

Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to provide my highest recommendation for Thane Johnson to serve as District Court Judge in the 20th Judicial District.

I have been fortunate enough to work with Thane defending the constitutionality of Montana's laws at the Montana Attorney General's Office.

Thane's skill as an attorney is unmatched. A multiple generation Montanan and Montana attorney for over 30 years, Thane has been in any and every situation imaginable. He has impressive expertise in litigation and the law generally but also specialties such as Indian law. His legal prowess would be an asset to the bench.

Thane's thoughtfulness would also distinguish him among other judges. He would put care into every single case, however small. Thane has a remarkable knack for efficiency at the same time as his thoughtfulness — another skill that would serve him and the people of the 20th Judicial District well.

Thane also has the perfect disposition for a judge. He is calm and composed, but also delightful to be around. Thane treats everyone with dignity and respect. He always has a smile on his face. Everyone would look forward to their hearings in front of the Honorable Thane Johnson.

Thane is an absolute standout when it comes to one of the most important qualities of a good lawyer and judge — ethics. He is a lawyer of the highest integrity, respected by all.

I consider myself lucky to work with a lawyer and person of Thane's caliber.

Thane would be an excellent judge and I urge you to give him the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Alwyn Lansing

FOSTER FUNERAL HOME(S) & CREMATORY. INC.

216 PROJECT DRIVE - ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA 59865

(406) 745-6789 24 HR # * OFFICE PHONE (406) 745-4037 * FAX LINE (406) 745-2121

January 11, 2025

Greg Gianforte, Governor of Montana
Governor's Office - Helena, Montana

Governor;

I am writing to recommend Thane Johnson for the District Court Judgeship for the district that I live and conduct business in that was recently left vacant by recent discoveries. Upon asking to see if he could represent me in a contractual manner that is in relationship to Utah and the Blackfeet Reservation Jurisdictions I found out that he might be appointed to fill the position for Lake and Sanders Counties.

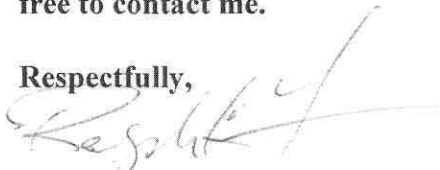
As the Republican Candidate for House District 15 for the last two elections I have nearly upset the heavily favored Democrat candidate winning all the precincts in Lake & Flathead County but was unable to win the two in Glacier County. I am a former deputy coroner in Sanders County, & funeral consultant for Blue Stone. Since 1996 I have been an owner/mortician of Foster Funeral Homes. Having 3 former judges (Moran, Donohoe, & Bear Don't Walk) serve as my attorney prior to Thane becoming my legal counsel in 2011. He has been my legal counsel up until when he started serving under Austin Knudsen in the Montana Attorney General's Office and in my opinion was one of best attorneys I have encountered in my 27 year career as an owner.

He is knowledgeable in regards to Tribal Jurisdictions and law and how it interacts with Montana rules, Regulations and Code. He has represented my firm in actions with State licensing, Contracts, Property rights, Funeral law as well as keeping me out of disputes between families and inadequate coroner and her mistakes. And I have been a resource for him in matters regarding funeral related matters.

He is a Montana boy who was raised around the reservations in Montana, his kids have went to college here and he is good fit for our area with opinions and views that are consistent with those that live here. I consider him a good friend and colleague and feel that a better appointment could not be made.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,



Ralph C. Foster

Carl C. Pepion
(406) 407-5196
judgecpepion@yahoo.com
Browning, Montana

Governor Greg Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Thane Johnson Application

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing this letter to provide my highest recommendation for the appointment of Thane Johnson for the position of District Judge for the Twentieth Judicial District. I am truly honored to be writing this letter. I have known Thane Johnson since he started practicing law in the Blackfeet Tribal Court in 1993. I am a member of the Blackfeet Tribe and a former Tribal Court Judge where I served over the course of two decades. I served as a Tribal Court Judge with Thane from approximately 2003-2006. I also presided over several matters including a civil jury trial where Thane represented various clients including several members of the Tribe. Throughout this time, I found Thane to be an excellent Judge and an excellent attorney. He understands the law and is always prompt and prepared.

Thane is very much respected in the Native American community, not only for his legal skills, but for his respect for the Native American people and the Blackfeet Tribe itself. He is considered one of the few experts in Indian law. He has represented Native Americans across the State and has appeared in all Tribal Courts in the State. Because of his experience and knowledge of Indian law and his uncanny ability to relate to the Native American people, he would be an excellent fit as a trial judge in counties that serve the Salish and Kootenai people.

Finally, and maybe more important than anything else, Thane Johnson is a good person and a good family man. His roots are in Montana. He is dedicated to serving Montana. Thane Johnson has the experience and the knowledge to serve Lake and Sanders County as a distinguished District Court Judge. I am honored to provide this recommendation to my friend and colleague.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Carl C. Pepion



INSURED TITLES

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Missoula, MT 59801
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Governor Greg Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

As a Lake County resident and private business owner, I am proud to endorse Thane Johnson for the appointment to the position of District Judge for the Twentieth Judicial District. I have personally known Thane for over 40 years. He exemplifies the qualities our community needs in a judicial leader: integrity, fairness, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

With a proven track record of over 35 years of legal experience across the state of Montana, Thane has demonstrated exceptional legal acumen and a deep understanding of the law. He is dedicated to ensuring that every person who steps into the courtroom is treated with respect and impartiality.

