

JC 1

Submitting for
consideration and
confirmation to the
District Family Court of
the First Circuit,
Judicial Nominee,
REBECCA A. COPELAND,
for a term to expire in
6 years.

October 28, 2019

For: Hawai'i State Senate Judiciary Committee
Re: Rebecca Copeland

This letter is written on behalf of Ms. Rebecca Copeland who is an appointee for district judge of the Family Court of the First Circuit.

Ms. Copeland has practiced in both trial settings and on the appellate level, having served with the State Attorney General, the Damon Key Law firm, and as the Attorney in her own Law Office. She has written and lectured extensively in the areas of Family Law and Appeals. Since 2016 she has served as a per diem district court judge in the First Circuit Court.

I have read her written briefs and observed her oral advocacy first hand in appeals to the Hawai'i supreme court. Her written work was well-researched, clear and on point, and her oral advocacy was accurate, respectful, and helpful to the court. Since appeals are reviews of trial proceedings, knowledge of appeals is instrumental in being a good trial judge. In an appeal the trial proceedings are examined for legal error. The examination consists of studying the transcript of the proceedings including the rulings of the trial judge. Thus, attorneys involved in appeals are familiar with the manner in which cases should be tried before the trial court, an asset for one who aspires to the trial court, such as Ms. Copeland. In the appeals I recall, Ms. Copeland did an excellent job and prevailed.

She has been involved in many professional and related activities and among other awards was named the Hawai'i Women Lawyers Outstanding Woman Lawyer in 2019. I have witnessed her community work in establishing the appellate pro bono program. The program was initiated through her efforts on behalf of the appellate section of the Hawai'i State Bar, in conjunction with the Access to Justice Commission and the Judiciary.

Having worked with her on that project, I know Ms. Copeland was instrumental in bringing about the program through her dedication and perseverance in a complex process that required the collaboration of several entities. As a result of that effort, the appellate pro bono program was instituted and now provides indigent persons with the opportunity to benefit from donated legal services on appeal and also provides attorneys the opportunity to perform a public service. What is impressive

is that she showed an ability to collaborate with others, to work through obstacles, and to maintain an even temperament.

I believe Ms. Copeland possesses the character necessary for judicial office. She is diligent, hard-working, inclusive and tolerant, and sensitive to community needs. I believe she is fair and will treat parties equally. She possesses a pleasant demeanor that comports with a judicial temperament. She has extensive knowledge of family law and appeals. She is well-qualified for a judicial position and will do an excellent job in serving the community, the judiciary, and the State.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Yours truly,

/s/ Simeon R. Acoba, Jr.

**TESTIMONY OF STEVEN H. LEVINSON BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY IN SUPPORT OF MEASURE JC1 – CONFIRMATION OF JUDICIAL
NOMINEE REBECCA A. COPELAND TO THE POSITION OF JUDGE OF THE
DISTRICT FAMILY COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT, STATE OF HAWAII**

November 5, 2019

Honorable Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Steven H. Levinson, and I write in strong support of the Hawai'i Senate's confirmation of Chief Justice Recktenwald's nomination (JC1) of Rebecca A. Copeland to the position of Judge of the District Family Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i for a six-year term.

I have known Ms. Copeland in a professional capacity since her founding of the Hawai'i State Bar Association's Appellate Section, of which I have been a member from its inception. My professional relationship with Ms. Copeland has continued to the present. I have interacted with her in her capacity as an active member of the HSBA's Appellate Section, a key participant in and coordinator of the Hawai'i Supreme Court's "Courts in the Community" program, and a tireless advocate for equal rights and treatment of the LGBTQ community in Hawai'i.

Ms. Copeland is one of the most highly respected members of the Hawai'i appellate bar, frequently appearing before the Hawai'i Supreme Court in oral argument. I have observed several of her oral arguments and have been deeply impressed with her presentations. Her appellate practice has been focused on Family Court matters, so she is thoroughly familiar with the workings and functioning of the Family Court in all areas of its jurisdiction. She is a top-notch advocate, and her professional record reflects that fact. She is knowledgeable, completely forthcoming, hard-working, collegial, and empathetic. She is dedicated to doing justice. Ms. Copeland possesses all of the attributes required of a good judge, and I have no doubt that she will be a superior district Family court judge. As such, she will continue to be a credit to the State of Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven H. Levinson
Associate Justice (Retired)
Hawai'i Supreme Court

October 24, 2019

Re: Testimony in support of the nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit (JC1)

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary Committee,

I submit this testimony in support of the nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland as a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

I have known and worked with Rebecca from the beginning of her legal career as a law clerk at the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA) where I served as an Associate Judge. Rebecca's work ethic and writing was outstanding. She worked well with judges and staff, and was respected and liked by all.

