

From: [Kevin Sweeney](#)
To: [NominateJudges](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 13th Judicial District - Judicial Nominees
Date: Saturday, September 13, 2025 6:29:28 AM

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for giving the opportunity to weigh in on the ultimate selection of lawyers to fill the two new seats created in Billings for District Judges.

I write to add my voice in support of Laurie Grygiel for District Judge.

I have known Laurie in my role as a practicing attorney in Billings, working to resolve cases together in the job of civil practitioner. I have been honored to work with Laurie now as Standing Master. From her years of work, she has impressed all in Billings both as a fierce and dedicated advocate for her clients while in private practice, and now as a fair, impartial and smart Judge.

The job of District Court Judge in Billings is difficult. The job of a Standing Master in Billings and the 22nd Judicial District, moreover, is more than difficult. It is more than a full-time job to do the job right. Laurie has shown that she has the stuff to do the job right. She does the hard work well.

Laurie Grygiel is an excellent choice to serve as District Judge.

Certainly, if anyone working on this matter has any questions for me, please do not hesitate to respond to this endorsement.

--Kevin Sweeney

From: [Benjamin Cherland](#)
To: [NominateJudges](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of Support for Laurie Grygiel, candidate for District Court Judge
Date: Thursday, September 11, 2025 10:49:09 AM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Benjamin Cherland and I am Laurie Grygiel's pastor. I am writing this letter in support of her as a candidate for a District Court Judgeship in the 13th District.

Laurie is an active member of the church and consistently leads in a context where few step into service roles. She is a strong and quietly faithful Christian who's trust in God supports her work in this congregation and as a judge. Laurie has enriched the life of this church as a measured voice with a keen perspective based in her observation of this community and her own sense of integrity.

Laurie is an excellent candidate for a District Court Judgeship in the 13th District. I am convinced she would be effective in this role because of her work ethic, diligence and personal integrity. She would be as beneficial to the 13th District as she has been to the communities she has served so well, including this one.

Sincerely,

Benjamin R. Cherland, Pastor [\(he/him\) \[mypronouns.org\]](#)
Messiah Lutheran Church
912 Lower Continental Drive
PO Box 1330
Red Lodge, MT
(406) 446-2430
www.redlodgemessiah.com [\[redlodgemessiah.com\]](http://redlodgemessiah.com)



Virus-free. www.avast.com [\[avast.com\]](http://avast.com)

[\[avast.com\]](http://avast.com)



Moirra Murphy Law Office, PC
A better legal system for you

Governor Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser

Via email: nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: 13th Judicial District Court, Yellowstone County, Montana
Application of Laurie Grygiel

Dear Governor:

This is a letter of support for Standing Master Laurie Grygiel's nomination for District Court judge in Yellowstone County.

As a family law practitioner, I have practiced before Standing Master Grygiel for 5 ½ years. Standing Master Grygiel has presided over dozens of my family law cases in Billings, Hardin, Columbus, and Red Lodge. She is always well prepared and ready to address whatever custody case or dissolution case is set for the day. Standing Master Grygiel is equally able to explain issues to a person representing themselves or an experienced attorney. She treats everyone with the same respect. She has a great courtroom temperament. Standing Master Grygiel is a consummate professional who makes solid evidentiary rulings. She issues timely, well-thought-out decisions that look out for the best interests of children.

Standing Master Grygiel has spent decades in public service and would make an excellent addition to the District Court bench.

Very Truly Yours,

Moirra Murphy
Attorney at Law

(406) 206-6513 tele
(406) 206-6514 fax
moira@mmlo.org

2722 3rd Ave. N
Suite 240
Billings, MT 59101

September 16, 2025

Dear Governor Gianforte,

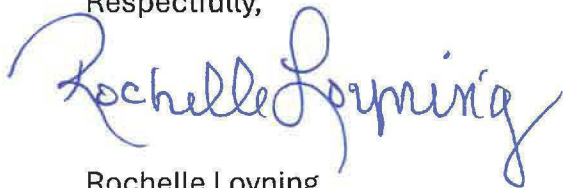
I am writing this letter in support of Standing Master, Laurie Grygiel.

