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Public Investiture for Judge Dana Christenson

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Thank you, Judge Thomas, for that warm introduction. I am proud to be here with the honorable members of the court and distinguished guests. This is truly a momentous occasion.

Our federal courts play an integral role in the lives of Montanans and Americans. From our ability to access a safe workplace to our right to keep and bear arms, our courts serve as the backstop for preserving individuals' liberties.

Of the many responsibilities the Constitution grants to the Senate, few are more critical than our role in Presidential appointments to the federal bench. The Senate's role is divided in two parts – first, to advise and second, to consent in the President's appointments.

The Senate's role *to consent* ensures that a nominee enjoys the support of a broad political consensus. But the role each Senator plays *in advising* the President is equally important. This is a great responsibility but also an opportunity for members of the Senate to confer with the executive branch on who can best serve the federal bench in his or her home state.

Judge Don Molloy came to me a little more than a year ago to tell me he would notify the President of his intention to take senior status. Don's respect for the federal bench and astute understanding of the law cannot be overstated. The task of filling his shoes required someone with that same respect and skill in the law.

I asked five of Montana's great legal minds to deliberate and consider who within Montana's legal community fit the bill. The panel unanimously and enthusiastically recommended Dana Christensen. I could not agree more.

As we have heard today, Dana has built an impressive career. He is well respected by his peers in Montana, as well as nationally, and Dana's recommendation came as no surprise to those who have had the privilege to get to know this great man.

It was my honor and privilege to make the recommendation to President Obama that he consider the appointment of Dana Christensen to be our next district judge for Montana.

Now, as many of you know, judicial nominations do not always move expeditiously in the Senate. But I pushed hard for Dana's consideration in front of the Judiciary Committee.

I spoke with Chairman Leahy and Senator Chuck Grassley many times, to make sure they knew how important this was to me and to Montana's legal community. I made sure my staff kept on this every day to move Dana's nomination as quickly as possible. On September 7, I was honored to join Senator Tester in introducing Dana to the Judiciary Committee.

After a nominee is approved by the Committee, he or she is placed on the executive calendar and given a number based on the order in which the Senate will consider the nominees. Quite fittingly, Dana's calendar number was Number 406. And on December 5th, Dana Christensen was confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate.

I have known Dana and Stephanie for a long time, and I am proud to call them friends. And it is wonderful to see their children, Cassidy and Ben, together with their families, here today for this occasion.

Dana, you are entering a prestigious history of Montanans who have had the privilege to serve on the federal bench. From William Hunt to William Jameson. From James Battin to Paul Hatfield. And you join a distinguished set of colleagues here today. While appointed by Presidents on different sides of the political spectrum, these judges all share the common value of respect. Respect for the law, the

federal bench, and its impact on the lives of those who come before it.

Dana, I am confident that you will continue in the great tradition of Montana federal judges, to provide citizens of this state with meaningful access to justice that our Founding Fathers held essential to our nation. I commend you and your family on this momentous occasion.