

**Joseph Perella**

January 22, 2026

Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Vermont State House  
Montpelier, VT

**Re: Support for Michael Drescher's Nomination for Supreme Court**

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "The ultimate measure of a [person] is not where [they] stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where [they] stand at times of challenge and controversy." In the first several troubling months of the Trump administration, Michael Drescher faced a daunting challenge. Instead of resigning, which would have been the easier path, he rose to the occasion and put the staff of the U.S. Attorney's Office and ultimately the State of Vermont above his own interests. His sacrifice is, in part, evidenced by the fact that he has now come under unfair criticism.

Yet those who know Mr. Drescher best, including those who worked with him for many years and members of the defense bar (see Former Chief Federal Public Defender Letter of Support by Michael Desautels), are resolute that Michael Drescher did the right thing under the circumstances in Vermont (which was very different from other U.S. Attorney Offices where federal prosecutors have admirably resigned related to criminal prosecutions and investigations).

This isn't about me but I believe it is important for the Committee to know my significant background in the Vermont legal system. I worked in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Burlington for almost 27 years (32 years total with DOJ). I attended Vermont Law School (1985-88) and was a judicial law clerk (1989-90) for the late, great Honorable Franklin S. Billings Jr. I knew from clerking for Judge Billings that my dream job was to work as an Assistant U.S. Attorney where your mission is to pursue justice and follow the laws and constitution. Your sole client is the public interest. I overlapped with Michael Drescher for over 20 years of his tenure there. I know first hand that he shares, and put into practice, those values. He has both impeccable integrity and intellect.

I also know that Michael Drescher demonstrated strong qualities that are imperative to being a good prosecutor, including empathy and a sense of fairness. These, of course, are also critical values to be a good judge.

Mr. Drescher, for example, was a strong supporter of the Recovery (Drug) Court for which I was the lead prosecutor from its inception (formed with the support of former U.S. Attorney Tristram Coffin). While Recovery Courts had been commonplace in state courts for many years, it was then a new phenomenon in federal criminal cases. Michael Drescher (and Christina Nolan, I should add) were strong supporters, including providing misdemeanor resolutions under the appropriate circumstances. It took a cultural change to embrace the principles of Recovery Court as some federal prosecutors resisted. It is now an embedded criminal resolution option within the U.S. Attorney's Office in Vermont, thanks in part, to Michael Drescher and Christina Nolan.

About 100 years before MLK uttered the inspiring words shared above, poet Emily Dickinson wrote: "We never know how high we are Till we are called to rise; And then if we are true to plan, our statures touch the skies . . . ."

Michael Drescher rose high when he was called upon to do so. I am hopeful that Vermont Senators will rise above the unfair vitriol reflected in some of the opposition to his nomination. The most telling and weighty evidence should really come from those who know him well, worked with him, and support him wholeheartedly.

To conclude, I am confident both Michael Drescher and Christina Nolan would be very exceptional justices of the Vermont Supreme Court.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Joseph Perella