

**TO: Connecticut Judiciary Committee**

**RE: CT Department of Corrections Ombudsman – Testimony in Support of Kenneth J. Krayske**

**HEARING DATE: Thursday, Jan 11, 2024**

I write today in wholehearted support for Kenneth J. Krayske as the CT Department of Corrections Ombudsman. A close friend of 35-plus years and a one-time colleague in the newspaper business, Ken is perhaps the most earnest and authentic person I know. Passionate, brave, intelligent, and a lifelong learner, Ken has spent much of his life pursuing a deeper understanding of our society and our government. His intellectual curiosity was evident as a young journalist writing engaging human interest stories. It grew as a photojournalist traveling to different countries in a humble search for knowledge about important parts of our world. Driven by a steadfast belief in equality, Ken became an activist for causes in which he believed. With his intelligence and resolve, he was formidable; he was (and is) never afraid to speak truth to power. As we know, Ken moved from protesting outside the system to the harder, more challenging work of seeking change from within. Putting himself through law school and entering the arena of politics, Ken has worked for justice on behalf of many citizens, including those who needed a hard-working, intelligent advocate for their Constitutional and human rights.. I am confident you all are aware of his outstanding work for clients in Department of Corrections custody.

Today, you are seeking a person who “will promote and advocate for the health, safety, welfare, and legal rights of individuals incarcerated within DOC facilities and/or on parole,” and someone who will “investigate and mediate complaints” by “examining”, “reviewing”, and “remaining informed”. Ken Krayske is wonderfully qualified for all those tasks. As a journalist, activist, lawyer, and conscientious citizen, Ken has always done the hard work to make sure he is evaluating all the sides and all the layers involved in an issue. In addition, he has a well-developed sense of justice, including a long-held willingness to “take all possible actions to advance the interests” of those who need their human rights protected. In the decades I have known him, I have never had occasion to doubt that Ken will fight for what he believes.

In my job as a teacher at Hamden High School, one major goal is for my students to appreciate the responsibilities and duties of citizenship. I want them to value their Constitutional rights so they can become active and responsible participants in the social contract of American Democracy. I want them to aspire to be like my friend, Ken. Kenneth J. Krayske is a self-made person who has never shied away from a challenge, whether in a press conference, at a rights march, on a Congressional debate stage, or in the courtroom. Honest and responsibly fearless, he is the person you want in this new and incredibly valuable role. Connecticut would never regret putting him in a position to communicate and advocate for his fellow citizens. I thank you for your time and consideration of my friend, and I fervently hope you do not pass up this rare opportunity to select the right human at the right time for the right job.

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