From: <u>Dan Rice</u>
To: <u>NominateJudges</u>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Irigoin - Support Letter

Date: Friday, December 20, 2024 10:06:05 AM

Governor Gianforte,

Please consider this letter of support regarding the appointment of Brett Irigoin for District Court Judge in the 7th District.

I have worked alongside Brett as an adjacent county attorney for approximately a decade, both of us holding office as county attorneys within the 7th District. As a part-time county attorney, I routinely consult Brett for his advice and counsel on complex or novel prosecution related matters. Additionally, I have prosecuted several cases alongside Brett, including vehicle pursuits and theft related crimes where both counties were involved in an overlapping criminal investigations, or had separate charges involving the same defendant(s).

In my observation, Brett Irigoin is an experienced attorney, who is even tempered, articulate, and well suited to serve as district judge. I confidently support Brett's application, and am hopeful that you will consider Brett's application, and his individual merits and qualifications for the office, when making your decision.

Regards,

Daniel Z. Rice

Rice & Martin, P.C.; Attorney

P.O. Box 728; 513 Main St. Miles City, MT 59301 (406)232-4070 Fax: (406)232-4093

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December 10, 2024

Governor Greg Gianforte P.O Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620 nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Support for Brett Irigoin Appointment as Seventh Judicial District Judgeship

Dear Governor Gianforte:

My name is Katie Mills, I am the Interim Chief of Police with the Glendive Police Department. I am writing to you in support of Brett Irigoin for the Seventh Judicial District Court Judge appointment.

I have had the pleasure of working with Brett Irigoin for the past 9 years, while he worked at the Dawson County Attorney's Office. I worked closely with Brett as the Undersheriff of Dawson County and now as the Interim Chief of Police. Without hesitation, I have complete certainty in Brett Irigoin's exceptional character and suitability as a District Court Judge.

During the 9 years that I have worked with Brett, he has only demonstrated professionalism, consistency, a wealth of knowledge, and outstanding integrity. He does his research and puts in countless behind the scenes hours.

In conclusion, I consider it a great honor to enthusiastically recommend Brett Irigoin for the Seventh Judicial District Court Judge. His abilities and dedication to his job, his interpersonal skills, and his knowledge of the law will make him an exceptional judge. If you or any members of the Advisory Committee have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Katie A. Mills

Interim Chief of Police
Glendive Police Department

millsk@glendivemt.gov

Cameron Pavlicek

Montana Division of Criminal Investigation

406-594-9811

Cpavlicek@mt.gov

To Those with vested interest,

My name is Cameron Pavlicek and I am a former Eastern Montana Drug Task Force Commander. I am also the former President of the Montana Narcotics Officer Association, Tactical Response Team Member, Afghanistan War Combat Veteran, and sole owner of Yellowstone Narcotics, which is a law enforcement professional training company responsible for training law enforcement officers around the country.

Over the course of my professional career, I can count on one hand the number of individuals that I have sought professional and personal guidance from when confronted with a unique or complicated set of circumstances. Brett Irigoin has always been and likely will forever be one of these people.

It has been my personal experience that when faced with an adverse problem, people offering advice or wisdom tend to err on the side of caution, offering the easiest solution or making comparisons to a "similar" situation in the past. I can attest that this could not be further from the truth with Brett.

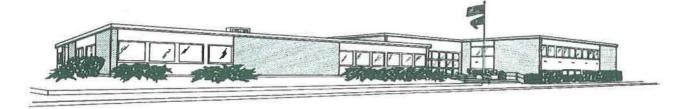
Brett is an extremely competent and driven person who seeks truth as opposed to ease or comfort. Brett is never afraid of the courtroom and viewed by those who know him as a person who is steadfast and articulate in his legal motions. Brett has shown me on many occasions his knowledge of the law, professional temperament, attention to detail, and sense of duty to the public as the Dawson County Attorney.

When I have taught law enforcement courses in Montana and other states, it is not uncommon for local prosecutors to attend and request references that have had experience prosecuting these types of investigations. Brett has been and continues to be the legal professional I refer them to.

It is my opinion and professional recommendation that Brett Irigoin be appointed to the bench as a Montana District Court Judge. Dawson County was lucky to have Brett, and I am honored to have known and worked with him.

Respectfully,

Cameron Paylicek



County Commissioners Phone 377-3562 Brad Mitchell, Chairman Dennis Zander, Member Joe Sharbono, Member

County of Dawson 207 W. Bell Glendive, MT 59330

www.dawsoncountymontana.org

Clerk and Recorder Phone 377-3058 Shirley Kreiman

County Treasurer Phone 377-3026 Lacie Bennett

December 17, 2024

RE: District Court Judge Support Letter

To whom it may concern,

The Board of Commission of Dawson County fully supports the appointment of Brett Irigoin as a district court judge. Brett has been our County Attorney and has served his role in the utmost professional and ethical manner. His appointment would be a great service to the citizens of Eastern Montana and the entire State.

Please join us in supporting Brett Irigoin's appointment as District Court Judge.

Respectfully;

Dawson County Board of Commissioners

Brad Mitchell, Chairman

Dennis Zander, Member

Joe Sharbono, Member

December 17th, 2024

The Honorable Greg Gianforte

Governor of Montana

Governor's Office

PO Box 200801

Helena, MT 59620

Governor Gianforte:

I am writing today to give my support for the appointment of Brett Irigoin to the Seventh Judicial District, District Court Judge. I have personally known Brett for the last eight years. I have worked with Brett on occasion through my role as Sheriff and his role as County Attorney for Dawson County. I would be honored to have Brett sit as the District Court Judge in my Judicial District. I believe that Brett has the qualifications and the integrity to make an excellent Judge for our district.

I appreciate your time to accept this letter of nomination For Brett Irigoin to the Seventh Judicial District, District Court Judge.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by any of the above means.

Respectfully,

Keifer Lewis

Sheriff, Prairie County Montana

My name is John Spurgeon and I have been a patrol Deputy with the Dawson County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) located in Glendive, MT since January, 2017. I am writing this letter to support and recommend our current County Attorney, Brett Irigoin for the 7th Judicial District Judge position out of Richland County, MT.

During my employment with the DCSO, I have had the pleasure of working alongside Mr. Irigoin extensively for over 6 years. In that time, Mr. Irigoin has represented multiple law enforcement agencies as well as members of the community. I have personally observed him performing his duties in and out of the courtroom and I can say that without a shadow of a doubt, that his ethics, morals, and integrity are unwavering. It appears to me that despite the situation, the circumstances, and how challenging his duties may be, that he remains determined, fair, impartial, and just.

As a rather productive and self-starting Deputy, I have been involved with many different investigations with a variety of people and situations. I take pride in my work as doing it to the best of my abilities can make or break a case which can be detrimental to both the victim, the public, and the suspect. Due to the severity and potential impact of my job on people's lives, I expect that a prosecutor has the same drive, dedication, and values so that the system has what it needs for it to function. In this regard and during my time working with Mr. Irigoin, I feel that he has been an ideal prosecutor for Dawson County and I have no doubt that his values and work ethic would make him an outstanding Judge.

Though this letter may aid in Dawson County and its law enforcement losing Mr. Irigoin as its prosecutor, I believe that his service and values should go beyond just one county.

Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Deputy John Spurgeon Dawson County Sheriff's Office 440 Colorado Blvd. Glendive, MT 59330

Office: 406-377-5291 Cell: 253-363-1991

E-mail: 1610dcso@gmail.com

December 12, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to support Mr. Brett Irigoin to be appointed to fill the vacancy of the judgeship in the 7th Judicial District of Montana. Mr. Irigoin had grown up and lived in eastern Montana his entire life and knows the people and culture well. I first met him in the spring of 2015 when he became a deputy county attorney for Dawson County. He worked closely with my office on many criminal cases. I have always found him level headed and possessed tempered judgment in exercising his discretion as a prosecutor.