I am the Clerk of District Court in Carbon County (Red Lodge). I have been in office since 2005. I work with Standing Master Grygiel, on a regular basis, she is top notch. Our Judge, Matthew J. Wald, relies on her for all our disputed Domestic Relation cases along with Orders of Protections. She also resides over our criminal and civil Law & Motion Calendar once a month, to assist with the caseload of Judge Wald's.

Ms. Grygiel is nothing but professional, respectful and patient when she steps onto the bench. I am very impressed by how she keeps the cases moving forward.

In my opinion, Ms. Grygiel's character speaks for itself, and she would be an outstanding choice for the position of the 13th Judicial District Court Judge appointment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rochelle Loyning". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rochelle" being more prominent and the last name "Loyning" following in a similar style.

Rochelle Loyning
Clerk of District Court

Natasha J. Morton, P.C.

ATTORNEY AT LAW

502 North Crow Avenue
P. O. Box 196
Hardin, MT 59034

Telephone: (406) 665-1647
Fax: (406) 665-2934

September 18, 2025

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

RE: Applications for two, new 13th Judicial District Court Judge positions

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I write in support of the application that Laurie Grygiel submitted to be considered for appointment to one of the two, new District Court Judge positions that the legislature authorized for Yellowstone County.

I don't remember exactly when I first came into contact with Laurie Grygiel but I would estimate it might be as far back as twenty years ago. At that time, she was assisting with or in the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Court, Lame Deer, Montana. I remember thinking that she was intellectually sharp, mindful of the Northern Cheyenne culture that we were working in and she quickly got to the substance of what we were dealing with.

My next recollection of her was when she was working for or with Montana Legal Services Association in Billings and I think her focus was on helping victims of domestic abuse with the legal proceedings that they were facing. I thought she was a no-nonsense, very able advocate for her clients in that position.

Finally, she has been working as a Standing Master in the 13th Judicial District and the 22nd Judicial District. I have had experience with her through the Standing Master office - with her serving as a Standing Master handling cases that Judge Wald assigned to her and as a mediator. I have found her to be on top of her case load, very timely in her responses, and decisive, all while showing appropriate consideration of the parties and their


counsel. These are all great attributes for a District Court Judge and as a Standing Master, she has probably been ably performing a large part of the job of a District Court Judge. Because of this, I think she would probably not face much of the learning curve that many lawyers face when going on the bench.

She has a breadth of experience in multiple areas of the law and I think she would make an excellent District Court Judge.

I want you to also know that I have no dog in the fight as I plan to retire at the end of 2025 and close my practice, but based on my 45 years of experience as an attorney in Montana, I think she would be a great choice to serve as one of Yellowstone County's newest District Court Judges.

Thank you for your consideration of her application and my thoughts regarding the same.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Natasha J. Morton', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

NATASHA J. MORTON, P.C.

From: [Jeannette Ellen Berry](#)
To: [NominateJudges](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 13th Judicial District Judicial Nominees
Date: Thursday, September 25, 2025 1:47:43 PM

Dear Governor: I am writing to support the application of Laurie Andreen Grygiel for the open District Judge position in the 13th Judicial District.

I have known Laurie since I hired her to work in the Domestic Violence Unit of Montana Legal Services. She was a great DV attorney and later branched into other areas at MLSA. MLSA was her first foray into family law. She was a quick and diligent learner. She soon did not need my supervision because she was totally capable. She is even tempered and got along well with and enjoyed her workmates in Billings and also the rest of us across MLSA. She was a team player.

Laurie is exceedingly intelligent and the hardest worker I have ever know. Whatever she tackles, gets her full attention, studious effort, and impressive work ethic. I know it may sound like I'm overblown in singing her praises, but that is not the case.

Three of us left Legal Services in the fall of 2015 and started our own law firm. Laurie and Mike Eakin were in Billings, and I was in Bozeman. I recognized an additional talent in Laurie through our law firm. She supervised the business end of the business with skill and diligence. The ability to organize is a gift that not everyone has.

