplating applying for the City Judge position for the City of Great Falls.

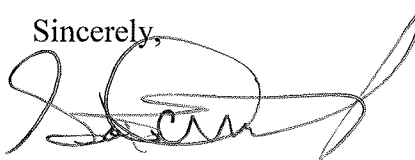
I had numerous discussions regarding his decision to change from prosecutor to judge, and frankly had no doubt in Steve's ability and competence to serve as an excellent City Court Judge. I do not currently appear or practice before him, however, I have had the opportunity to discuss his work as a judge with attorneys who regularly appear and practice before him. Based on the conversations I have had, Judge Bolstad is reported to be fair, impartial, and wise. Steve understands the law and importantly treats both attorneys and their clients with dignity and respect which is crucial for all public servants.

In regard to the District Court Judge position Steve seeks, I have absolutely no doubt he is qualified and competent for the position. Steve is not afraid of hard work, and he will work as hard as the position requires. The skills he has developed over his years of practice will serve the Citizens of Cascade County well. Based on the thirty-five years I have known Steve, twenty as an attorney, I am honored to write this letter of recommendation on his behalf.

In my opinion, Steve is an obvious choice for this position. He is a person of integrity who I would trust in any life situation or case. He is absolutely independent, impartial, and competent. I have no doubt Steve will serve Cascade County in an exemplary fashion equal to the service he currently provides as City Judge for the City Great Falls.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam S. Painter', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Sam S. Painter

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9:42:10 PM

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**From:** Stacy McKittrick <CLEMENTS0699@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 21, 2020 11:30 PM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Steve Bolstad Nomination

Judicial Nomination Commission  
c/o Lois Menzies  
Office Of Court Administrator  
P.O. Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620-3005  
[mt.supremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mt.supremecourt@mt.gov)

RE: Judge Steve Bolstad, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judge Applicant

Dear Commission Members,

Please consider this letter in support of Great Falls Municipal Judge Steve Bolstad's application for appointment as District Court Judge in the Eighth Judicial District. I have known Judge Bolstad for approximately sixteen years. During Judge Bolstad's time as a prosecutor in the Cascade County Attorney's Office, we frequently litigated cases as opposing counsel. I respected his ability to grasp the facts, the law, and take positions, whether in legal briefing or oral argument. Our relationship has always been one of professional courtesy and mutual respect.

Judge Bolstad has a breadth of legal experience that he would bring to the bench as a District Court Judge. Along with the aforementioned experience in criminal law, Judge Bolstad has experience in general civil litigation, and currently serves as Great Falls Municipal Court Judge. Judge Bolstad has served on a number of boards and committees and is deeply vested in the future of Great Falls and Cascade County. His experience with the Native American population and those in our community with mental health needs is a perspective that any District Court Judge should have. I have also seen Judge Bolstad understand and recognize that mistakes, particularly mistakes made by our youths, can and should be used as learning experiences which form the building blocks of a better future.

Judge Bolstad's honesty and integrity are unquestioned. He is ethical, competent, and highly motivated to do the difficult work of a District Court Judge. Judge Bolstad knows that a Court's decisions have lifelong ramifications for multiple individuals. I trust that as a District Court Judge, Judge Bolstad will afford all parties the ability to put forth their respective positions, and employ a decision making process that adheres scrupulously to the facts and law before him. Please consider forwarding Judge Bolstad's name on to the Governor for further consideration.

Very truly yours,

Matthew T. McKittrick  
Attorney At Law  
1009 Choteau Avenue NE  
Great Falls, MT, 59404

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



September 23, 2020

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

**EMAILED TO [lmenzies@mt.gov](mailto:lmenzies@mt.gov) & [mtsupremecourt@mt.gov](mailto:mtsupremecourt@mt.gov)**

**RE: Eighth Judicial District Court Vacancy - Applicant: Steve Bolstad**

Dear Ms. Menzies and Commission Members::

I write to recommend Steve Bolstad's application for appointment to Montana's Eighth Judicial District Court. I have known Steve, both personally and professionally, for more than two decades. Steve possesses the intelligence, work ethic, and integrity required of a top-notch Judge.