He has understood his position as a prosecutor is to keep people criminally accountable for their actions as well as to assist some to get needed help to change their criminal behaviors if they choose to. This carrot and stick approach for ensuring public safety within our county has been good for the citizens. I know we can't lock everybody up even though the temptation is there to do that. I believe being a good judge is knowing when to be firm and keep the public safe and when to use the available resources to get these people targeted help so they can lead productive lives. I believe he has the judicial character to do that.

In 2017 Mr. Irigoin became our county attorney when he won a contested election. He is currently in that role and has done extremely well for this county. He has helped the Sheriff's Office tremendously by giving good, sound legal advice. I believe he is held in high regard in this community and would have no trouble to get elected during the next district judge election cycle.

If you have further questions or concerns please contact me.

Sincerely submitted,

Sheriff Ross Canen 406-377-1625



SHERIFF'S OFFICE Wibaux County, State Of Montana Wibaux, Montana 59353

Shane Harrington Sheriff Bill Hecker Undersheriff

Office Phone: (406) 796-2415 Dispatch: (406) 796-2222

Fax: (406) 796-6222

To Whom it may concern,

Greetings! It is my sincere pleasure to write this letter of support for Brett Irigoin, concerning the opening for the 7th Judicial District Judge position. I have been a Peace Officer for 26 years, and have worked with a number of county attorneys. Brett is one of very few people I have contacted for legal advice, and have always found him to be very knowledgeable and eager to help. I also work with a number of his other colleagues, who share the same sentiment. I very much believe that Mr. Irigion would be a fair and impartial Judge. Please consider him for this position!

Thank you for your time!

Wibaux County Sheriff

Darty S. Harrington

Darby S. Harrington

To Whom it May Concern:

I am pleased to offer this letter to support for Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin's appointment to the Seventh Judicial District's judgeship. I have been a resident of Sidney in Richland County since 2000 when I began my teaching career in which I am currently finishing the first semester of my twenty-fifth school year. In each of those years, I have taught a variety of courses in the social sciences but the constant has been U.S. government and law education. Since I began teaching, I have been pleased with the willingness of community member to come to my classes and speak to my students. These speakers have included mayors, county commissioners, state lawmakers, and justices of the peace. Recently, we have included more legal classes into the curriculum such as criminal law and procedures and civil law. This has led to the inclusion of police officers, defense attorneys, district court judges, and county attorney. These legal classes were started in conjunction with the then assistant county attorney and District Court Judge, who served as team teachers of the classes. As the oil boom came through Sidney so too did the workload of these team teachers and each started to show up when they could, leaving the curriculum including the lecturing and communication to the guest speakers to me.

This change has allowed me to gain a unique perspective into the local legal arena and get to know the participants better. One of which is Brett Irigoin. Brett was recommended to me as a guest speaker because of his professionalism, knowledge, and amiability. I can say without equivocation that he embodies each of those traits when dealing with my students. He has been able to make the law that they are learning understandable and relatable. He captures their attention from the beginning of his presentation until the end, something not all guest speakers are able to accomplish. Moreover, he treats the students with respect as does not talk down to them or around their answers. I have found students are hyper-aware of fakes or con artists. Trust in our legal system, which is under attack both at the national and state level, is not present in my classroom because of guest speakers like Brett. He is able to make connections with them and establish respect on how he treats them. I believe he will similarly be a steward of the law as a judge for the Seventh Judicial District as I believe the aforementioned qualities distinguish a successful job that garners respect from the public he serves. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support Brett Irigoin in pursuit of this appointment and welcome any questions regarding my letter of support.

Sincerely,

Brad Faulhaber

Letter in support of Brett Irigoin.

I support Brett to fill the vacancy in the Seventh Judicial District. He has always been active supporting the community. I would consider him a community leader. The exposure to his work as county attorney I have seen, leads me to believe he is definitely competent in law and well spoken. For these reason, I would encourage your decision would be for Brett to fill the vacancy.

Regards, Michael Ziegler Chairman, Glendive Unified School Board. Dear Governor Gianforte,

My name is Brett Patterson and I have been a Deputy Sheriff with the Dawson County Sheriff's Office since December of 2018. During my time as a Deputy, I have been fortunate to work with Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin. I am writing this letter to support and recommend Brett Irigoin for the 7th Judicial District Court Judge vacancy.

Over the years of working with Mr. Irigoin, I have respected many of his qualities as an officer of the court such as his professionalism, integrity, and morals.

I fully support Brett Irigoin's appointment to the 7th Judicial District Court Judge position.

Sincerely,

Deputy Brett Patterson

Dawson County Sheriff's Office

Brett Patterson

440 Colorado Blvd.

Glendive, MT 59330

406-377-5291



202 Prospect Drive

Glendive, Montana 59330-1999

(406) 345-3306

FAX: (406) 345-3358

December 27, 2024

Governor Greg Gianforte Governor of Montana P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620-0801

Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to recommend Brett Irigoin for the Seventh Judicial District Judgeship. I have witnessed first-hand his exemplary skills and dedication to his profession.

As CEO of Glendive Medical Center (GMC) I have had the privilege of working with Brett on several patient related issues and projects. Brett has possessed a remarkable ability to establish and maintain good relationships with people that he has encountered. His approachable demeanor and effective communication skills make him an exceptional individual and a trusted legal advisor. My colleagues that have worked with Brett have consistently express their appreciation for his responsiveness and willingness to go the extra mile to ensure their needs are met.

One of Brett's most commendable qualities is his foresight. He has an innate ability to anticipate potential challenges and proactively address them before they develop into larger issues. This skill not only enhances GMCs effectiveness but also contributes significantly to the positive outcomes our patients.

Brett's strong work ethic and self-motivation are evident in every encounter I have had with him. He approaches his duties with a level of dedication that inspires those around him. Furthermore, his reputation for integrity and professionalism sets a standard within his office and the wider legal community in Glendive. He consistently upholds the highest ethical standards and encourages others to do the same.

I am confident that Brett Irigoin would be an asset to this position. His combination of strong communication skills, foresight, integrity, and work ethic uniquely positions him for success. I highly recommend him without reservation and remain available for any further questions you may have.

Thank you for considering this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Parker Powell, CEO Glendive Medical Center December 18, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin's appointment to the Seventh Judicial District Court as a Judge. Having worked closely with Brett and observed his professional conduct over the years, I firmly believe that he possesses the skills, experience, and dedication necessary for this important judicial position.

Brett has served as the Dawson County Attorney with integrity and a steadfast commitment to justice. His extensive legal experience, combined with his intimate knowledge of the community he serves, makes him uniquely qualified to navigate the challenges faced by our judicial system. Throughout his tenure, he has demonstrated a deep understanding of legal principles and an unwavering commitment to upholding the law with fairness and impartiality.

One of Brett's most admirable qualities is his ability to connect with individuals from all walks of life. He approaches every case with empathy, ensuring that all parties feel heard and respected. This quality would undoubtedly carry over into his role as a judge, where understanding and compassion are as vital as legal knowledge.

Additionally, Brett's commitment to community engagement and outreach reflects his belief in the importance of a judicial system that is accessible and relatable to the public. He has shown a consistent willingness to participate in educational programs and initiatives that promote legal literacy and community involvement, proving that he is not only a dedicated attorney but also a public servant committed to improving our justice system.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support Brett Irigoin's appointment as Judge in the Seventh Judicial District Court. His qualifications and character make him an outstanding candidate who will serve our community with honor and distinction. Thank you for considering his candidacy.