Afterwards, Rebecca appeared frequently as an appellate advocate before the ICA and Hawaii Supreme Court, and distinguished herself as one of the top appellate advocates in the state. It was always a pleasure to read her well crafted briefs and hear her argue. She never misrepresented the evidence or law, and always acted at the highest level of professionalism.

I also, as Chair of the Access to Justice Commission, worked with Rebecca on access to justice. She took the initiative in establishing the pro bono appellate program for those who could not afford a lawyer in civil matters would get a competent attorney to represent them before the ICA and Hawaii Supreme Court. The program has proven to be a success, and no one deserves more credit than Rebecca.

To be nominated from a list of highly competent candidates for the district and family courts is a credit to Rebecca and the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice would not have nominated Rebecca if she had not distinguished herself as a per diem district court judge. As the administrator of the judiciary, the Chief Justice has every reason to pick the best district and family court justices.

I have no doubt, if confirmed, Rebecca will distinguish herself as a family court judge. She has the experience, intelligence, compassion and work ethic that will well serve the judiciary and the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel R. Foley



October 29, 2019

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Submitted via hand delivery and website

RE: SUPPORT FOR NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF REBECCA A.
COPELAND TO THE DISTRICT FAMILY COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

Hawaii Women Lawyers (HWL) is a nonprofit business organization made up of over 300 female and male attorneys. HWL's mission includes improving the status of women in the legal profession, increasing the number of women attorneys in positions of authority and responsibility, and promoting the advancement of all women.

HWL believes that increasing opportunities for, and improving the visibility of, qualified women in the Judiciary is extremely important. The judicial bench should be adequately balanced and reflect the composition of Hawaii's citizens.

The percentage of women judges in Hawaii has never been truly representative of the community at large. While there has been some diversity improvement over the last few years, HWL believes that more qualified women should be appointed to fill judicial vacancies to bring balance to the bench.

HWL **supports** the nomination of REBECCA A. COPELAND for the District Family Court of the First Circuit. Her appointment will help to ensure that the number of women on the bench better represents the number of women in the legal profession and the larger community.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this nomination.

Very truly yours,

Hawaii Women Lawyers

Hawaii Women Lawyers
P.O. Box 2072
Honolulu, Hawaii 96805
Email: hawaiiwomenlawyers@gmail.com

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: angela@vlsh.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC1 on Nov 5, 2019 10:00AM (Written Only)
Date: Thursday, October 24, 2019 11:44:38 AM

JC1

Submitted on: 10/24/2019

Testimony for on Nov 5, 2019 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying in Person
Angela Kuo Min	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Dear Senator Karl Rhoads, Senator Glenn Wakai and the Committee on Judiciary: It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Rebecca A. Copeland (“Copeland”) for the position of judge in the District Family Court of the First Circuit. I have worked with Ms. Copeland quite closely in the last three years, specifically on the Access to Justice Commission – Committee on Increasing Pro Bono Legal Services and the Appellate Pro Bono Project (“Pro Bono Project”). Ms. Copeland is a prime example of an attorney who believes in and promotes access to justice, educating and mentoring fellow colleagues to do the same. She helped design and implement the Appellate Pro Bono Project in 2015. She understood the need for representation for individuals at the appeals and Supreme Court level and made it her mission to launch this pilot project. As the liaison for the Pro Bono Project, Ms. Copeland worked with my office on a regular basis to ensure its success and longevity. It is truly a team effort as my office handled much of the administrative side of qualifying an individual to the Pro Bono Project and Ms. Copeland recruiting the attorneys needed for the Pro Bono Project. Her hard work paid off when in less than two years, the Supreme Court rendered the Hawaii Appellate Pro Bono Pilot Project permanent. Since its commencement, four cases have been heard and prevailed for the clients including a unanimous ruling in favor for the client in a Supreme Court Ruling in 2017. The above highlights just some of the traits and what Ms. Copeland can bring to this position. Please deeply consider Ms. Copeland for the position of judge. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 808-522-0684 or at angela@vlsh.org. Sincerely, Angela Kuo Min Executive Director Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii

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Cecelia C. Y. Chang
60 N. Beretania Street, #2809
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Honorable Karl A. Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 204
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

October 30, 2019

Re: Letter of Support for District Family Court Nominee Rebecca A. Copeland

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

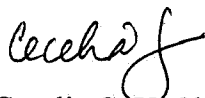
I write this letter to express my strong personal endorsement for the appointment of Ms. Rebecca A. Copeland to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I am a graduate of the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson School of Law (Class of 1985), have practiced law in Hawai'i for 30 years, and served on the boards for the Native Hawaiian Bar Association, the Hawai'i State Bar Association (HSBA), and the Hawai'i Chapter of the Association for Conflict Resolution.

