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May 9, 2017

Donald F. McGahn II
White House Counsel
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McGahn:

I write this letter in support of David Porter's nomination to the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

I am Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer and Secretary for Highmark Health. Previously, I served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC from 2003 until 2009. Prior to 2003, I was Chief Operating Officer of Buchanan Ingersoll for more than eighteen years.

I serve on the executive committees of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Pennsylvania State Economy League. I also serve on the boards of trustees for the University of Pittsburgh, the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, the Carnegie Museums, the board of the United Way of Allegheny County, and Chair the Board of Visitors for the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. My wife and I co-chaired the capital fundraising campaign for the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, where I am also a council member, and for the Pittsburgh African American Cultural Center.


Because I appreciate that the judicial nomination and confirmation process have political overtones, I think it is relevant to mention that I am an active Democrat and regularly support Democratic candidates at the federal and state levels.

I have known Mr. Porter since he joined Buchanan Ingersoll in 1994 following his judicial clerkship with the Honorable D. Brooks Smith, now Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Over the fifteen years that we were colleagues, I worked with David, evaluated his development as a lawyer and partner, and entrusted important Firm clients to his care. In addition I retained Mr. Porter for, and observed his astute handling of, an important litigation for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. I also observed his demeanor and believe that I have a good understanding of his character.

In my experience, Mr. Porter is unfailingly fair, courteous, reasonable, and possessed of excellent judgment. I am absolutely confident that, if confirmed, he will decide every case based upon the applicable law and not upon politics or personal ideology. I applaud the president's consideration of Mr. Porter as a judicial nominee for the Third Circuit.

I would be pleased to speak with you or Senators Casey or Toomey, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas L. VanKirk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'V'.

Thomas L. VanKirk
Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer

cc: The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Toomey
United States Senate
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510