Sincerely,

Tom Green

Warden, Dawson County

Tranquil Trails Legal, PLLC

Nathalia G. Collins, Esq. Phone: (406) 200-8510

Email: NGC@TranquilTrailsLegal.com



"Breaking Up Shouldn't Break The Bank"

January 6, 2025

Greg Gianforte, Governor of Montana PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing today to express my strong support for Mr. Brett Irigoin, Ms. Charity McLarty, and Mr. John Hrubes for the 7th Judicial District Judgeship. During my tenure as Law Clerk for Judge Simonton and Judge Rieger from 2016 to 2021 in Glendive, I had the distinct privilege of observing Mr. Irigoin, Ms. McLarty, and Mr. Hrubes in court.

All three candidates consistently demonstrated exceptional qualities, including thorough preparation, humility, patience, kindness, ethical integrity, and a tireless work ethic. They possess the requisite experience, legal knowledge, intelligence, research skills, attention to detail, and judicial temperament necessary to excel in this important role. Additionally, their deep connection to the local community and its support underscores their ability to maintain the trust of the people they serve and to be re-elected in the future.

I am confident that any of these three individuals would understand the importance of managing an efficient docket and serving the people of the 7th Judicial District with distinction. I have no doubt that they would bring honor, dignity, and fairness to the bench, making a meaningful and positive impact on the judiciary.

In contrast, I am unable to provide a recommendation for Mr. Herring. During my eight years of service with the Judicial Branch, I have not met Mr. Herring or observed him in court. Additionally, the writing samples he submitted—dated 1994, 1995, and 2017—do not reflect recent or relevant engagement with District Court work. By comparison, Mr. Irigoin, Ms. McLarty, and Mr. Hrubes have demonstrated far more substantial and timely experience in this arena.

Thank you for considering my perspective as you make this important appointment. Should you require any additional information or insights, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nathalia G. Collins, Esq.

Governor Gianforte,

Please consider this letter of support regarding the appointment of Brett Irigoin for District Court Judge in the 7th District. I have worked with Brett on a few issues as county attorney.

In my observation, Brett Irigoin is an experienced attorney, who is even tempered, articulate, and well suited to serve as district judge.

I confidently support Brett's application, and am hopeful that you will consider Brett's application, and his individual merits and qualifications for the office, when making your decision.

Clyde L.Mitchell 512 East Grant Glendive, MT 59330-2105 Governor Greg Gianforte PO Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620-0801

Governor Gianforte,

Please accept my complete and wholehearted recommendation for Brett Irigoin, Dawson County Attorney, to fill the vacancy on the Seventh Judicial District Court.

I have worked with Mr. Irigoin in a professional capacity in eastern Montana for a number of years. I am a supervisory agent with the U.S. Border Patrol and also deputized by many Montana sheriffs to work as an investigator with the Eastern Montana Drug Task Force.

During that time, I have effectively partnered with Mr. Irigoin on multiple complex investigations. His legal expertise and willingness to assist in all circumstances is unmatched by most county attorneys I have worked with the last ten years.

Regarding judicial temperament, intelligence, ethics, courage and integrity, experience, suitability to workload, the ability to communicate, civic and professional responsibility, health, and character, you will not find a better prepared individual than Mr. Irigoin to faithfully carry out the duties of a judge in the Seventh Judicial District.

Thank you,

Gabriel Flores Miles City, MT State of Montana

Matthew J. Wald District Judge

Alexander Wilson, Law Clerk Stacy Fortune, Court Reporter Kathryn Stanley, Court Administrator



DISTRICT COURT

22nd Judicial District P.O. Box 1268 Columbus, MT 59019

January 6, 2025

Governor Gianforte Attn: Hannah Slusser, Governor's Office PO Box 200801 Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Mr. Brett Irigoin's Application for 7th Judicial District Judge

Governor Gianforte:

I am writing on behalf of Brett Irigoin, who has applied to fill the judicial vacancy in the 7th Judicial District. From my observation of Mr. Irigoin, I have no doubts of his qualifications and fitness for the position.

My interactions with Mr. Irigoin have been as a judge presiding over felony criminal cases he has prosecuted as Dawson County Attorney. As you may be aware, I am the District Judge of the 22nd Judicial District. I have often taken jurisdiction over cases in Dawson County when Judge Reiger, the presiding Judge, had recused herself due to a conflict of interest in a particular case. In that capacity, in the past six years I have presided over multiple felony cases prosecuted by Mr. Irigoin, including the jury trial of a major felony sex crime case within which arose a number of difficult legal and evidentiary issues. Mr. Irigoin handled the case in a very professional manner and gained a conviction in the case. On all of these felony cases over which I have presided in Dawson County, I found Mr. Irigoin as an attorney and prosecutor to be extremely ethical, knowledgeable, and competent. I also found him to be very fair and possessive of a strong sense of justice, but also appropriately cognizant of the prosecutorial power that a county attorney wields. From what I have seen of his work, Brett Irigoin is an excellent Montana attorney and prosecutor, with the temperament and legal skill to excel in the position of District Judge.

In addition, I am aware that Mr. Irigoin is originally from Richland County, where of course lies the open judicial position in the 7th Judicial District. I am also aware of his agricultural upbringing, which of course is not necessary to be a good judge but speaking from experience, can surely be an asset to a judge when dealing with some of the cases that arise in an

Big Horn County Carbon County Stillwater County

406-322-5406 Fax: 406-322-8429 Governor Gianforte Attn: Hannah Slusser, Governor's Office P.O. Box 200801 Helena, Montana 59620 January 6, 2025 Page 2 of 2

eastern Montana courtroom. If you have any questions on any of the information I have provided, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Wald District Judge

MJW/kbs

January 3, 2025

Office of the Governor PO Box 200801 Helena, Montana 59620-0801

To whom in may concern,

I write to you in support of Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin and his wish to fill the vacancy of the Montana Seventh Judicial District Court Judge position.

I have been employed as federal agent with the United States Border Patrol for over 14 years. For several years, I have been assigned to work with the Eastern Montana Drug Task Force, which includes Dawson County, Montana. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Irigoin on numerous cases in his role as chief prosecutor for Dawson County. Mr. Irigoin's guidance and support during these investigations has been invaluable. Mr. Irigoin's legal expertise and interpretation of the law are well regarded throughout the State of Montana.

If Mr. Irigoin were to fill the vacancy listed above, the court system would be well positioned to serve our community and others like it. I recommend with full confidence Mr. Irigoin's appointment for the Montana Seventh Judicial District Court Judge position.

Respectfully,

Sean C. Allen

Seen I alh

January 3, 2025

Governor Gianforte's Office Attn: Hanna Slusser P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620

In Re: Brett Irigoin, Candidate for 7th Judicial District Court Judge

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my confidence in Brett Irigoin's character and qualifications for 7th Judicial District Court Judge position. Brett and I served as fellow prosecutors for 10 years and most recently both served together on the Board of the Montana County Attorney's Association. During that time, I was able to observe Brett's dedication, knowledge, composure, and integrity in his work and his dealings with others. I am confident that he would carry these same qualities forward to the work of a judge. Without question, the citizens of Montana would well-served by his appointment to the judiciary.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this letter of support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Benjamin J. Fosland

Sheridan County Attorney

15th Judicial District Court Judge-Elect

P.O. Box 1116 Miles City, Montana 59301

January 13, 2025

Governor Gianforte Attn: Hannah Slusser, Governor's Office PO Box 200801 Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Mr. Brett Irigoin's Application for 7th Judicial District Judge

Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to recommend Brett Irigoin for the judicial vacancy in the 7th Judicial District based upon my dealings with him in his role as Dawson County Attorney. I am a criminal defense and family law attorney who has had court interactions with three of the four candidates: Charity McLarty, John Hrubes, and Brett Irigoin.