Beyond his professional achievements Thane has shown a genuine commitment to serving our community. As a Montana native, he is well respected across the state, and a beloved family man of high moral character.

I believe Thane will bring wisdom, empathy, and a steady hand to the bench. He will be an asset to the Lake and Sanders County judiciary.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitmann
Manager
Insured Titles, LLC

Dan Wilson
P.O. Box 2181
Kalispell, MT 59903

January 8, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Application of Thane Johnson for appointment to 20th Judicial District Court

Governor Gianforte,

I write in support of Thane Johnson's appointment to Montana's Twentieth Judicial District Court in Lake County. Thane is now serving as Assistant Attorney General, Senior Counsel.

I have known Thane for almost 35 years, since our law school days, and he possesses all of the background, work ethic, experience, ethical standards, and devotion to the rule of law which are the essential qualifications of any trial court judge.

Thane has represented clients across the full spectrum of cases in both state and federal courts. He has represented the state as a prosecutor as well as persons accused of crimes. He's represented clients in civil disputes of all kinds, large and small. Always devoted to his clients and the rule of law, Thane is the consummate generalist, able to become expert on the law in any case.

Thane comes to court fully prepared to present his client's case and argue it effectively. There are few attorneys I've had the pleasure to work with over the years who could demonstrate the same breadth of experience as Thane, and I am confident that he will manage a large caseload and a courtroom with the courtesy and demeanor of a seasoned professional.

I could count on one hand the number of attorneys I would recommend for this appointment as wholeheartedly as I recommend Thane Johnson. And he may very well be first among them.

Respectfully,



Dan Wilson,
District Court Judge

211 Main Street • Polson, MT 59860

January 10, 2025

Governor Gianforte,

My name is Ryan Gage, and I am writing this letter of support for Mr. Thane Johnson regarding the open judge position in the 20th Judicial District Court. I grew up in Cut Bank, MT and had the good fortune of moving back to the Big Sky State about twelve years ago. I live in Polson, MT where I work for Gage Accounting, P.C. as a CPA. Through my time working here, I have come to know Mr. Johnson. We have had several common clients, and I have found him to be a very valuable asset to the communities which he has practiced law. I have found Mr. Johnson to be an honest man with high morals and integrity. It is due to these characteristics that he is very well respected.

It is my opinion that the position of judge must be filled by someone who is fair to the facts and circumstances of each case and will perform this duty with honor and integrity. I believe that Mr. Johnson can be trusted with this responsibility. He works hard and has gained the respect of individuals and business leaders in the communities in which he has lived.

It is my opinion that Mr. Johnson would not judge based on the background or circumstances of individuals but has a deep desire to follow the law and deliver justice that is fair and equal to all people that he serves. As someone who is respected professionally for his understanding of the law, who is fair and unbiased, and who has a sense of being a contributor in the community, Thane Johnson has my support for his appointment to the open judge position in the 20th Judicial District Court.

I appreciate you considering Mr. Thane Johnson for the position of Judge in the 20th Judicial District Court. If you have any questions or would like to follow up with any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 406-883-4368 or ryan.gage@gageaccounting.com.

Sincerely,



Ryan S. Gage, CPA

NominateJudges

From: Richard DeJana <rdj.dejanalaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 1:20 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] judicial nominations

Dear Governor: I have practiced law in MONTANA for over 40 years. District Judges should have proven legal expertise and proven ethics. Having practiced in Lake County in addition to my local Flathead County, I know what it takes to be a judge in that district. I am not going to make it easier for you but I want to recommend that you appoint either John Mercer or Thane Johnson. Both are highly ethical, well versed lawyers that will focus on the law and follow both statutory law, and precedent..

Wishing you success for Montana over the next 4 years.

Rich

Richard DeJana, Esq.

P.O. Box 1757

Kalispell, MT 59903-1757

406 752 4120

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NominateJudges

From: Chris Hill <wenceslas.gk@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 12:46 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment for the 20th Judicial District Judge

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Good Morning Hannah and Kaitlin:

I have reviewed the nominee applications and based on the nominee responses and credentials I believe their names are actually in rank order of the impressions I gleaned from their snapshots. I would prefer to see Either John Mercer or Thane Johnson.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the candidates.

Chrs Hill



January 8, 2025

VIA EMAIL: hannah.slusser@mt.gov

Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Re: *Letter of Support for Thane Johnson's Appointment to the Montana Twentieth Judicial District Court*

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic and wholehearted support for the appointment of attorney Thane Johnson to the vacancy in the Montana Twentieth Judicial District Court. Having practiced law in Montana for nearly 20 years, I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Johnson throughout my career.

