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Via email Jason_Thielman@daines.senate.gov and U.S. Postal Service

U.S. Senator Steve Daines
30 West 14th St., Ste. 206
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Kurt Alme for U.S. Attorney Appointment for District of Montana

The Honorable Steve Daines:

I am writing to provide my wholehearted support for Kurt Alme's appointment as U.S. Attorney for the District of Montana.

I have known Kurt since the earliest days of my legal career. We both began practice at the same law firm in Billings, Montana: Crowley, Haughey, Hanson, Toole & Dietrich, PLLP (today known as Crowley Fleck, PLLP). Kurt began in the transactional side of the firm, while I worked in the litigation department. Kurt quickly grew to have an outstanding reputation in his work with businesses, charities and estates. What was truly unique about Kurt, however, was that he also demonstrated great talent in other areas. He became known as someone who could transition seamlessly across a broad variety of complex and demanding matters. One day he would be doing estate planning with an old rancher trying to pass on the family ranch; the next he would be litigating a complex business dispute. Somehow, in the middle of all of this, he found time to do *pro bono* work, raise a wonderful family, and give back to his community.

The talent and capacity for work that Kurt showed in those earliest years presaged in many ways the direction of his future. My wife and I moved back to our hometown of Missoula, where I established my own practice and now law firm. Though we never lived in the same home town as the Almes again, we remained in touch with Kurt and his wife, Sandra. Having children of nearly the same age, and being of the same vintage in the practice of law, it was always a pleasure to follow their lives and to compare experiences and nuggets of (arguable) wisdom about everything from work to family.

What has truly impressed me about Kurt during the last 20+ years is the constancy of his commitment to service and his ability to follow through on it. In 2001, he became the Director of the Montana Department of Revenue, serving our state in ways not always obvious. Kurt bore the burden of making difficult budget choices. He also worked to negotiate agreements on behalf of the State that would ultimately have large revenue impacts. He also demonstrated his management skills, as he oversaw hundreds of state employees. These were extraordinary accomplishments for someone a mere 10 years out of law school, but somehow not surprising for Kurt.

After concluding his service to the State of Montana, Kurt moved to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Montana, where he became an assistant U.S. Attorney. It is here that I believe Kurt found his genuine calling. His role allowed him to blend his leadership skills with the technical requirements of being a prosecuting attorney and taking cases to trial. He became a well-known and well-respected member of that office. No doubt, those experiences laid the foundation for his desire to become U.S. Attorney now.


Kurt's next move, of course, was his move to the Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation, where he presently serves as President and General Counsel. While at first blush this role might seem incongruous with Kurt's prior career, I believe it is the role that most demonstrates his character and values. The Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch focuses on mental health care for troubled children and their families. The foundation for which Kurt works exists to support at risk youth and adults with special needs. It has been evident to me since the earliest days of my friendship with Kurt that he is someone who truly follows his life path to the place where he can do the most good and serve others in the most meaningful way possible. His work for the foundation is really a capstone on all of the elements of his career that came before it--and proof positive that Kurt is someone motivated first and foremost by service to others rather than mere personal gain.

I firmly believe that Kurt would make an outstanding U.S. Attorney for the District of Montana. He has demonstrated all of the qualities important to this role: Legal acumen, managerial skills, leadership, commitment to service, and the capacity to make tough decisions. Kurt is uniquely qualified for the position as someone who has experience in all realms of the practice of law, as well as leadership roles at the highest levels in state and federal government.

I am proud to support Kurt's appointment to become the next United States Attorney for the District of Montana.

Very sincerely,

REEP, BELL, LAIRD & JASPER, P.C.



Robert T. Bell
RTB/tw