

DURBIN RECONVENES BIPARTISAN SCREENING COMMITTEE; CALLS FOR APPLICATIONS TO FILL FEDERAL JUDGESHIP IN CENTRAL DISTRICT

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin today announced that he will ask a bipartisan screening committee to meet again to assist in selecting a Federal District Court Judge for the Central District of Illinois. At the end of February, Judge Joe Billy McDade took senior status, creating a third vacancy in the Central District. The other two vacancies were created by the announced retirements of Judge Michael Mihm and Judge Jeanne Scott, and Senator Durbin has previously submitted names to the President to fill those vacancies. The Central District screening committee, which Senator Durbin formed last year, is comprised of eight distinguished Illinoisans drawn from various aspects of the legal profession. A complete list and short bios of all committee members is included below.

“Making recommendations to the White House on U.S. Attorneys, federal marshals and judicial nominees is one of the most important jobs I have as a U.S. Senator,” said Durbin. “I am particularly pleased that, once again, these outstanding Illinoisans have agreed to advise me in selecting the best possible judicial candidates to recommend to President Obama.”

Durbin, who was first elected to the Senate in 1996, is the senior senator from Illinois. The senior senator from the President’s political party has traditionally had the lead role in making recommendations to the President for the positions of Federal District Court Judge, U.S. Attorney, and U.S. Marshal in the senator’s home state.

An application for the new judicial vacancy is available on Senator Durbin’s website (<http://durbin.senate.gov/issues/crime.cfm>). The application is nearly identical to the one used by the Senate Judiciary Committee and will help provide insight into potential nominees’ backgrounds and qualifications.

The deadline for submission of completed applications is May 17, 2010.

The screening committee will review the applications, interview applicants and references, and make multiple recommendations to Senator Durbin as quickly as possible.

Durbin will review the screening committees’ recommendations, conduct interviews of finalists, and – in consultation with the junior senator from Illinois and the Republican delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives – submit his recommendations to the President, who will make the final decision on a nomination.

Once the President submits a nomination to the U.S. Senate, the nominee will be reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which Senator Durbin is a member, and will ultimately receive a vote in the committee. If a nomination is approved by the Judiciary Committee, the nominee will receive a vote by the full Senate. The average length of time between date of nomination and date of confirmation for Federal District Court Judge nominees is approximately six months.

Senator Durbin’s Central District screening panel includes the following members:

Central District Committee Members

James Potter (chair). Mr. Potter is a partner at the law firm of Londrigan, Potter & Randle and is past president of the Springfield chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is on the board of trustees of Knox College and the Springfield YMCA, and he serves on the board of directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Illinois Capital Region, Prairie State Bank & Trust, and Farmers State Bank & Trust of Fulton County.

Clarence Darrow. Mr. Darrow has his own law practice in Rock Island. He previously served as a Circuit Court Judge for the State of Illinois in the 14th Judicial Circuit and was chief judge of the domestic relations division. Prior to his judicial service, he was elected to the Illinois State Senate and Illinois House of Representatives.

Robert Eggers. Mr. Eggers served as a Circuit Court Judge and Associate Judge for the State of Illinois in the 7th Judicial Circuit for over 17 years. He previously served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Central District of Illinois, a prosecutor in the Sangamon County State's Attorney's office, and president of the Sangamon County Bar Association.

Donald Jackson. Mr. Jackson has his own law practice in Peoria. He previously worked as an attorney for the National Labor Relations Board and the Peoria County Public Defender, and he has been an instructor at Bradley University. Mr. Jackson serves as president of the Peoria branch of the NAACP and president of the NAACP Illinois State Conference.

Stacey Lynch. Ms. Lynch is an attorney at the Dorris Law Firm in Bloomington, where she specializes in personal injury and medical malpractice. She is active in numerous bar associations and is a First Lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

J. Victor Malkovich. Mr. Malkovich is a small business owner and attorney in the Champaign-Urbana area. He has worked in the financial services and employee benefits field for over 30 years. He has been an advocate for developmentally disabled individuals and has served on the boards of Prairie Homes, Inc., C-U Independence, and Developmental Services Center.

Lucinda Awerkamp McClain. Ms. McClain is a partner at the Quincy law firm of Awerkamp & McClain, where she has worked for over 30 years. She has served as director of the Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation and director of the Large District Council of the Illinois Association of School Boards. She has served as board president or member of many community organizations including Quincy University, the Community Foundation of the Quincy Area, Quincy Public Library, and the Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce.

Ruth Waller. Ms. Waller serves as an Assistant State's Attorney in Macon County. Previously she worked for over two decades as a litigator at the law firm of Johnson, Waller & Chiligris in Decatur. She has been the vice president of the Springfield Coalition of Black Attorneys and president of her local YWCA, and has served on the boards of numerous institutions and organizations including Southern Illinois University law school, Millikin University, the Decatur Mental Health Center, Comprehensive Youth Services, and Planned Parenthood.