I first got to know Steve during our time as students at the University of Montana School of Law. Steve has always been passionate about the law, and he understands the importance of the legal profession to promote justice in our society. For several years, I practiced law in the same community as Steve and had the opportunity to observe him providing excellent legal representation for a very diverse group of Montana citizens. For the past several years, Steve has served the same community as a Municipal Court Judge where he has earned the respect of the legal community as well as the public.

Apart from his legal practice and judicial service, Steve Bolstad also contributes valuable time and resources to the betterment of his community. I have no doubt he would serve Montana well as a Judge in the Eighth Judicial District Court. I urge you to nominate Steve Bolstad for consideration by Governor Bullock for the position.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Mark M. Kovacich

MMK:dak

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**mtlawyers.com**

T: 406.222.2222

F: 406.259.3232

**Billings**

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

**Great Falls**

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

**Helena**

845 Great Northern Blvd.  
Helena, MT 59601

September 21, 2020

Montana Supreme Court:

It gives me great pleasure to offer this letter of recommendation on behalf of Steve Bolstad for District Court Judge. I have had the privilege of knowing Steve for 15+ years as a neighbor, a friend and I have observed him multiple times as our Municipal Court Judge. Steve is fair, genuine and brings natural leadership along with his invaluable experience.

I am sure that Judge Bolstad's prior experience as a Deputy County Attorney and Municipal Court Judge will guide him through any new challenges. I fully recommend Steve Bolstad, with the utmost confidence, and I know he will continue to serve our community with unwavering commitment and dedication.

Sincerely,

Marsha J. Wilson  
3105 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N.  
Great Falls, Mt 59401  
[Mjwilson22@aol.com](mailto:Mjwilson22@aol.com)  
406-781-6327

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 8:21:56 PM

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**From:** Koffler, Dean  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 4:58 PM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** 8th Judicial District Comment re Steven Bolstad

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission,

I am writing regarding the nomination of Steven Brian Bolstad to the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. I had the opportunity to practice almost exclusively in front of Judge Bolstad for roughly two years between 2015 and 2017 and have handled hundreds of cases in his Court. Based on my experiences in the Great Falls Municipal Court with Judge Bolstad presiding I do not believe he has the temperament to be a district court judge and I would respectfully request you consider one of the other candidates.

I have been employed with the Montana Office of the Public Defender for almost five years. The first two years of my job involved handling municipal court cases exclusively. During that time I handled hundreds of misdemeanor cases including several jury trials and countless bench trials. The vast majority of those cases and contested hearings were presided over by Judge Bolstad. Taken together I was in Judge Bolstad's court at least every other day for roughly two years. Since then I have practiced as a public defender in the Cascade County Justice Court and the Cascade County District Court.

My primary concerns with Judge Bolstad being appointed to the district court vacancy are his temperament during judicial proceedings, how he treats defendants and attorneys, and how he handles difficult contested matters. I cannot count the number of times Judge Bolstad seemed to lose his temper and yell at the litigants for a variety of reasons. My other big concern is that it seemed that Judge Bolstad would take things personally on occasion to an extent I have not seen with the other judges. While Judge Bolstad would often apologize later if things got too heated, the damage was usually done at that point. On a couple of occasions Judge Bolstad held my clients on misdemeanor cases without bond which I did not believe was allowed. Judge Bolstad would usually reverse course a day or two later, but again it was difficult to deal with the uncertainty of his rulings in hotly contested matters.

All of that being said I also want to mention that recently Judge Bolstad has been very polite to me personally and I have not experienced some of the things I saw a few years ago. I understand it has been a while since I have practiced primarily in Municipal Court however I wanted to make the commission aware of my past interactions with Judge Bolstad. Thank you for your consideration.

Dean Koffler  
Assistant Public Defender  
Montana Office of the Public Defender

September 23, 2020

Judicial Nomination Commission  
Office of Court Administrator  
PO Box 203005  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

I, John David Plascak, J.D., write this letter in support of Great Falls Municipal Court Judge Steven B. Bolstad for the appointment to the Eighth Judicial District. I support Judge Bolstad because of his honesty, integrity, thoughtfulness and his dedication to making correct legal ruling based on the facts and law presented to him. I write this letter as a Public Defender that has appeared before Judge Bolstad more than any other defense counsel.