I have known Ms. Copeland for nearly a decade through professional organizations including the HSBA, the Committee on Equality and Access to the Courts, and Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i. Ms. Copeland is a passionate volunteer and advocate for equality, diversity, and access to justice. She also has a reputation in the legal community for excellence, integrity, and kindness.

It is vitally important to appoint judges of the highest caliber who are an integral part of and give back to our community. Ms. Copeland has distinguished herself as a brilliant attorney who generously gives her time, energy and talent for the good of the entire community. Parties who appear in her court will feel that they were heard, understood, and "had their day in court." She will be an outstanding judge.

Very Respectfully,



Cecelia C. Y. Chang
JD 3929



DAVID S. BRUSTEIN
ATTORNEY AT LAW

October 31, 2019

Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: **JC 1**
APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT FAMILY
COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT – REBECCA A. COPELAND

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this letter of recommendation in support of Rebecca A. Copeland, who I understand has been nominated for a judgeship for the District Family Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

I have known Rebecca for almost six years. Rebecca has provided independent legal research services for my office on a wide variety of legal issues. I have always found her research, writing and analytical abilities to be exemplary.

Additionally, Rebecca joined the Board of Director of the Hawaii LGBT Legacy Foundation in February 2014. Although she first came on as a Director, she subsequently was unanimously voted into the position of Secretary. Her work product is always exceptional in that she is well prepared for all meetings and has become the backbone of our organization. Further, Rebecca has always gone above and beyond the call when it comes to the planning and implementation of special events, including our youth and educational programming.

In my opinion, Rebecca has always displayed the highest moral and ethical standards and I am proud to have her as a colleague and a friend. I would highly recommend her for the position of judge as I believe she would be a tremendous asset to the judiciary.

Should anyone reviewing this letter of recommendation have any questions or wish to discuss my opinions in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David S. Brustein', written in a cursive style.

DAVID S. BRUSTEIN, ESQ.

DSB:mls

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: dean.a.soma@hawaii.gov
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC1 on Nov 5, 2019 10:00AM (Written Only)
Date: Friday, October 25, 2019 11:19:17 AM

JC1

Submitted on: 10/25/2019

Testimony for on Nov 5, 2019 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying in Person
Dean Soma	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I have known Rebecca Copeland for over six years, first as very capable appellate practitioner representing my family law clients. I then grew to know her as an advocate for minority rights. However she is foremost a proud mother to two wonderful children and a lot of her work and passion for various causes stems from her love of her family. I believe she will be a true asset to the family court judiciary and support her nomination.

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November 1, 2019

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Senator
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu Hawaii 96813

Re: Nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland to the
District Family Court of the First Circuit (JC 1)

Dear Senator Rhoads and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of Rebecca A. Copeland, Esq., Chief Justice Recktenwald's nominee for the District Family Court of the First Circuit. Rebecca is an exceptional nominee and I urge the Committee to vote in favor of her nomination.

I have known Rebecca for more than ten years. We met when we served together as Deputy Solicitors General with the Appellate Division of the State of Hawai'i Department of the Attorney General. Since then, she moved to the private sector, and then set up a successful solo practice. We have been in frequent contact, both personally and professionally, in all the years since. We are close friends as well as colleagues, and I give her my unreserved recommendation.

Rebecca is a talented, hard-working lawyer. Her legal analysis is consistently thorough and incisive. She manages a rigorous caseload and her days as a per diem district court judge with diligence and assurance. She has an unshaking commitment to the betterment of the profession, which is shown by her many roles in the Bar over the years. I can also commend Rebecca to you as a person of unshaking integrity. Rebecca is civic minded and committed to true equality under the law.

I am certain that Rebecca will bring her characteristic mix of intelligence, diligence, humor, and grace to this appointment. She will be an exemplary addition to the Judiciary. I strongly recommend her confirmation.