I supported her application to be a 13th Judicial District Court Standing Master. I have not practiced in front of her, but I hear constantly about how good she is and how continually hard she works. Her application and my experience with her reflect a well rounded background and judicial ability--which is exactly what one wants in a District Judge.

You could not do better in this instance than to appoint her to the bench. Thank you for your consideration,

Jeannette Ellen Berry
Attorney at Law
BERRY LAW OFFICE
251 Edelweiss Drive, Ste. 2A
Bozeman, MT 59718
Cell: (406) 580-2338
Phone: (406) 624-6900
Fax: (406) 624-6908
email: jeb.berrylawoffice@gmail.com

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the individuals named. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this email. Please notify the sender immediately by email if you have received this email by mistake and delete this email from your system. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.



Scott Twito
Yellowstone County Attorney
217 N 27 Street
PO Box 35025
Billings, MT 59107
Phone: 406-256-2870
Fax: 406-256-6931

September 24, 2025

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

Re: Laurie Grygiel, Applicant for Montana Thirteenth Judicial District Court

Dear Governor Gianforte,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of Standing Master Laurie Grygiel and her application for one of the newly created judicial positions in the Montana Thirteenth Judicial District.

As the Yellowstone County Attorney, I have worked closely with Standing Master Grygiel primarily when my office appears for criminal arraignments. During these hearings I have found Standing Master Grygiel to be responsive to the arguments of counsel, considerate of the community protection issues from her decisions on bail and release conditions for offenders, and the appropriateness of her rulings. Her courtroom demeanor as a standing master is excellent and will, no doubt, continue should she be appointed to a judicial position.

If appointed I know that Standing Master Grygiel will use her extensive legal experience and knowledge to fairly and objectively apply the rule of law in the Thirteenth Judicial District. A district judge should have extensive knowledge of the law and legal procedure to properly serve as a judge. Standing Master Grygiel has that knowledge. She has obtained it through years of hard work and study.

Standing Master Laurie Grygiel has my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Twito".

Scott Twito
Yellowstone County Attorney

State of Montana



Matthew J. Wald
District Judge

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

Big Horn County
Carbon County
Stillwater County

406-322-5406
Fax: 406-322-8429

DISTRICT COURT

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

September 24, 2025

Re: Laurie Grygiel

To Governor Gianforte and members of the selection committee:

My name is Matt Wald, and I serve as the district judge of the 22nd Judicial District. I write on behalf of Laurie Grygiel, who has applied for one of the two new district judge positions recently created for the 13th Judicial District. I believe that I am in a unique position to comment on her fitness and ability to fulfill the duties of that position. Ms. Grygiel currently is a Standing Master for both the 13th and 22nd Judicial Districts, with half of her time devoted to my district. I can say without reservation that her hard work, legal knowledge, and ability as Standing Master have been invaluable to me in trying to deal with the workload of a very busy one-judge district. The quality of her work is such that in the cases I refer to her she is rarely substituted for me, and her decisions are rarely appealed to me. In fact, truth be told, I do not like the thought of having to replace her as Standing Master for my district. However, my selfishness and personal interest cannot outweigh the benefit that would be gained by the 13th Judicial District if Laurie Grygiel is appointed as a district judge. She does her job as Standing Master with intelligence, empathy, strength, and humility, all worthy attributes of a district judge.

Standing Master Grygiel has long and extensive experience as a practicing attorney and has now added to that legal experience with significant judicial experience. If appointed, there will be no learning curve for her but rather the ability to immediately go to work for the people of the 13th Judicial District. If you wish to discuss anything further about this recommendation, please do not hesitate to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Wald", written over a horizontal line.

Matthew J. Wald
22nd Judicial District Judge

Billings:
D. Michael Eakin



Sidney:
Daniel J. Eakin

Attorneys at Law

September 25, 2025

The Honorable Greg Gianforte
Governor of the State of Montana
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620-0801

Re: Application of Laurie Grygiel, 13th Judicial District Court Judge Positions

Dear Governor,

Please accept this letter as strong support for applicant Laurie Grygiel for the 13th Judicial District Court Judge positions in Yellowstone County. I have known Laurie for decades, and I have observed her work ethic and passion for the law firsthand, both as a practicing attorney and as a current Standing Master in both the 13th and 22nd Judicial Districts. She has a sound legal mind and tremendous experience as an attorney, and she continues to work hard each day as a current Standing Master.