I moved to Great Falls, MT from Indiana in October of 2017 after passing the bar exam in the spring of 2017. I began working at the State Office of Public Defender and was assigned to represent clients in Great Falls Municipal Court before the Honorable Judge Bolstad. Since November of 2017 I have been assigned to the Great Falls Municipal Court and have appeared before Judge Bolstad nearly every day for three years (absent weekend, holidays and sick days).

Judge Bolstad has taught me to become a more effective attorney and litigator. In November of 2017 I conducted my first trial, which was presided over by Judge Bolstad. After the trial he pulled me aside and explained the strengths and weakness of the case and how my argument could improve. Before Steven Bolstad became an attorney, he was schoolteacher and he has used those skills to help new attorneys become more effective litigators. Since 2017 Judge Bolstad has taught me how to be a more direct and concise attorney. Furthermore, I have trained four new attorneys in Municipal Court and Judge Bolstad has afforded them the same level of helpfulness.

Throughout my years appearing before Judge Bolstad he has ruled in the defense favor more times than I can count. Judge Bolstad is always open to hear all relevant facts and arguments in a truly fair and impartial manner. When the State has failed to meet their burden Judge Bolstad will acquit the defendant. When the State has proven all the criminal elements beyond a reasonable doubt, Judge Bolstad will convict the individual. I truly appreciate Judge Bolstad's ability to only consider relevant facts and relevant law and clearly explain why he ruled in a particular manner based on the application of the law to the facts. Judge Bolstad is very thoughtful in his application of law to facts and prides himself on making correct legal rulings. Throughout my career practicing before Judge Bolstad I have never felt I or my clients have been treated unfairly.

There is no doubt that courtrooms can become a contentious place where tempers may flair. On occasion Judge Bolstad does have to step in as referee when the State or Defense become overzealous. When I first started practicing the Great Falls Municipal Court there was a small number of times when the Judge was succumbed to the tension of the courtroom. However, he has truly overcome any tendency succumb to such heated tension. Presently, when contentious issues arise the Judge will have each side argue their position and he will make a ruling on the matter. From time to time the Court will encounter disrespectful defendant, however Judge Bolstad does not become tempered towards those

individuals. In such situation the Judge will hold the person in contempt and sentence them to jail. However, the next day Judge Bolstad always allows an individual, that has been held in contempt, the opportunity to appear and apologize. Given that the individual apologizes for disrespecting the Court the Judge will vacate the contempt sentence.

Further, during bail arguments Judge Bolstad is always thoughtful and carefully considers both the State's bail argument the defense bail argument. In dealing with misdemeanor offenders bail is generally a rare occurrence. However, when Judge Bolstad does set a bond in a case it is not without purpose. Generally, Judge Bolstad will only set a bond on case when the defendant has repeatedly failed to appear at a prior trial setting, when the defendant is accused of a particularly violent crime or to ensure compliance with a particular bond condition. For example, when a defendant has an overtly obvious chemical dependency issue or an obvious mental health issue Judge Bolstad will set a high bond until the person has undergone an evaluation. Once the defendant has either completed a chemical dependency evaluation or mental health evaluation Judge Bolstad will waive the bond. Judge Bolstad sets bonds in this manner to ensure defendants are getting the help and services that they need.

What's more, Judge Bolstad comes from humble beginnings. Most of the defendants that appear in the Great Falls Municipal Court are indigent or on a fixed income. Judge Bolstad truly cares about the individuals appearing before him and makes every accommodation for convicted persons to be able to comply with sentencing conditions. In Judge Bolstad's Court when an individual is sentenced to pay a fine but is unable to make monthly payments, he will give them an extension on their fines until their circumstances improve. Judge Bolstad understands the real life struggles that individuals face and allows them more time to complete sentencing requirements as to not make their already difficult situation worse.

I write this letter to recommend Judge Bolstad to fill the Eight Judicial District Judge seat. He has always been fair to defense counsel, defendants, and the State. Judge Bolstad is thoughtful and works hard to achieve legally correct results. He cares about the people appearing before him and helps individuals get any help and services they may need. I do not make this recommendation lightly, as I have practiced before Judge Bolstad more than any defense attorney. Judge Bolstad is a good man, a good attorney, and an even better Judge.

