

March 1, 2023

Letter of Support of the Confirmation of Judge Jennifer Barrett Esq.

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

My name is Amanda Jensen, and I have honorably served Orleans County Vermont as a Victim Advocate for the past 18 years. I started my career at our local domestic violence program, before taking a position at the Vermont State Police, and then was fortunate enough to join Jennifer Barrett's team at the Orleans County State's Attorney's office working through both terms, spanning February 2015 through October of 2022. Prior to Jennifer's appointment I accepted a job with the Federal Government and am no longer a State employee.

If I could leave you with one example that highlights Jennifer's character, it would be a child sexual assault case that we worked together in 2017. The complexities of this case were tremendous, and the sensitive victim was faced with unimaginable challenges. Our office ended up losing this case at trial due to circumstances out of our control. It should be brought to your attention that Jennifer Barrett was not the prosecutor assigned to this case, but on the day of trial ended up giving the clothes off her back, as the victim only had access to her pajamas on this day. During the pendency of this case, the victim turned to drugs and subsequently became the victim of human trafficking. Our office did the best we could to support her, we connected her to resources, found her emergency shelter, food, basic necessities and even preserved her statements, so that someday the victim was in a place to proceed with charges, Jennifer Barrett would be in position to prosecute her traffickers. Barrett understood her current condition and extensive trauma history and respected the fact that she was not mentally or emotionally prepared to go through another long prosecution, realizing that this was bigger than getting a conviction. But what is important for you to know is that the relationship and trust that was built with this crime victim led her back to our office for support during this challenging time in her life.

In closing, the State of Vermont should be considered lucky to have such an incredibly talented young woman, who represents to her core, the values and convictions that this great state was built upon. This woman is the enemy of an upstanding public servant, and is a role model for all women, to include myself.

Respectfully,

Amanda Jensen


02/01/2023

Dear Senate Judiciary Members,

I worked with Judge Jennifer Barrett while I was employed as a docket clerk for the Judiciary in Orleans County. I worked in that position for four years. My duties included; recording criminal court proceedings, scheduling and processing legal documents. At that time, Judge Jennifer Barrett was the Orleans County State's Attorney. I had the opportunity to watch her conduct hundreds of hearings, as well as many jury trials. I was able to observe her interact with the Court, defense attorneys and members of the public.

Judge Barrett displayed compassion, patience, professionalism and strong ethics. She has a remarkable ability to recall facts and law in each of her cases with a substantial caseload. Judge Barrett has always displayed high ethical values and the integrity that is required to fill the honorable position of Superior Court Judge. She consistently demonstrated a commitment to adhering to Vermont law and assuring fair and equal justice for all individuals.

Sincerely,



Cara Worth

Honorable Members

Vermont Senate Judiciary Committee

Vermont State House

115 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05633

February 1, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to you in support of the confirmation of Judge Jennifer Barrett.

I served as the first woman Presiding Superior Court Judge appointed in the state of Arizona. As a judge, my job was to be fair and impartial at all times while upholding the law. Judicial independence is paramount to the administration of justice. Judge Barrett stands by these same principles.

Judge Barrett is a native Vermonter. While many young people in the state leave to pursue more lucrative careers, Judge Barrett has served the public in her state during the entirety of her career. As a young woman, Judge Barrett brings diversity and vitality to the Vermont judiciary.

Judge Barrett brought an extraordinary amount of trial experience to the bench. She handled extensive caseloads during her tenure as State's Attorney in Orleans County. I worked with her in that office and watched her maintain poise, dignity, and good judgment.

Judge Barrett is compassionate toward victims. She listens attentively and as long as necessary for their stories to be told.

Judge Barrett is not influenced by partisan interests. She maintains judicial independence. She decides cases on the law and facts alone.

I strongly recommend the confirmation of Judge Barrett.

Respectfully,

Carolyn C. Holliday, Esq.