Laurie will be an excellent choice for district court judge, because she treats everyone who appears in front of her fairly and applies the law equally. She will not be biased or unfair to anyone appearing in front of her. She has already shown this in her Standing Master position, and she is familiar with many areas of law. She gets her work done in a timely manner, and keeps her cases moving forward. The 13th Judicial District will benefit from her expertise and experience.

I respectfully urge you to select Laurie Grygiel for the 13th Judicial District Court bench. If you any questions or concerns about this, please do not hesitate to contact me at 406-694-3174, or dan.406law@gmail.com.

Thank you,


Dan Eakin

From: [Corbin Howard](#)
To: [NominateJudges](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Application of Laurie Grygiel for 13th Judicial District Court Judge
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 9:50:59 PM

W. Corbin Howard
Attorney At Law
110 North 27th Street, Suite 250
Billings, Montana
corbinhoward@corbinhoward.com

September 26, 2025

Honorable Greg Gianforte
Governor of Montana
Attention: Hannah Slusser
Sent Via email to nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Application of Laurie Grygiel for 13th Judicial District Court Judge

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I have known Laurie Grygiel for years, first as an attorney and more recently as a Standing Master. She was a fine attorney. She is a very fine Standing Master. I believe she will make an excellent District Judge. I have practiced law for 49 years – 48 in Billings. I have appeared before many judges on many types of cases. Here are a few of the reasons I recommend you select Laurie as District Judge for Yellowstone County:

1. She comes prepared. When I walk into the courtroom, I know she has read the briefs.
2. She knows the law. In presenting a case to her, it is obvious that she has spent a professional life observing the thousands of ways the law can be used to address real, practical problems.
3. She's interested in people. There is no better "perch point" to observe human behavior and her curiosity in how events can play into the very different lives of our citizens – is a real asset. She pays close attention when lawyers question and witnesses answer. I've never seen her bored.
4. She can make a decision. There are a few judges who seem to have a heck of a time making up their mind. It shows when weeks turn into months waiting for a decision. That's not good – either for the people who are waiting with their lives on hold – or the legal system that keeps feeding each judge more new cases – and more new cases – and more after that. Laurie can grasp things quickly and decide promptly. Not all judges can do that.

5. She has a good “judicial temperament.” Laurie’s combination of respect for others, self confidence in the law, patience with those appearing before her and no-nonsense firmness when necessary will serve her – and the members of our community – very well.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Corbin Howard

100 North 27th Street

Suite 250

Billings, Montana 59101

Office: (406) 248-9244

Fax: (406) 333-0626

Email: corbinhoward@corbinhoward.com

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this e-mail message is privileged and confidential to the recipient named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible to deliver it to the intended recipient, any use, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately and destroy the original message from your electronic files.

ROCHELLE BELEY, MS, LCPC

MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST

**P.O. BOX 29
HARLOWTON, MT 59036
(406) 855-4517
(406) 632-4899 (FAX)
rbeley@itstriangle.com**

September 28, 2025

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

Re: Laurie Grygiel

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing this letter of support for Laurie Grygiel for Judgeship with the Thirteenth Judicial District. I have known Ms. Grygiel in her professional capacity as Standing Master for both the Thirteenth and Twenty-Second Judicial Districts for the past five years. Professionally, I have testified in Ms. Grygiel's court as a therapist for children in custodial matters. Further, I provide Parenting Plan Evaluations for the District Court and have completed those evaluations for Ms. Grygiel. I have always found Ms. Grygiel to be knowledgeable regarding matters involving children and families. I have further found that she prioritizes the best interest of the children when ruling on such matters. I believe Ms. Grygiel is fair and decisive in her rulings.

Thank you for this opportunity to support Laurie Grygiel for a position with the Thirteenth Judicial Court. I believe her experience and standards would be an asset to the Court and community.

