

I want to welcome Judge Suko and his wife Marcia, who is with him today, to this hearing.

Mr. Chairman, I am honored to recommend that the Senate confirm Lonny Suko as a District Court judge for the Eastern District of Washington State. Judge Suko has strong bipartisan support, and with good reason. He has handled some of the most difficult cases in Eastern Washington in the past decade, and he has won the respect of everyone who has come before him. That is one of the reasons why Judge Suko enjoys such strong support from a diverse group of attorneys and community leaders in Washington State.

Both Senator Cantwell and I assisted the President in choosing him from a list of very qualified candidates. Lonny Suko has spent his life living and serving Eastern Washington. He is a graduate of my alma mater, Washington State University, and of the University of Idaho School of Law. He has had a distinguished career as a lawyer and a U.S. magistrate judge.

In private practice, Lonny Suko had a successful practice defending both plaintiffs and defendants in a variety of tort, contract, creditor/debtor and public sector cases. He has also distinguished himself as a U.S. magistrate judge, serving part time from 1971 to 1991 and full time since 1991.

As I mentioned, Judge Suko handled some of the most challenging cases in recent history in Eastern Washington. He heard the injury and death claims of more than 2 dozen plaintiffs who were victimized by a gunman at Fairchild Air Force Base in the early 1990's. He was involved in several other high-profile settlements. In all of those cases, Judge Suko won high praise for his judicial demeanor, his fairness and his respect for all parties.

Judge Suko clearly meets the standards of fairness, even-handedness, and adherence to the law that we expect of our Federal Judges. Outside of his many professional credentials, I have met with him and I have been impressed by both his professionalism and his decency.

Therefore, it is my pleasure to introduce a great lawyer and judge who I believe will make an exceptional Federal Judge. I urge this Committee to approve his nomination, and I hope we can confirm Judge Suko before the full Senate quickly. He served the people of our State well, and I am proud to support his confirmation.

Thank you very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Senator Murray, thank you very much.

Senator Hutchison from Texas.

PRESENTATION OF EARL LEROY YEAKEL III, NOMINEE TO BE DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS; AND KAREN P. TANDY, NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BY HON. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Senator HUTCHISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am here today to ask for confirmation of two outstanding Texans.

The first is Lee Yeakel, who has been nominated to serve as a U.S. District Judge of the Western District. If confirmed he would fill a vacancy in Austin. He has served as a Justice on Texas Third Court of Appeals in Austin since 1998. Prior to his judicial service, Judge Yeakel spent 29 years in private practice in Austin, most recently as a partner with the firm of Clark, Thomas and Winters from 1990 to 1998, where he concentrated on State and Federal commercial litigation and appellate work.

He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1966 and his law degree from the University of Texas in 1969. He has earned a master of law degree from the University of Virginia in 2001. Judge Yeakel has also been very involved in civic activities. His involvement has included services on the boards of the Austin Rotary Club, the West Austin Youth Association, the Austin Choral Union, and the Committee for Wild Basin Wilderness.

He meets the high standard to which we hold all Federal Judges and I hope that you will vote expeditiously to recommend him to the Senate.

He is accompanied today—and I would like to ask them to stand—by his wife, Anne Yeakel, with whom I have worked at the University of Texas Law School; Evan Yeakel, his son; Clare Yeakel, his daughter; and his granddaughter, Sarah Blanton, if she woke up.

And I have a second recommendation, Karen Tandy, from whom you will be hearing shortly, who has been nominated to be Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Agency. If confirmed she will be the first female administrator of the DEA. She is also the first member of her family to graduate from college, and the first lawyer in her family.

Ms. Tandy is currently the Associate Deputy Attorney General and Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force at the Department of Justice. She is from Fort Worth and holds her undergraduate and law degrees from Texas Tech University. While there, she was the first female president of the student bar association.

Ms. Tandy clerked for Hon. Hal Woodward, the Chief Justice of the Northern District of Texas, after she graduated from law school. And she too has received numerous awards and special commendations during her career, including the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service, and the U.S. Attorney Director's Award for Superior Service.

Karen Tandy's experience and service make her an excellent choice to be Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Agency of the Department of Justice, and I hope that you will confirm here.

She is accompanied today by her husband, Steve Pomerantz, and her two teenage daughters, Lauren and Kimberly.

Senator GRAHAM. Welcome.

Senator HUTCHISON. I am very pleased to recommend these two outstanding Texans to you, and I hope that you will recommend them to the Senate. Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much for your statement.

Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield to Senator Fitzgerald, as the nomination was made by him, but I certainly support it. I would like him to make the opening statement.

Senator GRAHAM. Absolutely. Senator Fitzgerald.

PRESENTATION OF SAMUEL DER-YEGHIAYAN, NOMINEE TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS, BY HON. PETER FITZGERALD, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Senator FITZGERALD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Durbin.

I am pleased to introduce to the Committee Hon. Judge Sam Der-Yeghiayan, and to strongly support his nomination to the bench for the Northern District of Illinois.

Since his admission to the Illinois Bar in 1978, Judge Der-Yeghiayan has distinguished himself among his peers. In his more than 20 years of experience in the Federal judicial system, Judge Der-Yeghiayan has personally litigated and adjudicated thousands of cases. At a time when vacancies in the court system have pressed the limits of the Federal Judiciary, it should be pointed out that since his appointment to the U.S. Immigration Court in Chicago, Judge Der-Yeghiayan carried one of the heaviest case loads in the entire immigration court system.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, Judge Der-Yeghiayan's area of expertise is in the field of immigration law. As an immigrant of Armenian descent who came to the United States at the age of 19, I am sure it is not accident that he is now one of the leading authorities in this complex field. I have also been advised that if and when Judge Der-Yeghiayan is formally confirmed by the Senate, he will be the first immigrant of Armenian descent ever nominated and confirmed for the Federal Judiciary.

Judge Der-Yeghiayan began his legal career as an honored law graduate under the Attorney General's Honors Program, and was appointed in 1978 as a trial attorney for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Chicago. Four years later Judge Der-Yeghiayan was promoted to the position of District Counsel for the INS Chicago District with jurisdiction over the States of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. From 1982 to 2000 he managed one of the largest INS legal proceedings programs in the Nation, and supervised a staff of over 20 Government attorneys, including Special Assistant United States Attorneys.

During his time with the INS Judge Der-Yeghiayan served as part of the Government team litigating cases in both the U.S. District Courts and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. He also served on various national legal committees, including the Committee on National Security and Antiterrorism.

In 1988 Judge Der-Yeghiayan was detailed to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, where he served as the U.S. Justice Department's sole representative on refugee and other matters.

Judge Der-Yeghiayan is the recipient of numerous awards and commendations from prestigious legal organizations, including the Justice Department, the Chicago Bar Association, and the Federal Bar Association. On March 6, 2003, Judge Der-Yeghiayan was honored by the American Immigration Law Foundation with the Immi-