

To the Honorable members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write to offer my thoughts on the two proposed candidates for the Vermont Supreme Court.

I was an Appellate Defender for 26 years and have briefed and argued over 100 cases in the Vermont Supreme Court. I also taught Criminal Practice and Procedure at Vermont Law and Graduate School for many years.

The proposed candidates who have worked primarily within the federal court system do not have any significant experience with Vermont law and practice, and have failed to demonstrate respect for Vermont constitutional law. In 2022, Attorney Nolan, while running for the Senate, opposed the Reproductive Liberty Amendment which amended the Vermont Constitution to protect Vermonter's privacy rights to abortion. This amendment passed by 76% of Vermont voters and with Governor Scott's approval. Michael Drescher's actions in the [Rümeysa Öztürk](#) and [Mohsen Mahdawi](#) cases demonstrate a similar lack of respect for fundamental legal rights of individuals. His claim that he was simply "doing his job" illustrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of prosecutors, which is to seek justice rather than simply follow the orders of the department that hired him.

For over 125 years, the Vermont Supreme Court has upheld Vermonter's privacy rights in many areas- contrary to the federal law that these two former prosecutors enforced. The Court should continue to uphold these decisions and expand them as needed. There are many Vermont prosecutors, defenders, trial court judges and civil attorneys with significant experience with Vermont law and with deep respect for Vermont's constitutional values. They would be better choices.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of these candidates.

Anna Saxman  
Montpelier, VT.