Like many rural attorneys, I practice law in multiple judicial districts. Over the last nine years, I have practiced law in front of 20 district court judges in Montana and North Dakota which has brought exposure to crucial judicial characteristics. Brett possesses the qualities of the most highly effective judicial officers with whom I am familiar.

For the last six years I have watched Brett consistently act with integrity, intelligence, and humility. Brett is an attorney with excellent knowledge of the law, he is an effective communicator, he efficiently meets the demands of his current role, and he is compassionate in his dealings but always stands his ground when called upon to do so. I believe that Brett would fairly apply the law and properly serve all those who would come before him.

For these reasons I respectfully recommend Brett Irigoin for the judicial vacancy in the 7th Judicial District.

Sincerely,

Kathy G. Coleman

Kathy G. Coleman

Governor Gianforte P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Gianforte:

Please accept my letter of personal endorsement for the appointment of Brett Irigoin for District Court Judge of the Seventh Judicial District.

I have come to know and respect Brett personally and professionally through my previous work at the Montana Attorney General's Office Prosecution Services Bureau and our mutual involvement with the Montana County Attorneys' Association. Brett has earned my respect and support due to his moral principles, keen legal mind, and strong work ethic.

Brett's broad legal background, which importantly includes experience in prosecuting complex criminal cases as well as civil practice as county attorney, along with his demeanor makes him well qualified to serve as District Judge. The legal community and the public would be fortunate to have Brett serve as District Court Judge of the Seventh Judicial District.

Sincerely,

David A. Buchler



Dawson County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Ross Canen

1-8-2025

Dear Governor Gianforte,

My name is Bryan Bennett, I am the Sergeant with the Dawson County Sheriff's Department, in Glendive, Montana. I am proud to offer my esteemed recommendation of Mr. Brett Irigoin for appointment to the position of Seventh Judicial District Judge. I have had the honor of working with Mr. Irigoin during his entire tenure with the Dawson County Attorney's Office. I have witnessed an exemplary individual with a strong work ethic, dedicated to excellence in his profession. I have had many opportunities to work with him, sometimes in precarious situations, and difficult cases; Mr. Irigoin has always shown the upmost professionalism in his work. He has been a great asset to the community and people he represents.

I would gladly make myself available if you have any questions or wish to discuss Mr. Irigoin's potential appointment to this position. I can be reached at 406-377-5291.

Best Regards,

SGT. Bryan R Bennett

Dawson County Sheriff's Office

From: Jen Vaira

To: NominateJudges

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Letter Brett Irigoin Date: Saturday, January 11, 2025 3:01:44 PM

Jen Vaira 1101 Cedar Avenue Sidney, MT 59270 jenifervaira@gmail.com January 11, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte Office of the Governor State Capitol Helena, MT 59601

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to express my strong support for Brett Irigoin's candidacy for the Seventh Judicial District Judge. I have had the privilege of knowing Brett since he was a child, and I can attest to the character and values he embodies.

Brett was raised with a foundation of honesty, integrity, and hard work. These qualities have shaped him into a responsible individual who is dedicated to serving our community. His deep roots in the area and knowledge of the people here make him an excellent candidate for this position.

Brett's was born and raised on a farm and ranch in Richland County. This lends to his understanding of the unique challenges we face in both the agriculture and the oil and gas industries and all that it entails. He is not only well-respected but also genuinely cares about the welfare of our residents. I believe that his background and dedication will enable him to make fair and informed decisions as a judge.

Thank you for considering Brett Irigoin for the Seventh Judicial District Judge. I am confident that he will serve our community with the utmost integrity and commitment.

Sincerely,

Jen Vaira

Dear Governor Gianforte,

As a Glendive City Council Member, I am proud to give my strongest endorsement for Brett Irigoin for appointment as a District Court Judge. Mr. Irigoin is the most qualified candidate for this role, with an unmatched combination of legal expertise, fairness, and unwavering integrity.

In his role as County Attorney, Mr. Irigoin has consistently demonstrated exceptional competence, handling complex cases with professionalism and sound judgment. His prompt and effective handling of legal matters involving the City of Glendive has reinforced his reputation as a top-tier legal professional.

Beyond his legal accomplishments, Mr. Irigoin's commitment to our community sets him apart. His active involvement in in the community including coaching Little League baseball showcases his genuine dedication to the betterment of our community. His deep ties and proven leadership make him not only relatable but also extremely electable as he has earned the public trust and confidence.

Mr. Irigoin's extraordinary qualifications, extensive experience, and unwavering community commitment make him the best choice for District Court Judge. I have no doubt his appointment will bring fairness, wisdom, and integrity to our judicial system.

Thank you for considering Mr. Irigoin for this important role. I am confident he will excel in serving our community with the highest standards of judicial excellence.

Sincerely, Jun both

Doug Baker Glendive City Council Member



DAWSON COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER/ELECTIONS

Shirley A. Kreiman, Clerk & Recorder/Election Adm 207 West Bell Glendive, MT 59330

Phone: (406) 377-3058 Fax: (406) 377-1717

December 26, 2024

Re: District Court Judge

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of recommendation for District Court Judge appointment on behalf of Brett Irigoin. I have worked with Brett since May of 2015 when he became Deputy County Attorney to the present in his elected County Attorney position. He has been diligent to fulfilling his duties of prosecution of crimes. He has provided sound advice and has done the necessary research to provide it.

Sincerely,

Shirley a Kreiman

Dawson County Clerk & Recorder/Election Adminstrator

Governor Greg Gianforte P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620 nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am honored to write this letter in support of Brett Irigoin to fill the judicial vacancy in the Seventh Judicial District.

I worked with Mr. Irigoin for many years in my role as an Assistant Attorney General for the Montana Department of Justice, Prosecution Services Bureau. Mr. Irigoin and I prosecuted a particularly challenging homicide case in 2018. We worked closely for months on end, under stressful conditions. I was thankful to have him as co-counsel. Mr. Irigoin is an exceptional trial lawyer. He showed calm under pressure, seasoned judgment, and humility. I was also impressed with his leadership. It was clear to me that his team at the County Attorney's Office, the Sherrif's Office, Police Department, the Court and other professionals involved in the case respected and admired him.

Since that time, Mr. Irigoin and I have worked together on various other cases and spent time together at professional conferences. I have observed him to always demonstrate the highest competence, integrity, and character.

As a Montanan with a vested interest in our justice system, I am thankful that a lawyer of Mr. Irigoin's caliber and character is willing to serve our great state as a district judge. I have great confidence and admiration for him. I strongly recommend you appoint Mr. Irigoin to the Seventh Judicial District.

Sincerely,

Ole Olson 1929 Virigina Dale Helena, MT David.Ole.Olson@gmail.com

WYATT A. GLADE, AAL

14 N. 9TH STREET P.O. BOX 1526 MILES CITY, MT 59301

January 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of appointment of Brett Irigoin to the position of 7th Judicial District Judge. I have known Brett for a long time, and I believe that he will be an excellent District Judge.

I met Mr. Irigoin when he was a Deputy Dawson County Attorney. I came to know him well, as I was working as the Custer County Attorney, and we attended meetings and trainings together, and we shared some mutual cases as well. We often shared rides to and from training opportunities on the western side of the state. A long road trip shared is an excellent opportunity to get to know someone. I feel that I know him pretty well.

I have learned that Mr. Irigoin is not only a very intelligent person, but he is also very committed to obtaining justice for victims of crime. He is firm in his convictions, and he has demonstrated that he has the courage to do hard things when necessary. He considers decisions clearly, makes timely decisions, and stands by them. He is tough but fair. He is everything you would want in a District Judge.

