UNITED STATES SENATE

For Immediate Release
February 5, 2024
Contact: Emily Hampsten (Durbin), 202-228-5643
Ben Garmisa (Duckworth), 202-224-2038

DURBIN, DUCKWORTH ANNOUNCE SCREENING COMMITTEE, APPLICATION PROCESS FOR FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT IN THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today announced that they will begin accepting applications from those interested in serving as a Federal District Court Judge in the Central District of Illinois. The Senators will be assisted by a screening committee whose task is to review and vet District Court candidates and advise the Senators regarding the candidates' qualifications and fitness for the position.

"Our constitutional responsibility to advise and consent is one of the most important duties we have in the Senate. As we make recommendations for lifetime judicial appointments, we will benefit from the guidance and insights of our distinguished screening committee," the Senators said. **"We thank the members of the screening committee for their willingness to serve and look forward to recommending qualified and experienced individuals to the White House."**

The Senators' screening committee in the Central District of Illinois will be chaired by the Honorable Ronald Spears (ret.). The other members of the Central District Committee are the Honorable Glenn Collier (ret.), Donald Jackson, Nicola Sharpe, and Emily Sullivan.

Biographies of each member of the screening committee can be found below.

Application Process:

Applicants for the federal district court must submit a cover letter, resume, and a completed copy of this questionnaire to applications@durbin.senate.gov **by 5:00 p.m. CT on Monday, March 4, 2024.** Applicants are requested to incorporate their cover letter, resume, completed questionnaire, and any attachments to the questionnaire into a single PDF document if possible.

The application questionnaire is nearly identical to the one used by the Senate Judiciary Committee and will help provide insight into candidates' backgrounds and qualifications. The screening committee will review candidates and advise the Senators, who will make recommendations on

potential nominees to the President. Once the President submits a nomination to the U.S. Senate, the nominee will be reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee, which Senator Durbin chairs, and will receive a vote in the Committee. If a nomination is approved by the Judiciary Committee, the nomination will be sent to the full Senate for consideration.

Screening Committee for the Central District of Illinois:

The Hon. Ronald Spears (ret.) (committee chair): Judge Spears served as a judge in the Fourth Judicial Circuit in Taylorville from 1993 to 2015. Prior to that, he worked in private practice in Taylorville and served for several years as the city attorney. Previously, he clerked for the Hon. J. Waldo Ackerman in the Central District of Illinois. Currently, Spears is a mediator and arbitrator. He served in the Illinois Army National Guard from 1972 to 2006, retiring at the rank of colonel. He was also in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He has a B.A. from the University of Illinois and a J.D. from Southern Illinois University School of Law.

The Hon. Glenn Collier (ret.): Judge Collier was appointed to the 10th Judicial Circuit of Illinois in 1995, and he retired as a Circuit Judge in 2011. Prior to his judicial tenure, he was Corporation Counsel for the City of Peoria and was a partner in the law firm of Jackson, Mitchell, and Collier. He was also a part-time business law professor at Illinois Central College for 24 years. Collier received his undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois and his law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law. In 2005, he received the University of Illinois College of Law Distinguished Alumni Award. Collier has sat on the board of directors for numerous not-for-profit organizations, including CASA and as chairman for Peoria Community Against Violence. He currently serves as a volunteer to the Peoria School District as a lecturer, instructor, and judge for student mock trials.

Donald Jackson: Jackson is a solo practitioner specializing in civil rights and workplace and disability discrimination.   He is a former president of the NAACP Peoria chapter and the NAACP Illinois State Conference. Jackson was previously an attorney for the National Labor Relations Board and the Peoria County Public Defender's Office. He received his J.D. from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Nicola Sharpe: Professor Sharpe is a Professor at the University of Illinois College of Law, where her research and teaching focuses on corporate governance, ethics, antitrust, compliance and professional responsibility. She also serves as the Director of the Chicago Business Law Program and an Associate Academic Director of the Center for Professional Responsibility in Business and Society at the University of Illinois Gies College of Business. Prior to joining the College of Law in 2008, Sharpe served as a visiting assistant professor at Northwestern University School of Law and practiced at Shearman & Sterling LLP. She received a B.A. from Cornell University, an M.B.A. from Yale School of Management, and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

Emily Sullivan: Sullivan was born and raised in Schuyler County and currently resides there with her family. Most recently she served as Schuyler County State's Attorney, holding the office from 2020 through 2022. Prior to that, she worked at the Illinois Farm Bureau as the Associate Director of State Legislation and as an Associate with Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck. Sullivan has also held various positions in state and federal government, including working as Assistant Counsel to

the Speaker in the Illinois House of Representatives and as a legislative staffer to Senator Durbin and former Congressman William Enyart. Sullivan is a graduate of Illinois State University and Southern Illinois University School of Law.