February 23, 2016

The Honorable Ron Johnson
328 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

We the undersigned are law professors at both Marquette University Law School and the University of Wisconsin Law School. We write today to urge you to return your blue slip for Seventh Circuit nominee Donald K. Schott and seek prompt consideration of his nomination by the Senate Judiciary Committee and full Senate.

President Obama nominated Mr. Schott on January 12 after the bipartisan Wisconsin Federal Nominating Commission, with commissioners appointed by both you and Senator Tammy Baldwin, found that he is qualified to fill this important and longstanding judicial vacancy. This vacancy is now the oldest on any court of appeals in the country, and we believe that further delay poses a serious risk to both the federal justice system in Wisconsin and the integrity of the judicial selection process.

Mr. Schott is a partner at Quarles & Brady LLP with decades of litigation experience. He is nominated to a seat that's been empty since Judge Terence Evans took senior status six years ago. In 2013, you and Senator Baldwin established a bipartisan judicial selection commission, and you each appointed three commissioners. Under its charter, the six-member commission was charged with interviewing judicial candidates, and recommending candidates approved by at least five of the six commissioners. The commission began work on the Seventh Circuit vacancy in July 2014 and the process concluded with Mr. Schott and one other candidate receiving the requisite five commission votes.

As the commission's approval indicates, Mr. Schott's qualifications are unquestioned. He has over 30 years of litigation experience representing a variety of clients—plaintiffs and defendants, individuals and large corporations—in a variety of cases, including commercial disputes, medical malpractice, and prisoner litigation. He also has relevant appellate experience, having argued before the Seventh Circuit, the Ninth Circuit, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In addition to his practice, he has served in leadership positions at Quarles & Brady as the Managing Partner of the Madison Office, the longest-tenured member of the Executive Committee, and the Chair of the Firm's Legal Personnel Committee. It is because of this extensive experience and demonstrated leadership that he received the rating of "unanimously well qualified," the American Bar Association's highest rating for judicial nominees.

With a well-qualified nominee who has the bipartisan support of your selection commission, there is no justification for further delay in filling this important seat. The people of Wisconsin deserve full representation on the Seventh Circuit, and all those within the Seventh Circuit's jurisdiction, including Illinois and Indiana, deserve access to a fully-staffed court. We hope that you will return your blue slip and also that you will urge your Senate colleagues to ensure that this qualified nominee is confirmed.

Sincerely
The Undersigned

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Cc: Senator Baldwin

Please note: Organizational affiliation for all signatories is included for identification purposes only; individuals represent only themselves, not the institutions where they are teaching or other organizations in which they are active.