Respectfully,



Rochelle Beley, MS
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

*Phillips County Courthouse
P.O. Box 470
Malta, MT 59538
(406) 654-1062 Office
(406) 654-2363 Fax*

Yvonne Laird
District Judge

Kathy King
Court Administrator

Kelley A. Barstad
Court Reporter

Phillips County - Malta
Blaine County - Chinook
Valley County - Glasgow

September 26, 2025

Governor's Office
Attn: Hannah Slusser
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620
Via email: nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: Laurie Grygiel – Thirteenth Judicial District Judge Applicant

Dear Governor Gianforte:

Please accept my letter of support for Laurie Grygiel's appointment as a District Court Judge in the Thirteenth Judicial District. Ms. Grygiel is uniquely qualified to serve as a District Court Judge. During her professional career she has practiced in several different District Courts around the State of Montana and two Tribal Courts. Additionally, she served as a law clerk in Federal Court and currently she is serving as a Standing Master for the 13th and 22nd Judicial Districts. This breadth of experience has allowed her insight into the necessary qualities of an effective and competent presiding judge.

Ms. Grygiel will be able to pull together all of the positive judicial practices she has observed and enhance them with her own insights. This will allow her to run an orderly, efficient, and judicially sound court. Given the volume of cases handled in

the 13th Judicial District, the ability to run a court in such a manner will be a necessary skill.

Ms. Grygiel has a keen legal mind and exceptional practice skills. Although she could have concentrated her legal practice in much more lucrative areas, Ms. Grygiel has focused much of her practice and professional legal career on serving the underserved and serving as public servant. Ms. Grygiel would be a welcome addition to the bench and a tremendous resource for the constituents in the 13th Judicial District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yvonne Laird". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Yvonne Laird
District Court Judge

Governor Gianforte
Attn: Hannah Slusser
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
nominatejudges@mt.gov

RE: 13th Judicial District Court, Yellowstone County
Department 9 & 10
Application of Standing Master Laurie Grygiel

Greetings Governor Gianforte,

I have had the honor and privilege of working as the judicial assistant for Laurie Grygiel since she was appointed as Standing Master for the 13th and the 22nd judicial districts in February of 2020. I am elated that Standing Master Laurie Grygiel has added her name to the pool of candidates for one of the newly announced district judge positions. I am very proud to work with such an amazing leader. Her knowledge, experience and legal background is vast and inspiring. I pledge my support to her potential appointment. The broad and diverse day to day duties of the standing master department put her in a unique position to step into the role of district judge and immediately start serving the community. Standing Master Laurie Grygiel serves with integrity and respect for every individual's right to due process. With the ability and knowledge to begin work on day one, especially with the diversity of her current position, Laurie Grygiel would be an ideal candidate for one of the district court judges.

Thank you for your time,
Martha Forrest-Martin

Raschel Gallagher LCPC, LAC
Family Relations Supervisor
Po Box 81512
Billings, MT 59001
rgallaghercounseling@gmail.com
406-598-4029

09/258/2025

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am honored to write this letter in strong support of Standing Master Grygiel as a candidate for judicial appointment. I have known Standing Master Grygiel for 3 years, and throughout that time, she has consistently exemplified the values and professionalism we hope to see in our judiciary.

Standing Master Grygiel brings a unique combination of intellectual rigor, ethical leadership, and a deep understanding of the human impact of the law. She has built a legal career marked not only by her technical proficiency but by her genuine commitment to fairness and service to the community. Her ability to approach difficult legal questions with a clear, analytical mind while never losing sight of compassion is rare, precisely what makes her a remarkable candidate for the bench.

In addition to her extensive legal experience, she is a natural leader and consensus builder. Whether in the courtroom, in negotiations, or in community settings, she carries herself with dignity, patience, and an unwavering sense of justice. Her colleagues trust her judgment, and those who appear before her know they will be heard with respect and treated with impartiality.