I think very highly of Mr. Irigoin. Please consider recommending that Governor Gianforte appoint him as District Court Judge.

Sincerely,

Wyatt Glade

(406) 234-5800 EMAIL: GLADELAW@OUTLOOK.COM January 10, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte Attn: Hannah Slusser Governor's Office P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620

Via Email: nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Judicial Appointment, Montana Seventh Judicial District Court

Brett J. Irigoin

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the appointment of Brett J. Irigoin for the position of District Court Judge in the Montana Seventh Judicial District Court.

I first met Brett in 2016 when I had the pleasure of working alongside him as a Deputy County Attorney for the Dawson County Attorney's Office. Although Brett was already busy with his own cases, teaching at the local college, community involvement, and family activities, Brett was always generous with his time and willing to teach me the practice of criminal law.

I have now had the privilege of working for Brett in his role as the Dawson County Attorney for nearly the last eight years. Brett has demonstrated tremendous leadership through his work ethic, mentorship, and knowledge of the law. He has maintained the highest ethical standards, and is extremely professional in his interactions with opposing counsel, defendants, victims, and witnesses.

Brett's knowledge, character, and dedication to his community and public service make him an excellent selection for the next Montana Seventh Judicial District Court Judge, and I am proud to recommend him for the position.

Best Regards,

Cody Lensing

Deputy Dawson County Attorney



Behavioral Health

107 Dilworth Street * Glendive, Montana 59330 * (406) 345-2654 * FAX: (406) 345-2655

January 9, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte Governor of Montana P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620-0801

Governor Gianforte,

It is with great enthusiasm that I am writing this letter of recommendation in support of Mr. Brett Irigoin for the position of District Court Judge in the Seventh Judicial District. As a licensed psychiatrist with 9 years of experience in mental health, I have had the privilege of knowing Brett Irigoin for over five years in a professional capacity and have been consistently impressed by his character, intellect, and dedication to justice.

Since the beginning of my employment as the staff psychiatrist at Glendive Medical Center, I have worked with Mr. Irigoin on several mental health involuntary commitment cases over the years and have found him to be an invaluable resource. We have a collegial working relationship, and I have come to value his insight and often seek his guidance when dealing with the intersection of mental health and the law.

Most of our cases involve individuals facing significant mental health challenges, and they sometimes pose a threat to the community. He approaches every situation with empathy, patience, and an unwavering commitment to fairness. These qualities, combined with his profound understanding of the law, make Mr. Irigoin uniquely qualified to serve as a judge.

I am confident that Mr. Irigoin possesses the temperament, integrity, and wisdom required to excel in this role. His dedication to fostering justice and addressing the nuanced needs of individuals, particularly those dealing with mental health issues, sets him apart as an outstanding candidate for this position.

Thank you for considering this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Paulette D. Lassiter, MD

Medical Director for Behavioral Health

Glendive Medical Center

Governor Greg Gianforte Attn: Hanna Slusser Governor's Office PO Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620 nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Public Comment on Seventh Judicial District Judge Applicant Brett Irigoin

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am pleased to write this letter to show my support of the appointment of Brett Irigoin to District Court Judge in the Seventh Judicial District Court.

I am currently a managing attorney with the Office of State Public Defender in Missoula, Montana but previously worked as a Deputy County Attorney under Brett Irigoin in the Dawson County Attorney's Office.

I joined Brett's team straight out of law school and consider him to be the best mentor I have had the pleasure of experiencing. During my time in Brett's office, I observed him to be ethical and professional. Brett is a strong leader but listens to the voices and opinions of those around him. Brett is thoughtful about his decisions and is guided by reason, integrity, and thorough research.

After joining the Office of State Public Defender in 2021 I began working on cases opposite Brett and continued to be presented with a Brett that is reasonable, upfront, and professional at every turn, even when we disagree.

I have confidence that Brett Irigion has all the qualities that a district court judge should possess and would show up every day with respect for our Constitution.

It is for these reasons that I recommend that Brett Irigoin be appointed District Judge of the 7th Judicial District.

Respectfully submitted,

Hailey Forcella, Esq.

Cindy Larsen, CEO
Action for Eastern Montana
PO Box 1309
Glendive, MT 59330
c.larsen@aemt.org
406-987-1006

January 13, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte PO Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the nomination of Brett Irigoin to the Seventh Judicial Court District Court Judge. As his colleague when I served as the Seventh Judicial District Treatment Court Coordinator, I had the privilege of working closely with Mr. Irigoin for numerous years. Since then, he has guided me through complex child and family service law and employment questions during my tenure at other positions. During these times, I have observed firsthand his exceptional qualifications, unwavering integrity, and steadfast commitment to justice.

Brett Irigoin possesses an impressive legal acumen and a profound understanding of the law. He has consistently demonstrated the ability to analyze complex legal issues with precision and clarity, ensuring that all parties are heard and that justice is served fairly and impartially. His keen analytical skills, combined with his dedication to upholding the principles of justice, make him an outstanding candidate for the judiciary.

In addition to his legal expertise, Mr. Irigoin is known for his exceptional interpersonal skills and compassionate demeanor. He treats everyone with respect and empathy, fostering an environment of trust and cooperation. His ability to listen attentively and consider diverse perspectives has earned him the admiration and respect of colleagues, clients, and community members alike.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Seventh Judicial District, District Court Judge. His exceptional legal skills, unwavering integrity, and dedication to justice make him an exemplary candidate. I am confident that Mr. Irigoin will bring honor and distinction to the judiciary, and I strongly urge his confirmation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cindy Larsen

CEO

Action for Eastern Montana

January 13, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte PO Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620 nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Support for Brett Irigoin for 7th Judicial District Court Judge

Dear Governor Gianforte:

This letter is to voice my support for Mr. Irigoin to be selected for the Seventh Judicial District Court Judge.

I am a retired Sergeant with the Montana Highway Patrol. Over my 25-year law enforcement career, I worked with many different attorneys. I can say confidently that Brett Irigoin was one of the top attorneys with whom I've worked. I was the detachment Sergeant in Glendive from 2015 to 2017. During this time, Brett was the Dawson Deputy County Attorney and I had the pleasure of working with him on multiple cases during this time. Brett was always available for questions and was always well-prepared for court. In 2017, I transferred to be the Sergeant of the Eastern Montana Interdiction Team with the Montana Highway Patrol and we had numerous felony criminal interdiction cases and multiple felony cases in Dawson County. Brett became the Dawson County Attorney during this time. Brett is one of very few prosecuting attorneys who pursued and completed additional criminal interdiction training to learn all about criminal interdiction. He attended the same training law enforcement officers do to advance their understanding of criminal interdiction. I called Brett on numerous occasions for his advice and guidance on many of the cases that the Interdiction team had in Dawson County. On some of the cases, he would assist in the writing of search warrants and execution of the search warrants even when it was after normal business hours. I knew that we could call Brett anytime of the day or night and he would assist us if he could. Brett was a highly valued partner in this important work.

From working with Brett, I know he is an extremely hard worker and dedicated to his job. Brett is very knowledgeable in all aspects of law. I have had the pleasure of talking to Brett about different Supreme Court rulings over the years and have asked his opinions on some of the rulings as I instructed other officers in the state on these rulings. I believe Brett has the right temperament for the job as I have always known Brett to be fair and honest on all cases.

I believe Brett Irigoin would make an excellent District Court Judge. I am very pleased to support Brett Irigoin for the Seventh Judicial District Court Judge.

