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Nebraska Judicial Resources Commission
via E-Mail Only to: ashley.jenkins@nejudicial.gov

Re: 5th Judicial District, County Court

Dear Justice Freudenberg and Members of the Judicial Resources Commission:

My name is Catrina K. Harris and I am a practicing attorney in my tenth year of practice at Lutton Law Office, LLC in Ashland, NE and in Saunders County, Nebraska.

I am writing in my personal capacity to express my support for declaring a vacancy in the 5th Judicial District, County Court, following the retirement of Judge C. Jo Petersen. While I am submitting this letter as an individual, I respectfully refer the Commission to the more detailed information contained in my separate correspondence submitted on behalf of the Saunders County Bar Association.

The 5th Judicial District covers eleven counties, including Butler County and Seward County, where Judge Petersen primarily served. Without filling this seat, there will likely be increased delays and reduced access to the courts across the District. The caseload remains substantial, and maintaining a fifth judge based in Seward County is essential to ensure timely case processing and preserve access to justice for residents throughout the District.

As noted in the 2025 Weighted Caseload Report, the District's calculated need is 4.57 judges, but reducing from five to four would place an unsustainable workload on the remaining judges. Judge Petersen's caseload alone totaled 56,578 weighted workload minutes, with Seward County alone (38,287) ranking in the upper half of counties within the District for workload. Leaving this vacancy unfilled would strain judicial capacity and risk longer wait times for hearings and decisions.

Further, as an attorney practicing primarily in Saunders County within the District, I recognize the importance of maintaining consistent and accessible judicial coverage for my growing County. Judge Lange already carries a full docket serving Colfax County and Saunders County, two of the top five counties in terms of District workload. Preserving access to this judicial resource in Saunders County is essential to ensure that the needs of Saunders County—and the District as a whole—continue to be met efficiently, fairly and without undue delay.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to declare a vacancy in the 5th Judicial District, County Court, and maintain the seat in Seward County.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,



Catrina K. Harris

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