Very truly yours,

s/ Deirdre Marie-Iha

Deirdre Marie-Iha

STARN • O'TOOLE • MARCUS & FISHER

A LAW CORPORATION

November 4, 2019

The Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 204
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: JC1 Testimony in Support of Rebecca A. Copeland

Dear Chair Rhoads:

I respectfully submit testimony in support of Rebecca A. Copeland as a family court judge.

When I was the Attorney General, I worked closely with her to pass an historic transgender non-discrimination bill. Rebecca Copeland is highly respected in our legal community. She has been a key advocate for LGBTQ rights as the proud mother of a transgendered son. She has set a great example as a *per diem* judge and has a reputation among attorneys as being fair, smart and balanced. Rebecca Copeland has been active in the Hawaii State Bar Association and was recently honored by other women lawyers for her strong and bold record of community service.

She would make an excellent judge. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Doug Chin

Emily H. Kawashima
ATTORNEY AT LAW L L L C

Topa Financial Center
700 Bishop Street, Suite 1700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
TEL 808.744.4688
FAX 888.777.5405
EM emily@kawashimalaw.com

October 28, 2019

VIA E-MAIL – JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov


Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania St.
Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Appointment of Rebecca Copeland

Dear Chair and Senate Committee Members:

I am writing to you in strong support of Rebecca Copeland for her appointment as a District Family Court. Ms. Copeland and I have collaborated for many years on a number cases. She has the breadth and depth of legal knowledge and most importantly, would have a very positive judicial temperament which is especially important in Family Court. I believe she would be an excellent addition to the bench. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,


Emily H. Kawashima, Esq.

Judicial Appointment Copeland

Gemma-Rose Poland Soon, Esq.
984 Apokula Place
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

10/25/2019

Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: Judicial Appointment Copeland

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in recommendation of Rebecca Copeland ("Rebecca"), who has been nominated to be a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

I have known Rebecca since I was a Law Clerk at the Hawaii Supreme Court approximately ten (10) years ago. As a Law Clerk at the Hawaii Supreme Court, I had the opportunity to review Rebecca's written briefs, as well as observe her oral advocacy. I was always impressed by Rebecca's poise, intelligence, and the quality of her work.

Since then, I have gotten to know Rebecca better as she reinvigorated the Appellate Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association, as opposing counsel in a number of appellate cases, as a mentor, and, now, as a friend. I remain impressed by her intelligence and the quality of her work, but am also in awe of her desire to serve the community, her work on transgender issues, her professionalism, her humility, and her passion for justice. Rebecca exemplifies the highest level of professional behavior and interpersonal abilities, and the Judiciary would be privileged to have her.

10/25/2019

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On March 14, 2017, I was fortunate enough to meet with Governor Ige as part of a Hawaii Women Lawyer's event: "Becoming a Judge: a Talk with Governor David Ige." Of the many things Governor Ige shared, two stuck out to me: (1) that he wants judicial appointments to reflect the community; and (2) that he wants judicial appointments to not only be excellent jurists, but also good people. I cannot express just how much Rebecca is both. Rebecca not only reflects the larger community, but is also an excellent attorney and a great person. Rebecca truly cares about serving the community and does it selflessly. The State of Hawaii would be fortunate to have her in its' service.

I highly recommend Rebecca for judicial office. I am confident that she will make a great addition to Judiciary and will serve our community full heartedly.

Sincerely,

Gemma-Rose Poland Soon, Esq.

From: [Greg Markham](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Re: Nomination of Rebecca Copeland for the family Court
Date: Thursday, October 24, 2019 9:46:35 AM

Dear Committee, I am an attorney who has practiced for 36 years in all the Courts in our state and I have known Rebecca for at least 8 years. She would make an excellent judge as she possesses the attributes necessary to perform that junction very well. Those attributes include, diligence, commitment, intellect, fairness, compassion and a willingness to listen and make those she is in front of feel "heard". I endorse her appointment to the bench 100%. Thank you for your consideration.

Gregory K. Markham

CHEE MARKHAM & FELDMAN

American Savings Bank Tower

1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2700

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Tel: (808)523-0111

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Email: gmarkham@cheemarkham.com

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LATE

From: [Howard K.K. Luke](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: Support for Rebecca A.V. Copeland in her appointment as District Court Judge
Date: Monday, November 4, 2019 11:36:54 AM

Dear Chair Lee and fellow members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please accept my strong support for Ms. Rebecca A.V. Copeland's appointment to the position of Honolulu District Judge, First Circuit.