Respectfully,

Try R. Musi

Retired Montana Highway Patrol Sergeant

Troy R. Muri 246 South Sunday Creek Drive

Miles City, Mt. 59301



Lincoln Elementary School

213 S Nowlan Glendive, MT 59330 (406) 377-1138 (406) 377-2309 Fax Ryan Buckley Principal

Michaela Murphy Secretary

> Kelsey Haseley Counselor

January 10th, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic recommendation for Brett Irigoin as a candidate for the Seventh Judicial District Judge for the state of Montana. I have had the privilege of working with Brett for several years in our community, and during this time, I have come to know him as an exceptional individual, dedicated to both his professional and personal responsibilities.

In his work and in his community involvement, Brett has proven to be a person of great integrity, strong work ethic, and exceptional attention to detail. Whether through his professional efforts, coaching high school football, or his active participation in officiating games, he consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to fairness, transparency, and justice—qualities that will serve him well in a judicial capacity.

Beyond his professional life, Brett is an outstanding father who balances the demands of his career with a clear devotion to his family. His ability to lead by example and foster positive relationships in both his personal and professional life speaks to his character and leadership.

Above all, Brett exudes confidence in his decision-making and is deeply committed to the success of any endeavor he undertakes. He works tirelessly to ensure the best possible outcome for his community, and I have no doubt he would bring this same dedication, thoroughness, and ethical commitment to the Seventh Judicial District Court.

I wholeheartedly recommend Brett Irigoin for this important role. His blend of confidence, character, and commitment makes him an ideal candidate for this position, and I am confident he will continue to serve with distinction in the judicial system.

Sincerely,

Ryan Buckley Principal

Ry_Buckly

Lincoln Elementary School

Jackie Stinnett
Business Manager/District Clerk



Val Hafele Special Services Director

Cody Cook Technology Coordinator

July 4, 2024

Governor Greg Gianforte Office of the Governor P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620

RE: Support for Brett Irigoin's Appointment as Seventh Judicial District Judge

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to express my full support for Brett Irigoin's appointment as the Seventh Judicial District Judge. As both a citizen of Dawson County and the Superintendent of Glendive Public Schools, I have had the privilege of working with Brett in a variety of capacities and can confidently attest to his qualifications and character.

Over the years, I have served alongside Brett on several committees in our community, including the Board of Health and the County Interdisciplinary Child Safety Team. In every instance, Brett has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to doing what is right. He is not afraid to voice his perspective when necessary, but he also listens intently and thoughtfully considers the input of others. His ability to collaborate and develop solutions that benefit all parties involved has been instrumental in addressing complex community issues.

On a personal level, I have always appreciated Brett's professionalism, integrity, and dedication. His work as Dawson County Attorney has been exceptional, and while I fully support his pursuit of this judgeship, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that his departure from his current position would be a significant loss for our community. That sentiment alone speaks volumes about his value to Dawson County and the respect he has earned from those he serves.

Brett is a person who approaches his responsibilities with dedication and diligence, always striving to do the very best he can. I have no doubt that he will bring the same work ethic, fairness, and commitment to the role of District Judge.

Thank you for considering Brett Irigoin for this important position. Should you require any further information or insights, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Stephen Schreibeis Superintendent

Glendive Public Schools

PO BOX 701 900 N. Merrill Glendive, MT 59330 (406) 377-5293 (406) 377-6212 (F)

Governor Greg Gianforte

Officer of the Governor

P.O.Box 200801

Helena, MT 59620

Re: Letter of Character referencing Brett Irigoin of Dawson County for 7th Judicial District Court Judge

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing in reference to the character that Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin has exhibited in my years that I have known and worked with him during my tenure as a Glendive Police Officer for the Glendive Police Department.

Although I have worked alongside applicants Scott Herring, and John Hrubes in my years as well, I have not had as much career related interaction. The interaction I have had with Scott and John professionally has been positive and find both applicants to be intelligent and cognizant of the task ahead of them. I have not had the pleasure of working with Charity Mclarity yet at this time.

I worked with Brett while a Glendive Police Officer primarily on felony cases, and often times Juvenile cases referred through the District Court.

In my professional years with Brett, I felt he was very down-to-earth, approachable and professional when I was requesting guidance or seeking information pertaining to cases we worked together. Brett offered direction above and beyond his scope of being a county attorney by offering education and knowledge to assist officers like myself on complex sometimes multijurisdictional felony cases that required an attorney with tenacity and diligence to follow through to completion in the judicial processes. Brett made it a point to introduce me to the local Department of Criminal Investigations Agents (DCI), Drug Task Force (DTF Agents), Border Patrol and any other resources I would need along the way, which spotlighted his commitment to ensuring networking and connections that were professional and important.

Brett frequently kept timely communication with me with any felony cases we worked together, sending notifications for any appearance dates and stressed the importance our communication while following up on cases. His guidance truly helped me become a better police officer by obtaining institutional knowledge and intelligence he obtained during his career that he happily passed on.

I always felt the door was open to asking questions at his office, and if he did not know an answer, Brett would research to find the answer before giving me one. I felt lucky to have a county attorney that I was able to work closely with on felony cases in order to achieve the best possible result for the case at hand.

When handling Juvenile cases, I felt Brett handled them compassionately, and although frequently having to make tough and firm calls with the youth, I feel he did what was best for the community, the victims, and the juveniles themselves.

Brett also assisted in guiding my career on a multitude of mental health related calls, often in the middle of the night with little to no notice before he was giving sound legal advice and direction for officers while they were actively handling scenes. Brett never sounded as though any of these calls or situations burdened him, and was a positive voice to hear on many late nights working in these forms of situations where they are rapidly evolving.

Brett is confident in his abilities, which is reflected in his work. Brett thoroughly impressed me with his prosecution of two trials in 2023 throughout which he had offered extra legal assistance and guidance when our Police Department was short staffed. He offered to speak to our department about changes in law and keeping officers up to date on changes in any

legal or supreme court changes which may affect law enforcement to assure better outcomes and interactions in the public interest.

I felt supported by Brett as a Law Enforcement Officer and felt he has been a friendly face in the community at many community events. There are important life lessons Brett taught me through my career that will never be forgotten. In his desire to further his career, I feel it's my turn to offer words of support as he works through the process of advancing to a different stage of his professional life.

Thank you for your time today.	
Respectfully,	
Tessa Hopper Glendive, MT	



Dear Governor Gianforte,

As a Glendive City Council Member, Assistant Chief of the Fire Department, Chairman of the Dawson County Economic Development Council, and Facilities Director for our Glendive Public Schools, I strongly endorse Brett Irigoin for District Court Judge. Having worked alongside him, I can say that Brett combines high character, fairness, and ethical integrity in a way that makes him perfect for this role.

In his position as County Attorney, Brett has consistently shown his ability to handle complex legal matters with skill and professionalism. His work handling legal issues for Dawson County proves he's a talented and capable candidate for this judgeship.

What really makes Brett stand out is his dedication to our community. Beyond his legal work, he volunteers in various community organizations and events, showing his genuine commitment to making Glendive and Dawson County a better place. His local connections and leadership abilities have earned him the community's trust and respect - people know they can count on him.

With Brett's impressive qualifications, extensive experience, and proven commitment to our community, I'm confident he's the ideal choice for District Court Judge. I know he'll bring good judgment, careful consideration, and strong principles to the bench.

I strongly encourage you to select Brett for this important position. His dedication to justice and proven track record show he'll serve our community with distinction.

Best regards,

Rhett Coon

Glendive City Councilman
Assistant Chief for the City of Glendive Fire Department
Chairman of Dawson County Economic Development Council
Facilities Director for Glendive Public Schools

January 14, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte

P.O. Box 200801

Helena, MT 59620-0801

Governor Gianforte,

I would like to offer this letter of support for Brett Irigoin concerning the vacancy in the Seventh Judicial District. I have worked in law enforcement in several capacities for approximately 27 years in Eastern Montana.

