

**Introduction of Mary McElroy  
December 9, 2015**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am proud to join my senior Senator, Jack Reed, in introducing Mary McElroy to the Committee. I would also like to recognize Mary's husband Bob, her children Evan and Chloe, her siblings Kathy, Steven and Liz and her parents Edwin and Edwina. I know they are all very proud of you.

Recommending a judicial candidate to the President is among a Senator's most important responsibilities. The decisions that a Federal judge makes every day profoundly affect the lives of Americans across all walks of life.

The position requires not only intellect, but also an ability to set aside personal beliefs and decide cases based on the law and the facts. It requires a deep understanding of legal precedent and respect for the other branches, as well as restraint and discretion. Ultimately, it requires patience and an understanding that every person, no matter their background, deserves their day in court.

Simply put, a federal judgeship is a serious job and one that demands only the finest lawyers. That is why I was proud to join Senator Reed in recommending Mary McElroy to President Obama as the best candidate for a seat on the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island. After our extensive vetting process, it was clear that Mary possesses the qualities and demeanor that will make her a great asset to our state's Federal bench.

Mary is a shining example of the best Rhode Island has to offer. Born in Warwick, Rhode Island, Mary attended Providence College before going north to receive her J.D. with honors from Suffolk University in Boston. While in law school, she worked as a paralegal in the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office. Her devoted service to her home state more than makes up for her brief sojourn across the border to Massachusetts!

Mary's legal career spans over two decades, all of it in her native Rhode Island. Mary began her career as a law clerk to the Honorable Donald Shea on the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Following her clerkship, she spent a year in private practice before joining the Rhode Island Public Defender's Office. In twelve years as a Rhode Island public defender, Mary tirelessly represented the poorest and most vulnerable citizens in our state in criminal proceedings. Despite often representing unpopular clients in tough cases, Mary never wavered in her commitment to ensure that every client received his or her Constitutional right to counsel. In 2006, Mary joined the Rhode Island Federal Public Defender's Office, where she continued to work on behalf of indigent Rhode Islanders.

In 2012, after nearly twenty years of service as a state and federal public defender, Mary was selected to lead the Rhode Island Public Defender's Office—the first woman in Rhode Island history to hold the post. In addition to representing clients, Mary has worked closely with social workers, mental health professionals, and counselors to spearhead efforts to secure better access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, job training, and other vital social services for our most vulnerable citizens.

Throughout her career, Mary has distinguished herself as a determined and honest broker—a true advocate for justice. It is not surprising that her nomination is supported by her colleagues across Rhode Island’s legal community.

Former Rhode Island Attorney General James O’Neil writes of Mary, “Her integrity is without question, her experience is great, obviously, she knows the Courtroom well.” He goes on to describe Mary as “an attorney who is dedicated to affording justice to all without fear nor favor.”

In recommending Mary’s nomination, Colonel Steven O’Donnell of the Rhode Island State Police writes, “Ms. McElroy is an outstanding advocate for her clients. She is dedicated, has sound judgment, is flexible, innovative and forward thinking. . . . She was an outstanding Public Defender, and she would bring both her experience and sense of fairness and empathy to the federal Bench.”

Captain Jason Allaire of the Rhode Island Division of Sheriffs explains, “Mary is a hardworking, fair and experienced trial attorney. She worked her way from the entry level, to the head of her Agency and is a true professional. She has always exhibited the utmost integrity in her position and personal life.”

Barry Weiner, the Assistant Director of Rehabilitative Services in Rhode Island’s Department of Corrections simply writes, “I know of nobody more suitable to be our next United States District Court Judge.”

[I ask unanimous consent that the letters of support from James O’Neil, Steven O’Donnell, Jason Allaire, and Barry Weiner be placed in the Record.]

Rhode Islanders have been fortunate to have such a committed and skilled public servant. Her career has been a testament to her desire to serve her community and her commitment to justice. She is an extraordinary attorney, and I am confident Mary will make a fair, honorable, and respected judge and a terrific addition to Rhode Island’s judiciary.

I would like thank the Committee for holding this hearing. I thank Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy for their work on Mary’s nomination. I look forward to Mary’s confirmation. Rhode Island will benefit from her service on our district court.