Ms. Copeland has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i State Bar Association for many years. In her capacity as a director, she distinguished herself as a thoughtful, pragmatic, and insightful contributor to some of the most complex issues concerning matters that were up for discussion and resolution by the board.

As an appellate attorney, Ms. Copeland provided some of the most compelling oral advocacy for her clients in cases on appeal to the Supreme Court. Her contributions to the Supreme Court's Courts in the Community Program were extensive. She not only made clear and persuasive arguments on behalf of her clients, but also was an excellent role model for the participating high school students from both public and private schools across our state.

In summary, I respectfully request that you confirm Ms. Copeland to serve as District Court Judge for the First Circuit, State of Hawai'i.

Aloha,
Howard K.K. Luke
Attorney at Law

November 4, 2019

LATE

To: Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC 1, TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT FOR CONFIRMATION OF REBECCA
A. COPELAND TO THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

HEARING: Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 10:00 A.M., Conference Room 016

Senator Wakai and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing in support of judicial nominee Rebecca Copeland for confirmation as District Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Rebecca for the last 3 years and I have worked with her on appellate cases for two of those years. She has long been committed to truth and justice and more importantly has focused her career on giving back to the community. Her *pro se* appellate project has created avenues of justice for litigants who would otherwise have no voice in our appellate courts. She is also dedicated to taking her skills to the community in her tireless efforts to manage the Court's in the Community Program.

In addition to her career accomplishments that speak directly to her selfless service, I have had the distinct privilege of serving with Rebecca as a per diem judge on the District Court bench. Her performance as a judge can be described as thoughtful, empathetic and prudent in her rulings. Her appellate experience provides her the foresight to consider the secondary and tertiary effects of her decisions. These characteristics as well as her skills in handling the post-trial appellate matters gives her a trifecta of aptitudes, appellate experience, capabilities as a judge and legal community outreach unique to her as a judicial nominee. These traits will serve her well as she endeavors to further serve her community as a judge on the District Court bench.

Rebecca will make an excellent judge for the District Court. She is a person of unquestionable character and integrity and a long-time public servant who works for the interests of the people. Her judicial experience, commitment to justice, and public service makes her an excellent candidate for appointment as District Court judge and demonstrate why she should be confirmed by this committee and the Senate.

Very Truly Yours,
J. Alberto Montalbano #7552

October 23, 2019

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: JC1, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee REBECCA A. COPELAND

HEARING: Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 10:00 A.M.

I am writing in **strong support** of the appointment of **Rebecca Copeland** to the District Family Court of the First Circuit. I know Ms. Copeland through my work with Hawai'i Women Lawyers and Courts in the Community. She is compassionate, humble, intelligent, caring, creative, and ethical. Ms. Copeland has all the traits to be a great district family court judge. My first interaction with Ms. Copeland was listening to her speak at a HWL panel, "Judge 'by the Day': Becoming and Being a Per Diem Judge." She stood out right away as someone who wants to be a Judge for the right reasons. It was clear that she cares deeply about our community and wants to give back. A question was asked of all the panelist to comment on how it felt when they first put on the black robe. Ms. Copeland's answers showed her true humbleness. She responded by explaining how uncomfortable it was walking around with the black robe on and people standing up when you walk by and to be called Judge. If she is selected, she will carry out her judicial career with the same humbleness, lack of ego, and love for our community as she has always shown.

Ms. Copeland has the experience as a District Court Per Diem Judge and is familiar with the procedures, laws, and case law of family law to immediately go on the bench, handle the emotional nature of family court with ease, and resolve issues in the cases before her. As a Per Diem Judge she has experience with *pro se* litigants who often times are emotional, upset, and hostile under the circumstances. Ms. Copeland has shown that she is respectful, listens, and will

October 23, 2019

Page 2

resolve the issues presented in the cases that appear in front of her diligently. She is also experienced with family law as the majority of her appellate practice is family law. Many attorneys on the list do not have this same experience or ability to hit the ground running.

Ms. Copeland will be a great face for the judiciary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Jacquelyn Esser
Jacquelyn T. Esser

The Law Offices of
JOHN W. SCHMIDTKE, JR.
Attorney at Law • A Law Corporation

October 25, 2019

Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 204
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Rebecca Copeland: District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit (Island of O'ahu)

Dear Committee Members:

I highly recommend Rebecca Copeland as a District Family Court judge. I trust her judgment, her intelligence, her legal knowledge, and her even temperament. Most of all, I trust her wisdom, a wisdom infused with kindness and understanding.