In 2015, Mr. Irigoin was appointed to the position of Deputy County Attorney in Dawson County and has since been elected to fill the role as County Attorney. I have worked with Mr. Irigoin since his initial appointment in 2015.

The use of an antique scale to represent justice dates back hundreds of years. The scale symbolizes equality, fairness and objectiveness in the weighing of evidence on both sides of a legal proceeding. I have seen first hand that Mr. Irigoin embodies the values represented by the Scale of Justice.

In conclusion, I am confident in recommending Mr. Irigoin for the vacancy in the Seventh Judicial District and encourage you to consider his application.

Sincerely,

Jake Feist

440 Colorado Blvd

what with

Glendive, MT 59330

(406)377-5291

Governor Greg Gianforte
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59601
VIA EMAIL ONLY: nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Brett Irigion's Appointment to the 7th Judicial District Court

Dear Governor Gianforte,

Ashley Howard left her two-year-old son, Caleb, strapped into his car seat for 13 hours in her late-model sedan parked in front of a house where she was attending a party. The last several of those hours, the outside temperature reached the mid-80s. It was August in Glendive. Best estimates by the partygoers indicated Howard passed out after midnight. At 1:00 in the afternoon, Howard bolted upright from the bed she was sleeping it off in just feet away inside the house. When she found him, his internal body temperature was 107 degrees, and he was unresponsive. Though she took him to the hospital, doctors in Glendive and later in Billings could not undo the damage caused by his own mother. Caleb died just after his second birthday in an emergency room bed in Billings.

Brett charged Howard with negligent homicide and prosecuted the case. I was assigned to assist Brett in the later stages of the case as an Assistant Attorney General in the DOJ's Prosecution Services Bureau. Our friendship, and my respect for Brett, were forged during the prosecution and eventual trial of Ashley Howard. The reason I bring all this up in this forum is not to brag about what Brett did in achieving justice for young Caleb. To be sure, Brett's legal prowess and dedication to justice are certainly noteworthy, and, well, letter of recommendation worthy. However, I really bring it up to explain what Brett did not do, and why he did not do it, which are what you will want to know as you are assessing who is right for the job.

It is easy to be outraged by a mother who killed her own son in that egregious manner. It would have been very easy, and legally ethical, to throw the entire weight of the State against Howard and aggressively resist any of her legal maneuvering. Brett did not do that. Brett did not lose his objectivity. Brett did not lose his humanity. Brett was patient and accommodating as Howard and her various lawyers maneuvered as lawyers do. Brett did not resist her delays or her evaluations to determine if there was a legal excuse for her behavior (i.e. the insanity defense). It turned out that Howard did not meet the required thresholds to advance an insanity defense. At trial, she tried to advance that argument anyway, and we had to contend with what to do.

So, at trial, when Brett was faced with whether to object to Howard's last-ditch effort at an insanity defense, he did not. Brett's humanity and dedication to doing the right thing were paramount in his decision. As we stood there in front of the counsel table in the near hyperbaric chamber conditions of Covid-era jury trials, with Judge Best waiting for the State's position, we just looked at each other for a long moment. We knew that the law was on our side, and we knew that if we objected, Judge Best would not allow Howard to argue an insanity defense to the jury. Brett decided not to object, and I agreed. It was a big risk, as you never know what a jury will do, but it was the right thing to do under the circumstances. It undercut a complex and obvious appeal issue, and it allowed Howard to have her full day in court.

In the end, Howard was convicted. While there was relief and some rejoicing with family members that justice had been served, Brett and I somberly walked out of the courthouse. We had done our jobs, but we were saddled with a heavy amalgam of emotions. Since that day in August of 2020, I have worked with Brett on several more cases and even had dinner in his home with his wonderful family. I've always been impressed by his mature, reasonable demeanor and approach to being a prosecutor.

That is the temperament and approach that we need for our judges. A person that can withstand the outrage and pressure of the angry mob and do what is right and fair, not just what feels good or is popular in the moment. Oftentimes the two paths go to the same place – like a conviction for negligent homicide for Ashley Howard – but it is the way you get there that matters greatly. Brett has the temperament, the humanity, the will to do the right thing even when it's hard, and the dedication to the truth which are paramount to being a good judge.

I would choose Brett Irigion every day of the week and twice on Sunday to be a District Court Judge. I hope you do too.

Sincerely,

Mike Gee, Esq

January 15, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte P.O. Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620 Nominatejudges@mt.gov

Dear Governor Gianforte:

Please accept my letter of endorsement for the appointment of Brett Irigoin for District Court Judge in the Seventh Judicial District.

I had the privilege to work with Brett through my employment at the Montana Attorney General's Office Prosecution Services Bureau, and currently, through our shared work on the Montana Sexual Assault Response Network legislative committee. Over the last few years, I have come to know him on a personal and professional level. I have no doubts as to his ability to serve as the next District Court Judge in the Seventh Judicial District.

Prosecutors, and likewise judges, are vested with great power to affect someone's life. Brett does not take that power lightly. I have observed him consider difficult legal issues over the years, and each time, his decisions are based on sound legal reasoning and a commitment to justice. I know he will make every decision as a district court judge with those same principles in mind.

Brett's accolades are numerous and have been reiterated in other letters of support. I echo each of them. He will bring dedication, knowledge, integrity, fairness, and a commitment to the law and justice to the bench. He will make an excellent district court judge, and I strongly recommend his appointment.

Sincerely,

Selene Koepke

January 14, 2025

Office of the Governor PO Box 200801 Helena, Montana 59620-0801

To whom it may concern,

I write to you in support of Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin to be appointed to fill the vacancy of the District Court Judge in the Seventh Judicial District.

I served the Glendive Police Department for over 20 years and retired as Chief of Police. I also worked as an investigator for the DOJ Gambling investigation Bureau. I had the pleasure of working with Brett over the course of my law enforcement career. I noted his strong work ethic and dedication to the County Attorney's Office. On several occasions I had the opportunity to work with Brett on criminal cases. During these times I observed his professionalism, legal expertise and integrity.

I firmly believe that Brett's appoint to the Seventh Judicial District would greatly benefit the citizens of the District.

Thank you for considering my recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ty Ulrich

To: Governor Greg Gianforte

From: Captain Tim Therrien

Detective

Glendive Police Department, Glendive, MT.

Date: 01/15/2025

Dear Sir,

I would like to express my support of Brett Irigoin for the position of District Court Judge for the 7th Judicial District Court. Over the past 9 or so years I have worked closely with Mr. Irigoin in my capacity as a Patrol Officer and as a Detective. I have had occasion to consult with him on numerous occasions to understand the proper application of the laws of Montana. I have always found him to be fair-minded, knowledgeable and thorough. I have known him to always been willing to listen to all of the particulars of a question or complaint before coming to a conclusion. These are qualities that I believe are critical in a person seeking the office of District Court Judge. I believe that he will bring to the bench the same sense of ethics, professionalism and diligence that he has demonstrated as our County Attorney. Please accept my unqualified support of his application.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Therrien

hally b. Theren

Detective

Glendive Police

PUBLIC WORKS DEPT. CITY OF GLENDIVE 300 S. MERRILL AVE GLENDIVE, MT 59330



PHONE (406)-377-3318 FAX (406)-377-6873

Frank Ceane City of Glendive 300 S. Merrill Ave. Glendive, MT 59330 **Public Works Director**

January 15th 2025

To whom it may concern;

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Public Works Director for the City of Glendive to express my wholehearted support for Brett Irigoin as a candidate for the position of District Court Judge.