Over the years, I have both litigated against Mr. Johnson as opposing counsel and collaborated with him as co-counsel on cases. These experiences have provided me with a unique perspective on his character, professionalism, and legal acumen. Mr. Johnson is one of the most qualified attorneys I have encountered, with a breadth of experience in both criminal and civil law that sets him apart as an exceptional candidate for this judicial role.

Mr. Johnson's significant trial experience further underscores his suitability for this position. His ability to navigate complex legal issues, present persuasive arguments, and maintain a steady and fair demeanor in high-pressure situations makes him particularly well-suited to serve as a trial judge. His extensive practice and familiarity with Montana's legal system provide him with the practical knowledge and judicial temperament necessary to excel in this role.

I have no doubt that Mr. Johnson will serve the Twentieth Judicial District with integrity, impartiality, and dedication. His appointment would be a significant benefit to the legal community and the citizens of Montana.

Thank you for considering Mr. Johnson's candidacy for this important position. I am confident that his experience, professionalism, and commitment to justice will make him an outstanding district court judge.

Respectfully,

LEE LAW OFFICE PC

By: 

Brian D. Lee
Lee Law Office PC
P.O. Box 790, 158 Main Street
Shelby, MT 59474
Phone: (406) 434-5244
Email: brian@leelawofficepc.com

cc: Thane Johnson

Dear Governor Gianforte,

It is with great pleasure I write to you in support of Thane Johnson to be appointed as the Twentieth Judicial District Judge.

I practiced law in Cut Bank and the surrounding area for over 30 years and later became the Ninth Judicial District Judge for the final 10 years of my career. As a practicing attorney, I tried cases against Thane Johnson as well as having him appear before me when I was a sitting Judge.

Thane was always well prepared and an excellent litigator. In addition, he is a hard worker and dedicated to the practice of law. I believe his skill; work ethic and high standards make him an excellent candidate for the position of District Judge.

A District Judge in Montana is faced with a variety of cases. Thane has the experience and demeanor necessary to hear and reasonably rule on any case. In addition, he was both a prosecutor and criminal defense attorney. Furthermore, he had a successful civil practice. From my own personal experience, I feel these attributes are of utmost importance when sitting on the bench.

I am honored to recommend Thane Johnson both personally and professionally as I feel he is the type of individual needed to serve Montana as a District Judge.

Should you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Olson

9th Judicial District Judge, Retired

Ross Grubb
(406) 579-6563
118 Valley Drive
Ross_grubb@yahoo.com
Bozeman, Mt., 59718

Governor Greg Gianforte
c/o Hannah Slusser
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Application for Twentieth Judicial District Judge, Thane Johnson

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I write this letter to recommend Thane Johnson for the appointment to the position of District Judge for the Twentieth Judicial District. I have known Thane Johnson since he started practicing law in Cut Bank in 1993, and have followed his practice to Kalispell. Thane represented myself and my family. Throughout his representation, I found Thane to be extremely efficient with a strong knowledge of the law. He is articulate and always prepared.

Thane grew up on a farm and ranch north of Cut Bank. From this experience, Thane has learned the value of hard work and dedication to the task at hand. His upbringing has also instilled conservative values in him, which he will bring to the judiciary.

Perhaps more important than anything else, Thane Johnson is a good person and a good family man. He is dedicated to serving Montana. Because of his background and experience, Thane Johnson will be an excellent District Court Judge. I am honored to provide this recommendation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ross Grubb". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ross Grubb

Slusser, Hannah

From: papacuffe@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 8:08 AM
To: Slusser, Hannah
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thane Johnson

Good morning. I write in support of Thane Johnson for the position of district judge for Montana's 20th Judicial District. Mr. Johnson has appeared in front of me many times in my capacity as the 19th Judicial District judge. He had demonstrated a strong legal mind in all instances. His legal experience is broad. He appeared in criminal and civil cases. He has experience in all areas a district judge sees regularly. More importantly, Mr. Johnson always demonstrated a commitment to the process while zealously advocating for his clients. I believe he will be an asset to the Montana judiciary. I appreciate you considering this reference.

Matthew J. Cuffe
Sent from my iPhone

Slusser, Hannah

From: Marc Buyske <buyske8@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 9, 2025 3:35 PM
To: NominateJudges
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thane Johnson

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to support the appointment of Thane Johnson as District Judge for the 20th Judicial District Court. As a former District Judge for the 9th Judicial District, I had the opportunity to interact with Thane in his capacity as Deputy County Attorney for Glacier County, and as a private attorney representing clients in civil matters. Thane's legal analysis in criminal and civil matters was always on point and well presented. His courtroom manner was always respectful of the Court and of the opposing party. Both of these traits—legal analysis and courtroom manner—will no doubt serve him and his constituents well as a sitting District Judge. I am certain Thane will follow the law as provided by constitution, statute and controlling court precedent, and not attempt to “legislate” from the bench.

Thane's family is well established and respected in the Glacier County area, and he enjoys the respect of his community there, in the Kalispell area, and here in Helena as a family person.

Again, I urge the appointment of Thane Johnson as the next District Judge for the 20th Judicial District Court. Thank you.

Marc G. Buyske
Sent from my iPad