Ms. Copeland and I have worked together for many years. We have co-counseled on several appeals. Her legal writing and research skills are superb. In the course of working with her, she has made suggestions about how my presentations to the trial court could have been more precise and more persuasive. Working with her made it less likely my clients would need her skills on the appellate level. I am a much better lawyer because of our association.

I have full confidence in Ms. Copeland as a family court judge. Her knowledge of the law and pre-trial procedures is comprehensive. Her analysis of the issues brought to her for decision will be thorough. Her decisions will be articulate and understandable. The attorneys and litigants who will appear before her will receive a compassionate decision they can understand.

Ms. Copeland has unquestioned integrity and diligence. I trust everything she says. She is candid and fearless in standing up for what is right, but she is diplomatic so that she persuades those with other ideas. If she promises to do something, she does so promptly, thoroughly, and with excellence.

The citizens of Hawai'i will benefit from having Ms. Copeland on the family court bench. The family court judges already sitting will benefit from her knowledge. The family law attorneys who will appear before her will have to step up their game to meet the excellence she will demand. I am completely confident in her ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of a family court judge.

Ms. Copeland should be immediately confirmed. If you have any questions, please call me.

Very truly yours,

John W. Schmidtke, Jr.

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senate of the State of Hawai'i

Lance D. Collins, Ph.D
Law Office of Lance D. Collins

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 at 10:00 AM
Support for JC1, Judicial Nominee Rebecca A. Copeland
to the District Family Court of the First Circuit

My name is Lance D. Collins and I am an attorney in private practice. I testify in strong support of the nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland to the District Family Court of the First Circuit giving my unqualified support to her appointment.

I first came to be acquainted with Ms. Copeland through her internet blog Record on Appeal. I came to know her better through the Appellate Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association as well as the Hawai'i LGBT Legal Association. Since that time I have come to be well acquainted with her and her work. Although we do not generally practice in the same areas of law, I have found her analysis and advice on procedural issues to be quite helpful and useful in my practice. I know I can rely on her to give good counsel.

Her work in helping to establish the Hawai'i Pro Bono Appellate Program cannot be understated. Without question, the program assists individuals of limited financial means who seek its assistance and enjoy the benefits of having error in their cases corrected that would otherwise not be corrected. Even more important to our justice system as a whole is the increased likelihood that types of error that affect indigent and unrepresented parties will be more likely reviewed by appellate courts. The decisions in these cases are then able to assist the trial courts in avoiding those errors in other cases especially with indigent and unrepresented parties.

Most importantly, for the position for which she is a candidate, Ms. Copeland understands the nuances of family law having long practiced in appeals. This experience unquestionably has given her a broad and deep understanding of the areas of law for which she will adjudicate.

I strongly urge this Committee to recommend confirming Ms. Copeland to the Family District Court for the First Circuit. Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

//

From: [Linda Luke](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Subject: District Family Judge Nominee Rebecca A. Copeland, Esq.
Date: Monday, November 4, 2019 6:33:55 AM

Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Legislature

Dear Mr. Chair:

I write in support of Ms. Rebecca A. Copeland who has been nominated as a District Family Judge, First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

For several years prior to my recent retirement from the bench, I had the opportunity to work with Ms. Copeland who serves as a per diem District Court judge in the First Circuit.

She has been an asset to the District Court bench where she presides in both civil and criminal/traffic matters. Ms. Copeland is known as a diligent, hard working and dedicated judge who is able to make clear cut and well reasoned rulings.

Ms. Copeland also served with me on the Hawaii Supreme Court Committee on Equality and Access to the Courts, first as a member, then as co-chair. I know her to be committed to enhancing public access to the courts. She is also a recognized legal expert on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transsexual rights, and has presented to Judiciary staff on these emerging issues.

In April, 2019, Ms. Copeland was awarded the Outstanding Women Lawyer Award by the Hawaii Women Lawyers for her tireless work in establishing the appellate pro bono committee of the Hawaii State Bar Association. That committee assisted pro se appellants before the Intermediate Court of Appeals and the Hawaii Supreme Court. She has also been an active member of the Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice.

More recently, Ms. Copeland and I conducted a continuing legal education training for the Family Law Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association on trial and appellate practice tips in Family Court matters. I know that she is held in high regard by the family law bar given her practice which focuses on Family Court appeals.