Respectfully,

John David Plascak

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John David Plascak", is written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

September 24, 2020

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

Re: Eighth Judicial District Judgeship Vacancy (Cascade County)

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for Steve Bolstad, Dave Grubich and Michele Levine for the position of District Judge for Montana's Eighth Judicial District. Each of these candidates has the experience, expertise and temperament to be an outstanding district judge.

I've had the pleasure to know all of these candidates personally and professionally over many years. In addition to being talented, hard-working and experienced lawyers, each candidate has a calm, even temperament and possesses a sincere respect for our justice system. I have no doubt that whomever is appointed to the bench by Governor Bullock from this impressive 'short list' will bring all of these important qualities to work each day as a District Judge for Cascade County.

For all of the above reasons, I support these three candidates' applications for this important judgeship without reservation and respectfully urge the Commission to submit their names for consideration by Governor Bullock.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael J. George



FAURE HOLDEN  
attorneys at law pc

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

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

Re: Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

When you walk into the south entrance of the Civic Center in Great Falls you are instructed to immediately proceed down marbled stairs where only a portion of the hallway is carpeted. It is a basement. And that is where Judge Bolstad dispenses justice every day in a manner that makes those in front of him feel like they are on the top floor. Judge Bolstad treats every defendant, lawyer, victim, and citizen before him with respect and fairness.

Judge Bolstad has transformed "City Court" into an efficient and fair Court. If you have never appeared before Judge Bolstad, it is difficult to truly appreciate what he has accomplished. Mondays are busy, but that is only the start of the week. People are lined up in the cement hallways. Every walk of life roams the halls - the parents of a teenager who got a Minor in Possession on Saturday night, an alcoholic working on recovery, and the married couple facing separation because of a Partner Family Member Assault. He does this every day, and he does not change his honest and effective approach to case after case.

Nelson Mandela once said that "a nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but it's lowest ones." So it is with judges. Judge Bolstad has shown through his years of dedication that he has the temperament and poise to ascend to a position of a District Court Judge. We urge you to forward his name to the Governor for appointment to Judge Pinski's seat.

Very truly yours,

  
Jason T. Holden

  
Jean E. Faure

  
Katie R. Ranta

FAURE HOLDEN attorneys at law pc

PO BOX 2466 GREAT FALLS, MT 59403 • 1314 CENTRAL AVE • GREAT FALLS, MT 59401  
PHONE: 406.452.6500 • FAX: 406.452.6505 • www.faureholden.com

**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 8:15:56 PM

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**From:** Marie Vossberg <marievossberg@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 11:36 AM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 8th JUDICIAL DISTRICT JUDGE APPLICANT - Steven Brian Bolstad

Judicial Nomination Commission,

Please consider my input on selecting Steven Brian Bolstad for the position of District Court Judge of the Eight Judicial District:

I have personally known Steve Bolstad for over 30 years. He and his wife, Laura, are close friends to my sister and her husband; through them I have become a good friend and supporter. Steve is fair, honest, and community oriented. I remember conversing with Steve and he commented he would rather have low level offenders in his court learn from their mistakes, perform community service, and become good citizens rather than throw into the jail system. Steve will advocate for mediation when available vs court litigation (divorce). Steve will be a great asset to the Eighth Judicial District as he is fair, honest, compassionate, smart, and a leader in the community.

Please select Steven Bolstad to the District Court Judge of the Eight Judicial District

Thank you,

Marie Snodgrass,  
Former resident of Cascade County and MSU graduate

612-910-1735  
1101 Crystal Ct  
Chaska, MN 55318

# MOORE, COCKRELL, GOICOECHEA & JOHNSON, P.C.

Mikel L. Moore  
[Also Admitted in Arizona]  
Dale R. Cockrell  
[Also Admitted in South  
Dakota and Colorado]  
Sean P. Goicoechea  
Jay T. Johnson  
Christopher C. Di Lorenzo  
[Also Admitted in Colorado and  
Nebraska]  
Eric Brooks  
[Also Admitted in Maryland]  
Katrina L. Feller

145 Commons Loop, Ste. 200  
Kalispell, MT 59901

•  
P.O. Box 7370  
Kalispell, MT 59904-0370

•  
Office: (406) 751-6000  
Fax: (406) 756-6522

September 23, 2020

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

Also emailed to [mtsupremecourt@gmail.com](mailto:mtsupremecourt@gmail.com)

Re: Steve Bolstad - Nomination for District Judge

Dear Judicial Nomination Commission:

I am writing to recommend Steve Bolstad for appointment as district court judge of the 8th Judicial District. I have known Steve for many years as both a lawyer and judge. Steve is a superb candidate for this position.