Judge (Retired)

I have known Judge Barrett for about 10 years, dating back to her time as a Deputy prosecutor in Orleans County. For the least eight or so years, I have worked with her extensively in her role as the elected Orleans County State's Attorney. While she and I did not always see things eye-to-eye (It would be unnatural for she, a prosecutor and I, a defense lawyer, to share a mutual perspective), I have always admired her incredible work ethic, her devotion to her constituency, and her unfailing honesty and integrity.

I unhesitatingly and enthusiastically recommended her to Governor Scott when asked about her potential appointment to the bench.

I have heard grumblings from some of my defense bar colleagues about Judge Barrett's prosecutorial approach. Nothing she ever did was untoward or outside the bounds of the law. She used the prosecutorial tools the legislature provided her. (We can discuss another day whether it was wise for the Legislature to increase the number of offenses with potential life sentences threefold and to authorize holding people other than those facing life sentences without bail. See, 13 VSA 7533a) Those laws, and others, have significantly increased the burden on defense lawyers. But it is a defense lawyer's job to push back when prosecutors are asking for Court rulings they view as unwarranted. Losing those arguments shouldn't generate vitriolic reactions towards a prosecutor.

I'd be happy to share a more detailed account of my assessment of Judge Barrett in any forum the Senate desires.

January 31, 2023

heather.macdonald5831@gmail.com

RE: Letter of Support for Confirmation of Jennifer Barrett

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

I am writing this letter to express my support for Judge Jennifer Barrett's confirmation. I am a former Judicial Assistant with Orleans County Criminal Division and worked there from 2015-2022 while Judge Barrett was the Orleans County State's Attorney. I had several job duties but the most common were docketing cases, scheduling and recording criminal proceedings. I had daily interactions with Judge Barrett and watched her conduct evidentiary hearings, arraignments, jury draws and numerous jury trials.

Judge Barrett was professional in her interactions with the Court, opposing counsel and the public. She weighed the facts surrounding the individual and the impacts a case would have on whom she was interacting with. Judge Barrett was also a dedicated public servant during her time as the State's Attorney.

I had the opportunity to work with over 6 judges while I was with the Judiciary. The best judges I observed were compassionate, even tempered and knowledgeable about law. Judge Barrett also possesses these skills and will make a great judge.

Sincerely,

Heather A. Macdonald



Jennifer L. Harlow
Sheriff

ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
PO BOX 355
NEWPORT, VT 05855

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Memorandum

To: Members of Senate Judiciary
From: Orleans County Sheriff Jennifer Harlow
Date: 1/31/23
Re: Judicial Nomination of Jennifer Barrett

I am writing to support Jennifer Barrett as you consider her confirmation to serve as a Vermont judge. I have worked with Jennifer Barrett since she was elected Orleans County State's Attorney in February 2015.

Jennifer Barrett strived to be a positive role model to the citizens of our community, especially young women. Jennifer has encouraged and supported women to seek and be in leadership positions. At one time in our County, she was the only woman in leadership, and now we have more women in both law enforcement and legal positions, which, in my opinion, is directly attributable to Jennifer Barrett's excellent reputation and role-modeling.

As the State's Attorney, Jennifer was my partner in presenting career information at the Women Can Do! Program held annually at Vermont Technical College. Young women from all across the state attend. Jennifer and I had one of the highest attendance rates in students, with many of the young women sharing with us that because of our class, they were now interested in working in law enforcement and as lawyers. Jennifer is an excellent role model for young women.

While Jennifer Barrett was State's Attorney, she supported and helped develop a Diversion Program for sexting cases within Orleans County. This was in an effort to conduct education as well as to keep our young people from entering the criminal justice system. To my knowledge, Orleans County was the first to offer this program for young people so they would not face the possibility of criminal charges.