She is not only ready for this role, she is right for it. Standing Master Grygiel will serve with distinction and bring honor to the judicial office. I offer my full and unequivocal support for her appointment and am confident she will make a meaningful, lasting contribution to the judiciary. I have seen her firsthand be dedicated, courteous and kind in the times she is working with these families.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,
Raschel Gallagher LCPC, LAC

Family Relations Supervisor

From: [Emily Beard](#)
To: [NominateJudges](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 13th Judicial District Court - District Court Judge Selection
Date: Monday, September 29, 2025 1:56:07 PM

Dear Members of the Judicial Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the appointment of Standing Master Laurie Grygiel to the position of District Court Judge. I have known Laurie for about five years and have been consistently impressed by her professionalism and knowledge of the law.

Before taking the bench as a Standing Master, Laurie practiced a diverse range of civil law, where she gained invaluable experience advocating for clients while navigating complex legal and personal matters. As a Standing Master, she demonstrates an innate ability to balance a demanding and geographically diverse caseload throughout Yellowstone County and surrounding counties. Laurie's ability to manage responsibilities across these diverse communities clearly establishes her efficiency, work ethic, and deep understanding of the legal issues facing Montana's communities.

Laurie has a well-deserved reputation for being fair, impartial, and skilled in dealing with self-represented litigants. She treats all individuals with respect and ensures they are heard, regardless of their legal background. Laurie's character, practical experience across various aspects of the legal system, and demonstrated commitment to equal justice make her an outstanding candidate for the District Court Judge position. I have no doubt that she would continue to serve in this role with fairness, patience, and integrity.

Thank you for considering Laurie for this important position.

Sincerely,

Emily Beard

Emily Beard
Emily Beard Law, PLLC
PO Box 20259
Billings, MT 59104
(406) 545-2903
emily@emilybeardlaw.com



HUGHES

L · A · W_{PLLC}

September 29, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte
Attn.: Hannah Slusser
nominatejudges@mt.gov

Re: Applicants Bradley Kneeland and Laurie Grygiel

Dear Governor Gianforte,

I am writing to recommend Bradley Kneeland and Laurie Grygiel for the Thirteenth Judicial District Court judicial vacancies. These two candidates have much needed experience in the areas where the two new judges will need it, especially considering the specialized courts we will see in 2026.

On January 2, 2026, the Thirteenth Judicial District will transition into specialized courts. The two newest judges will be assigned family law, dependent neglect and civil cases. In recent years, Yellowstone County has seen over 10,000 new filings per year. The vast majority of those filings are domestic relations, abuse and neglect, criminal law and involuntary commitments. With the specialized courts, whoever is appointed will face an exceptionally high caseload in the areas of family law and dependent neglect proceedings. Mr. Kneeland and Ms. Grygiel have been standing masters in the Thirteenth Judicial District for several years and have been successful in those positions. They've been managing a work load similar to that of a district court judge and have shown that they have the ability to effectively manage the workload and issue timely and accurate rulings.

The family law case load is heavy in more than just caseload statistics. It is emotionally charged and tends to bring out the worst in people. The litigants are often pro se and are not at all sophisticated litigants. As a standing master, Mr. Kneeland has a significant amount of experience dealing with pro se litigants. No only is he experienced, his ability to calmly, yet firmly, control his courtroom in the midst of emotionally charged situations is beyond reproach. His courtroom demeanor commands respect. While I've not practiced in front of Laurie Grygiel, I've heard the same can be said of her.

Mr. Kneeland and Ms. Grygiel also have a significant amount of experience in the area of civil law. They oversee mediations referred to them by the district judges and preside over pro se

3031 GRAND AVE. #151

BILLINGS, MT 59102

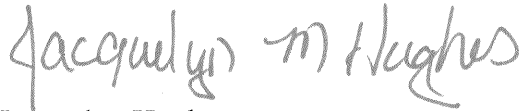
PHONE 406.855.4979

EMAIL JHUGHES@HUGHESLAWMT.COM

civil trials where the litigants have not requested a jury trial. Finally, they both have experience in dependent neglect cases as they preside over emergency protective services hearings. Mr. Kneeland represented parents in dependent neglect proceedings prior to becoming a standing master, making him familiar with the rights of parents in dependent neglect proceedings.