Steve is blessed with a calm and measured demeanor which lends itself well to the work of a district court judge. Steve is truly a problem solver who protects the rule of law but does not lose sight of the fact the cases he handles involve real people with real problems. His approach to the bench and the work required of a judge is workmanlike and humble.

Steve's integrity is beyond reproach. Defining true integrity in today's fake news world is increasingly difficult. Nonetheless, I can say with certainty that I am 100% comfortable playing poker with Steve Bolstad via telephone (the old school phone with no video). If you knew Steve well, you would be comfortable doing the same. You will not find a more honest, forthright, and principled person for this position.

The breadth of support Steve has received in the form of letters to this Commission confirms that Steve's reputation, character, and approach to the bench is exemplar. This breadth of support also confirms Steve is well respected among lawyers from all aspects of the Montana Bar. Very few attorneys or judges are respected by lawyers practicing in all areas of the law. Steve has the hard-earned distinction of being a judge who is thorough, capable, and committed to the

September 23, 2020

Page 2

rule of law regardless the issues or people he is judging. These traits make him a perfect candidate for this position.

There is simply no question that, if appointed, Steve will be a superb judge and will serve litigants in the 8th Judicial District and the State of Montana well. Please accept my highest recommendation in support of Steve for this position.

Very truly yours,

MOORE, COCKRELL,  
GOICOECHEA & JOHNSON, P.C.



Sean Goicoechea  
Direct Line No. (406) 751-6015

SG/srj

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

LAW OFFICE OF  
**DAVIS, HATLEY, HAFFEMAN & TIGHE, P.C.**  
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TELEPHONE  
(406) 761-5243  
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(406) 761-4126

\*Also admitted to practice in Oregon & Washington

FILE NO.

September 23, 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 in support of Steve Bolstad for appointment as a District Court Judge to fill the upcoming vacancy in the Eighth Judicial District Court. I have known Steve over twenty-five years. When I first met Steve he was employed as a teacher and coach. It was apparent that he took great pride in his role as a teacher and mentor to his students. Steve has displayed that same sense of pride in his work as an attorney and now as the Great Falls Municipal Court Judge.

Steve is proud of his Great Falls roots. After law school, Steve worked in Billings and then returned to Great Falls when he had the opportunity to do so. Steve has been active in the community and served on numerous boards and committees. Steve is vested in making Great Falls the best it can be.

Steve is a hard worker that does what it takes to get the job done. That quality will serve him well as the Eighth Judicial District has a heavy case load. He has experience in both civil and criminal law.. Steve's six years of experience as the Great Falls Municipal Court Judge will allow for an easier transition to the position of District Court Judge. I believe Steve possesses the personal and professional characteristics that are required of a District Court Judge. For that reason, I am recommending him for this position.

Sincerely,

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

By   
Stephanie A. Hollar

P.O. Box 2413  
Colstrip, MT 59323

September 22, 2020

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

Subject: 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judge Appointment

Dear Distinguished Judicial Nomination Commission Members,

It's my honor and pleasure to recommend that Steve Bolstad be nominated for appointment by Governor Bullock as the next 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judge. I've been very fortunate to have known and been a friend of Steve's since attending junior high with him in Great Falls. Steve comes from a hardworking Montana family who instilled in him from a young age the highest principles of integrity and honesty. He genuinely cares about people and easily connects with others from all walks of life both professionally and personally. It's through this connection with others that Steve has and is able to express his beliefs and opinions to people with opposing views without compromising his principles or creating feelings of animosity.

If appointed judge, I'm sure Steve will be open-minded to the views of other parties, and principled in upholding the requirements of the position in making the best decisions possible. Steve works hard to always do what's right even though it may be difficult or not popular. He is very analytical in the manner he approaches problems, but not to the point where he won't make a needed decision. Steve doesn't shy away from difficult situations, and works tirelessly to address issues that have contributed to these situations.