In my numerous interactions with Mr. Irigoin in his role as our County Attorney, I have been consistently impressed by his integrity, diligence, and deep commitment to the principles of justice and equity. His legal acumen and thorough understanding of the law are evident in his handling of complex legal issues that impact our community. Mr. Irigoin's proactive approach and his ability to engage constructively with various city departments have been instrumental in ensuring that legal considerations are integrated seamlessly with public works initiatives.

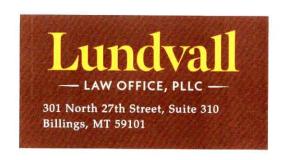
His dedication to the community goes beyond his professional obligations; it is rooted in a genuine desire to see our community thrive. Mr. Irigoin has demonstrated exceptional judgment and fairness in his dealings, traits that are indispensable for an effective District Court Judge. His transition into this role would not only be a natural progression of his career but also a significant benefit to our judicial system.

I am confident that Brett Irigoin's unique blend of expertise, community awareness, and judicial temperament will contribute immensely to the judiciary and help uphold the highest standards of justice in our district.

Thank you for considering this endorsement, which I make both in my professional capacity and as a concerned and involved member of our community.

Sincerely,

Frank Ceane Public Works Director City of Glendive



January 14, 2025

I am an attorney in Billings and also work as a Judge Pro Tempore for Billings Municipal Court. I have practiced law for over 27 years in both state and federal courts. I have had a fairly consistent caseload representing criminal defendants in the Dawson County and Richland County area for about 12 years.

In my experience as a litigator and substitute Judge, I have the opportunity to interact with many prosecutors from several different counties in Montana. With that background, I wholeheartedly recommend Brett Irigoin for the District Court Judge position vacated by Katherine Bidegaray.

I have had the opportunity to work with Brett from across the table while I have represented defendants he has charged with crimes in Dawson county. While we obviously are working "against" each other. I have always found him to be respectful of me and my clients, yet firm in his convictions and representing the interests of the citizens of Dawson County.

He is organized, prepared and knowledgeable about the facts of each case and the applicable law. I have always found him to be honest and professional in our dealings. He has both civil and criminal experience and has the proper temperament for the bench. I believe he would serve the 7th Judicial District with integrity, fairness and impartiality.

Sincerely.

Lance Lundvall

Lundvall Law Office. PLLC 301 North 27th Street, Ste. 310

Billings, MT 59101

Betsey Hedrick Glendive, MT, 59330 1/14/2025

The Honorable Greg Gianforte Governor of the State of Montana PO Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to express my support for Brett Irigoin's appointment as Judge for the Seventh Judicial District in Montana. Having observed Mr. Irigoin's professionalism, integrity, and dedication to justice throughout his tenure as County Attorney, I am confident he possesses the skills and temperament necessary to excel in this role.

Beyond his remarkable legal expertise, Irigoin is an invaluable asset to our community. He has dedicated countless hours to volunteering in the Lions Group of Glendive and coaching ABC baseball teams, positively shaping the lives of many young people. His leadership and generosity have profoundly impacted our community, and if selected, Brett will undoubtedly be deeply missed.

In addition to Brett's commitment to fairness and impartiality, Irigoin has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of judicial ethics and a proven track record of integrity, including the ability to recuse himself when necessary. This level of self-awareness and adherence to ethical principles further highlights Brett's suitability for the role of District Judge.

I firmly believe that Mr. Irigoin will serve as an exemplary District Judge, bringing the same dedication, fairness, and commitment to the bench as he has demonstrated in all aspects of service. I respectfully urge you to give Brett Irigoin's application your fullest consideration.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely, Betsey Hedrick 817 N. Kendrick Ave Glendive, MT, 59330 406-580-7496

Recommendation of Brett Irgoin for District Judge 7th Judicial District January 15,2025

Dear Governor Gianforte,

It is my honor and pleasure to recommend Dawson County Attorney Brett Irigoin for appointment as District Judge to fill the vacancy in the 7th Judicial District Court of Montana. As a City Councilman of Glendive I have come to know of Mr.Irigoin and his fine work as Dawson County Attorney and of his many contributions to the community of Glendive.

As County Attorney Mr.Irigoin has demonstrated competence in the enforcement of laws, an ability to work with and in cooperation with multiple government agencies, he has provided a fine example of integrity and leadership, and has modeled an outstanding work ethic for our community.

Brett has contributed in numerous ways to the life of the community, especially as a volunteer for many of the youth activities. Whenever I called on Mr.Irigoin for assistance, he responded promptly and positively. For an individual with many work-related demands, this service to the community is truly noteworthy.

Mr.Irigoin would be an outstanding choice for this vacant District Court Judge position due to his outstanding work as County Attorney, because of his character, his work ethic, and because of his reputation as a strong family man and contributor within our community.

Thank you for your consideration of this worthwhile candidate.

Sincerely, Robert Michael Dryden Glendive City Councilman Ward III

STATE OF MONTANA

OLIVIA RIEGER DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

Phone: (406) 377-2666 • Fax: (406) 377-7280 Olivia.Rieger@mt.gov



Dawson County Courthouse 207 W. Bell Street, PO Box 1249 Glendive, MT 59330

DISTRICT COURT SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

January 15, 2025

RE: Letter of Support for Applicant Brett J. Irigoin

Governor Gianforte,

I write in support of Brett Irigoin in consideration for the position of District Court Judge for the 7th Judicial District Department 2.

As the current 7th Judicial District Court Judge for Department 1, I have observed Mr. Irigoin from the bench serving the citizens of eastern Montana with fairness and impartiality as County Attorney, handling felonies, misdemeanors, abuse and neglect proceedings, mental commitments and various other civil matters with equal commitment and competence. As observed, Mr. Irigoin has consistently demonstrated exceptional skills and an extremely strong work ethic on behalf of the people of Dawson County and the State of Montana. I also know that Mr. Irigoin has served in various leadership roles including the Montana County Attorney Association Board and various other boards. Many individuals look to Mr. Irigoin as a leader and as someone with an inherent ability to solve complex problems.

Mr. Irigoin's commitment to supporting both his legal and ethical obligations demonstrates his ability to serve as District Court Judge and ensure all those who enter his court are afforded a fair and just opportunity for justice. Mr. Irigoin knows the complex nature and the demand of this position and would be an ideal candidate. Important to note is that Mr. Irigoin is likely to be successful in any subsequent election by the people of this District to fill Department 2's vacancy. With his strong ties to the culture in the community in all five counties of this District, Mr. Irigoin would be an ideal choice for appointment and then retention by popular vote for this vacant position.

Finally, Mr. Irigoin has supported the Montana Seventh Judicial District Adult and DUI Treatment Court programs which provide wrap around services for individuals in the criminal justice system with substance use disorders. Mr. Irigoin has overwhelmingly supported the cause of the Treatment Court program in an effort to reduce recidivism and achieve a sense of public safety. Mr. Irigoin has dedicated a prosecutor from his office as a Treatment Court Team member and has consistently recognized when defendants should be referred to complete the program. Treatment courts are important, and Mr. Irigoin would preside over the Department 2 Treatment Court, and he already is familiar with the goals and purpose of such program.

Looking at the letters provided in support of Mr. Irigoin, each show distinctly the broad nature of support he would have to fill this very important role within our communities. While Mr. Irigoin is in a field of lawyers who seek the position, Mr. Irigoin has the temperament, work ethic and integrity to be seriously considered for appointment.

Should you require any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards,

Olivia Rieger

Hon. Olivia Rieger

District Court Judge, Department 1

Montana Seventh Judicial District Court