Jennifer Barrett and I would also go into our local high school's Human Service class to speak about our careers and encourage young women to aspire, act and achieve their goals, and pursue their interests. Jennifer was encouraging and let them know that their aspirations are absolutely achievable, and that hard work makes these goals possible.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on Jennifer Barrett as you consider her confirmation.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Jennifer Harlow

Senate Judiciary Committee
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

January 31, 2023

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in support of the confirmation of the appointment of Jennifer Barrett as a Judge to the Superior Court of the State of Vermont. Shortly after my retirement from the Orleans County States Attorney's Office Jennifer came to the office to do her clerkship and I was introduced to her. In the time that I have known Jennifer I have been impressed by her intelligence, skill and enthusiasm for the law and the judicial process.

After I retired I was hearing a great number of complaints and concerns about the management and direction of the office from my friends and colleagues in the defense community and law enforcement. Due to the ongoing problems and dissatisfaction with the management of the Office Jennifer became a candidate for the Office of States Attorney and received the support of a community that she was very much a stranger to. She did this by hard work and by clearly stating her plan of meeting the needs of the community she would be serving.

Once elected Jennifer demonstrated real leadership by the changes that she made in the staff and management of the office. I have had the pleasure of serving on the Board for our Child Advocacy Center with Jennifer. Jennifer served as Board President until her appointment to the bench and has demonstrated great skill in guiding the management of that organization. As you may know the Center is tasked with assisting the victims of domestic and sexual violence.

I have also served on our Community Justice panel. Thanks to Jennifer's support and ongoing commitment to finding alternative approaches to dealing with crime in our County, the Panel has been quite busy.

The office that Jennifer managed and directed was one that includes a woman of color who came here from South Africa and is of Indian descent, a woman from

Romania, an Asian American, a member of the LGBTQ community, a male from Connecticut, and two women from our local community. Jennifer recommended and supported our friend Farzana Leyva to assume her position as States Attorney for Orleans County. I may be incorrect in this but I believe that as a result of this appointment Farzana may be the first woman of color to serve as a States Attorney in Vermont. I say friend because Jennifer has brought the people she works with and people like me and my wife together for a variety of social events where we have gotten to know each other as friends.

As for me my name is Joseph Malgeri. I was admitted to the Vermont Bar in 1977 and after a brief time as counsel for the Vermont State Housing Authority I was hired by the Honorable James Morse to serve as a public defender in Caledonia, Orleans and Essex Counties. Through the years I have been the Public Defender in the Champlain Islands, Lamoille and Orleans Counties. During Walt Morris's tenure I traveled as kind of Public Defender at large traveling across the northern area of Vermont taking cases from the County offices in an effort to relieve their caseload. I have also served as an Assistant Attorney General and a Deputy States Attorney.

I support the confirmation of Jennifer Barrett's appointment to the Superior Court's bench because I know her to be an intelligent, fair-minded individual who will serve this State with integrity and in the best traditions of our Judiciary.

Sincerely;

Joseph T. Malgeri

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting this letter in support of the honorable Jennifer Barrett. I have known Judge Barrett approximately five (5) years while employed as a Family Services Worker and most recently as a Senior Family Services Worker for the Department for Children and Families and she was the State's Attorney in Orleans County, Vermont. I currently hold a Master's in Human Services with a concentration in Leadership and am working on a second master's degree in Counseling. As an investigative Family Services Worker there were many instances that I would have to write affidavits requesting temporary custody, for then, SA Barrett to review. SA Barrett would always provide feedback on whether the children required government intervention in order to be safe. There were many times that SA Barrett advised that the Department did not have enough danger/ safety concern to separate children from their parents.

SA Barrett participated in monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings, and she always reviewed cases professionally and had a strength-based approach. SA Barrett wanted all the facts of a case presented before deciding on how to proceed. SA Barrett attended basic and forensic interviewing to allow insight on how interviews are conducted and the impact they have on children and their families. SA Barrett was able to show empathy to the families served and took additional trainings to be able to effectively interact with children and bring resolution these cases.

Should you need further information regarding my support, please do not hesitate to contact me at 802-624-0113.

Sincerely,

Misty Poitras