Thank you for considering my recommendation in nominating Steve Bolstad as the next 8th Judicial District Judge. I'm confident Steve will be a huge asset in this position and serve to the best of his ability.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Craig



**From:** [Menzies, Lois](#)  
**To:** [Cook, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Bolstad  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 8:16:32 PM

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**From:** Shea, Jim  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 12:11 PM  
**To:** MT Supreme Court,  
**Subject:** Recommendation for Steve Bolstad for Eighth Jud. Dist. Court Vacancy

Dear Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission:

It is my pleasure to write in support of Steve Bolstad's application for appointment to the Cascade County District Court. Steve has been a personal friend since we first met at the beginning of our freshman year of college at U of M. During nearly all of Steve's tenure as Great Falls Municipal Court Judge, I have also had the opportunity to observe the exceptional work he has done on the bench in my capacity as a Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, I feel I have a unique perspective to comment on how his personal and professional qualities intersect to make him an excellent candidate for the District Court.

In the thirty-five-plus years I have known Steve, I have known him to be an individual of character, integrity, and compassion—qualities that are all essential to being a good judge. Steve is also Great Falls to the bone. He has always taken great pride in his community and, as is well-demonstrated by his history of service to the people of Cascade County, he is committed to his hometown.

Montana has exceptional judges serving our courts of limited jurisdiction, and Steve is a prime example of that exceptionalism. Serving as a municipal court judge in a city the size of Great Falls is the very definition of being "in the trenches." Steve has handled the job admirably. He is prepared, he is knowledgeable, he works hard, and he demonstrates compassion and judgment. He would bring those same qualities to the very challenging position of District Court Judge.

You have a list of impressive candidates for this position, and I do not envy the task you have in front of you. But as he has already demonstrated by his six years of service on the Municipal Court, and by his years of service as a practicing attorney before that, Steve has the personal and professional qualities to serve as an excellent District Court Judge. I highly recommend that his application be passed on to Governor Bullock.

Thank you for your service and your important work on this Commission.

Sincerely,

Jim Shea

JAMES JEREMIAH SHEA  
JUSTICE  
MONTANA SUPREME COURT



## CASCADE COUNTY

### Board of County Commissioners

325 2nd Avenue North

Great Falls, MT 59401

Tel. 406.454.6810

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[commission@cascadecountymt.gov](mailto:commission@cascadecountymt.gov)

[www.cascadecountymt.gov](http://www.cascadecountymt.gov)

09/22/20

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

RE: Judge Steve Bolstad, 8th Judicial District Application

Members of the Judicial Nomination Commission,

I write to you to express my support of Great Falls Municipal Judge Steven Bolstad to fill the vacancy in the Eighth Judicial District.

I first met Steve when I became a Cascade County Commissioner following the election of 2004. Steve was assigned to the Commission as one of our civil attorneys. I worked with him on numerous projects for the Commission office. I found Steve to be very intelligent, knowable and a very able attorney. We did not always agree but he always presented me with the detailed research required to justify his position. He has a strong respect for the letter of the law which I respect greatly and an ability to disagree without being disagreeable.

When he moved from the civil position to that of a prosecutor, he continued to perform very well for the citizens of Cascade County. While a prosecutor, he also served as the head of their bargaining unit with the commissioners. Those were not pleasant negotiations, but as always Steve kept his professional demeanor and bargained hard but professionally for his fellow attorneys.

In this role and previously as our civil counsel he acquired the type of insight into county operations and budgets that is lacking in the majority of the current eighth district judges. This lack of understanding has created unnecessary friction between the District Court Judges and the county elected officeholders and staff.

In summary, I believe that Steve Bolstad is the best qualified of the candidates for the following reasons:

- He is currently a Great Falls municipal city judge, so he is not new to role of a judge and understands the balancing act that comes with the position.
- He has served in the Legislature giving him additional insight in the development of the Montana Code Annotated.

- He has a positive existing relationship with both the GF Police Department and the Sherriff's office.
- He has a positive established relationship with the Cascade County Attorney's Office as well as with the members of the Commission.
- He is a competent attorney currently serving our citizens as the City Municipal Judge.

Thank you for your attention to this important task. I wish you well in your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Joe Briggs  
Cascade County Commissioner