Based on the foregoing, I respectfully submit that Ms. Rebecca Copeland is more than up to meeting the challenges of high volume/short duration dockets, and would be a tremendous asset to the District Family bench.

I would be pleased to provide any further information you might require. My email is luke.lkcl@gmail.com.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Ms. Copeland's nomination.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

On the Following Measure: JC1 Submitting Consideration and confirmation to the District Family Court of the First Circuit, Judicial Nominee, Rebecca A. Copeland, for a term to expire in 6 years.

Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary
November 5, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016

Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Wakai:

I am writing to express my support for Ms. Rebecca A. Copeland confirmation to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

I have known Ms. Copeland for over 5 years and have the highest regard for her. During my tenure as the executive director of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii, I worked with Ms. Copeland on several access to justice initiatives. Ms. Copeland spearheaded the planning and implementation of the Hawaii Appellate Pro Bono Program which provides a vehicle for indigent litigants to access legal representation. Ms. Copeland not only help launch the program, but has continued to recruit, train and mentor volunteer attorneys to provide pro bono service for litigants who cannot afford legal services.

I have known Ms. Copeland to be of high moral character, integrity and honesty. I humbly ask for your consideration in confirming Ms. Copeland to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

Respectfully yours,

Michelle D. Acosta

THE LAW OFFICES OF
PETER VAN NAME ESSER

POST OFFICE BOX 11170
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96828
TELEPHONE: (808) 538-3636
PETERESSER@MAC.COM

October 24, 2019

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 204
415 South Beretania
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **Reference for Rebecca Copeland as Family District Court Judge**

Gentlepersons:

I write in support of the confirmation of Rebecca A. Copeland for Family Court Judge of the First Circuit, now before this Committee after nomination by the Honorable Mark Recktenwald, Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court. I am happy to offer this recommendation, based on her legal ability, intelligence, and dedication to serving the courts, the Bar and the community at large.

I have practiced law in Hawaii for 35 years, appearing over 250 times before Hawaii's appellate courts. During that time I have litigated numerous cases with Becky, both as collaborator and opponent, and reviewed her oral and written work, which shows research, integrity and judgment. Her appellate practice focuses on family court cases, contributing to some of appellate courts' most important recent decisions in that field. We have conducted family law seminars on Oahu and the neighbor islands, and co-written updates for the **Hawaii Divorce Manual**. She has served as a per diem district court judge in the First Circuit for the past three years, handling hundreds of trials.

Before coming to Hawaii, Becky served as law clerk for the Honorable Sandra Duncan, Associate Judge of the Texas Court of Appeals. After arriving here, she clerked for the late Associate Judge John Lim of our own ICA. She has practiced with distinguished law firms and worked as a Deputy Attorney General. She has published articles in the **Hawaii Bar Journal** on family law, and authors a monthly blog entitled **Record on Appeal**. Becky is an elected member of the Board of Directors of the HSBA, and founded its Appellate Section. She sits on the Supreme Court's Commission on Professionalism and Access to Justice Commission. Mayor Carlisle appointed her to the Zoning Board of Appeals. She has testified before the Legislature on behalf of Equality Hawaii and Hawaii's LGBT Legacy Foundation, and moderated panels of judges and lawyers at HSBA Conventions. Most important, Becky is a trusted colleague who I can call for advice when confronted with complex legal issues. She would make an outstanding family court judge.

Sincerely,



Peter Van Name Esser

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

RE: Support for Rebecca A. Copeland, JC1
Hearing: November 5, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the nomination of Rebecca Copeland to serve on the District Family Court of the First Circuit. I first met Rebecca in her role as the founding chair of the Appellate Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association. She recognized a need and worked to elevate the quality of appellate practice in Hawai'i. In 2015, we served together on the HSBA Board of Directors, and I appreciated her insight and focus on improving the legal profession. Rebecca also has been instrumental in the success of the Courts in the Community program and Appellate Pro Bono Project. If confirmed, Rebecca has shown that she will be not only a strong jurist, but also an invaluable public servant.

In addition to appreciating all that she has done as a volunteer, I have personally observed Rebecca's work as an attorney. She consistently impresses with her thoughtful consideration of and ability to parse difficult legal issues.

In short, the State of Hawai'i would be well served if you confirmed Rebecca Copeland for this position.

