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Iowa Federal Judicial Nominee, Leonard Strand, Clears Senate

Feb 11, 2016

WASHINGTON – Senator Chuck Grassley said today that the nomination of Judge Leonard Strand of Sioux City to be a U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa was approved by the Senate today by a vote of 93-0.

“Judge Strand’s integrity, legal acumen and appreciation for the Constitution will make him an exception judge in the Northern District. I have great respect for what he’s done over his career, both in private practice and as a magistrate judge. I appreciate my colleagues’ votes in favor of his nomination,” Grassley said.

Grassley recommended Strand, along with Judge Rebecca Ebinger who was confirmed by the Senate earlier this week, to the White House after an extensive effort by a Judicial Selection Commission that Grassley formed after two judges announced their intention to take senior status. The commission was comprised of highly qualified members of the Iowa legal community, and led by Cynthia Moser, a former Iowa State Bar Association president. The commission also included Richard Sapp, Jeffrey Goodman, Harlan D. Hockenberg, and Adam Freed.

These lawyers spent hundreds of hours carefully reviewing applications and interviewing each of the 39 Iowans who submitted applications and sought consideration. Eleven applicants were then selected to participate in a lengthy second interview. The commission’s review included not only these interviews, but also a thorough study and examination of the applicants’ professional history, credentials, and qualifications. The commission then made recommendations to Grassley, who – in consultation with Senator Joni Ernst – reviewed the candidates and their qualifications before submitting his recommendations to the White House.

Strand currently serves as a U.S. magistrate judge in Sioux City for the Northern District of Iowa. He graduated first in his class from the College of Law at the University of Iowa and brings extensive experience in civil litigation from private practice in Cedar Rapids.

Today’s vote was held after an agreement in December between both the Republican and Democratic leaders that Ebinger and Strand would be two of five judicial nominees to be voted on before President’s Day. As Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Grassley helped lead the effort to reach the agreement.

Floor Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Nomination of Judge Leonard Strand of Sioux City
Thursday, February 11, 2016

Today, the Senate will vote on the nomination of Len Strand from Iowa. I’m very pleased to be here to support him, just as I was to support Judge Ebinger from Iowa, who was unanimously confirmed on Monday.

I said this on the Floor earlier this week, but for the benefit of my colleagues who didn't get to hear, in my opinion the Iowa nominees are the two best judicial candidates this President has nominated.

Earlier this week, I discussed the extensive selection these nominees underwent, so I won't go into those details again. But I will say I'm very pleased the process produced such a fine nominee in Judge Strand.

Let me tell you a bit more about him.

Judge Strand has deep Iowa roots. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa in 1987 and his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1990.

Upon graduation, he joined one of the most prestigious law firms in Iowa as an associate where he specialized in employment law and commercial litigation. During his time at the law firm, he received several awards, including "Super Lawyer" for Iowa and the Great Plains Region for 6 years straight.

During his time at the firm, he was very involved in his community. He's been a member of a wide range of organizations important to Iowa, from the Symphony Orchestra to the Medical Center to the YMCA.

In 2012, Judge Strand was appointed as a Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa. In this capacity, he has handled hundreds of cases, which has prepared him well to handle cases as a District Court Judge.

The ABA considers him "Unanimously Well Qualified" for this position and I urge all my colleagues to support his nomination today.

I yield the floor.