Both Mr. Kneeland and Ms. Grygiel are already successfully doing exactly the kind of work that will be expected of them if they are appointed to fill the judicial vacancies. They will be true assets to the Thirteenth Judicial District and I am hopeful you will consider appointing them to fill the two new vacancies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jacquelyn M. Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Jacquelyn" is written in a larger, more prominent script, followed by "M." and then "Hughes".

Jacquelyn Hughes

Netzer, Krautter & Brown^{P.C.}

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

DONALD L. NETZER**
don@nkbattorneys.com
RYAN ALEXANDER PAYNE*
ryan@nkbattorneys.com
1060 South Central Ave., Ste 2
Sidney MT 59270
T: (406) 433-5511
F: (406) 433-5513

JOEL G. KRAUTTER**
joel@nkbattorneys.com
CHASE E. BROWN**
chase@nkbattorneys.com
JAMES REAVIS*
james@nkbattorneys.com
301 N 27th St #100
Billings MT 59101
T: (406) 534-7800

***licensed in North Dakota & Montana*

Offices in Sidney & Billings

*licensed in Montana**

September 23, 2025

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

Dear Office of the Governor:

It is my honor to recommend Laurie Grygiel for appointment as a District Court Judge for the Montana Thirteenth Judicial District, Yellowstone County. Laurie brings with her a long and distinguished career in the practice of law, marked by dedication, integrity, and service to both state and tribal communities.

Over the course of nearly four decades in the profession, Laurie has built a reputation as a thoughtful, fair, and principled attorney and Standing Master. Her broad experience includes more than a decade of active practice in Crow and Northern Cheyenne Tribal Courts (2007–2018), where she demonstrated not only her command of the law but also her deep respect for the sovereignty and traditions of tribal communities.

For the past five and a half years, Laurie has served as a Standing Master in Yellowstone and Carbon Counties, where she has presided over complex matters requiring careful legal analysis and balanced judgment. In this role, she has shown a remarkable ability to handle challenging cases with impartiality, diligence, and respect for all parties. Her written decisions are clear, and well-reasoned.

Beyond her professional background, I can personally attest to Laurie's qualities as both an attorney and judicial officer. Having known her since childhood, I have also had the privilege of working directly with her in the legal system. I have either practiced in front of her and/or mediated cases with her in over a dozen matters. In every instance, Laurie demonstrated passion

1

Sincerely,



Chase E. Brown
Netzer, Krautter & Brown, P.C.

STEVEN L. THUESEN

*P.O. Box 1368
Red Lodge, Montana 59068
(406) 425-2429*

VIA EMAIL at manderson@a-llaw.com

September 29, 2025

The Honorable Greg Gianforte
Governor of Montana
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Laurie Grygiel, Applicant for Montana Thirteenth Judicial District Court.

Governor Gianforte,

It is my pleasure to write on behalf of Laurie Grygiel who has applied for one of the two newly created district judge positions in the 13th Judicial District. I am a practicing attorney, and I can attest to Ms. Grygiel's qualifications, fitness, and ability to fulfill the duties of that position. Her hard work, legal knowledge, and skill as a Standing Master will be of genuine benefit to the people of the Thirteenth District.

Ms. Grygiel currently serves as a Standing Master for both the 13th and 22nd Judicial Districts. My understanding is that she was chosen for this position by former Judge Mike Moses and Judge Matthew Wald, who recognized her exceptional qualifications. It is a daunting role; her work as Standing Master in two districts requires her and her one-person staff (shared with the other Standing Master) to effectively and efficiently manage the heavy workload of both districts. Judge Wald, as the sole judge for the very busy and geographically large, Twenty-Second District, has come to rely extensively on her service and expertise.

I admit I do not particularly like the thought of losing her talents as Standing Master in our district. However, I appreciate her legal knowledge and skill, intelligence, understanding, strength, and humble approach she brings to her work. These are qualities I believe are essential for an effective district judge. Ms. Grygiel has demonstrated, time and again, her capacity for careful, thoughtful decision-making, and her integrity has earned the trust of those who appear before her.

For all of these reasons, I can unequivocally recommend Laurie Grygiel for appointment as a district judge in the 13th Judicial District. I have every confidence she will serve with distinction.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Thuesen, P.C.

Steven L. Thuesen, Attorney at Law