Respectfully,



R. Brian Black

DIEHL AND WEGER

Attorneys at Law

A Law Corporation

Attorneys at Law
Richard J. Diehl
Christine D. Weger

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Hawaii Kai Executive Plaza - Suite 208
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Pacific Guardian Center, Makai Tower
733 Bishop Street, Suite 1410
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Telephone: (808) 396-4080
Fax: (808) 395-4440

October 31, 2019

Via E-mail to JDCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear JDC Members:

I understand that Judge Rebecca Copeland has been nominated by the Chief Justice as a District Family Court Judge.

I would like to strongly recommend that Judge Copeland be confirmed.

I have known Rebecca as an excellent appellate attorney, as a colleague, as a First Circuit District Court Judge and as a friend. I have served with Rebecca as a per diem Honolulu District Court Judge since her appointment. Her judicial demeanor, command of the law, decency and compassion to litigants and counsel is apparent from her performance on the bench. Rebecca has assisted our law firm and family and Circuit Court trial counsel in her appellate practice and her work product is always excellent.

No doubt you see qualified candidates frequently but few nominees have Rebecca's appellate experience.

Rebecca has been a professor of legal practice at the law school, appellate counsel with the Attorney General's office and a litigation and appellate attorney in private practice in our state since December of 2008 including a stint with Damon, Key, Leong, Kupchak and Hastert.

Rebecca served for 5 years as an HSBA Board Member, on the Hawaii Access to Justice Commission, the Hawaii Justice Commission, Equality Hawaii, the Hawaii LGBT Legacy Foundation and is the recipient of the HSBA President's Award, and just recently the Hawaii Women Lawyer's Lawyer of the Year Award.

Senate Judiciary Committee

Page 2

October 31, 2019

Thank you for your consideration. Your confirmation of Judge Copeland would be a tremendous asset to the Family Court.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Diehl

RJD:sy

cc: Rebecca Copeland



HEW & BORDENAVE
A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP LLP

LATE

November 4, 2019

Committee(s): SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 10:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 016

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for JC1, the Nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland to the District Family Court of the First Circuit

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee on Judiciary:

I am Ryan K. Hew, former president of the Young Lawyers Division, current chair of the Solo and Small Practice Division, and Managing Partner of Hew & Bordenave, LLLP, LLP. I write in **strong support** for REBECCA A. COPELAND's nomination to District Family Court of the First Circuit. I've known and worked with Ms. Copeland for many years and in my opinion she has the professional qualifications and temperament to be a Family Court judge.

Ms. Copeland and I have worked together during our time on the Hawaii State Bar Association's Board. I have also had clients work with her on a number of appeals matters. She is professional, forthright, intelligent, and passionate. She has been dedicated to the law and the access of justice for as long as I've known her. One of the things I admire about her is asking questions that matter—whether it be budgetary concerns, client interpersonal issues, or if a change in a few words will have significant impact on the policies that impact communities struggling in Hawaii. For many years she has served the legal profession and helped the people of Hawaii by the projects she has worked on, including being the editor of the Hawaii Appellate Practice Manual and point person of Courts in the Community; a program invaluable in educating Hawaii's youth on an attorney's role and the Hawaii Supreme Court of the rule of law.

On a personal level, Ms. Copeland is highly ethical and moral—not just legally, she will not be persuaded by undue influence and will always take time to study an issue. She is fair, open-minded, and understands that diversity makes up Hawaii's community. She is always a thoughtful communicator, even when responding to tough or abstract legal matters.

For all the foregoing reasons, I urge you all to support Rebecca A. Copeland's nomination to District Family Court of the First Circuit. Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,

Ryan K. Hew, Esq., *Managing Partner*
Hew & Bordenave, LLLP, LLP

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS D. FARRELL
Regarding JC1, Nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland
Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair/Senator Glen Wakai, Vice Chair
November 5, 2019, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Good morning Senator Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I support the nomination of Rebecca Copeland to be a District Family Court Judge and urge your committee to recommend her confirmation.

As one of the top appellate practitioners in Hawaii, Ms. Copeland's breadth of knowledge of the law is impressive, and she is the expert other lawyers turn to for advice on appellate practice and procedure. Many of her cases have involved family law issues.

Although her private practice concentrates on appeals, she has also served as a per diem District Judge, which has provided her with an excellent foundation in the workings of high-volume trial courts.

Ms. Copeland is the architect of the highly successful "Courts in the Community" project, in which thousands of high-school students throughout Hawaii have had the chance to interact with volunteer lawyers and attend an oral argument of the Hawaii Supreme Court at their or a neighboring school. She has also been instrumental in the Appellate Pro Bono program, where indigent parties to appeals who would otherwise be unrepresented have been paired with volunteer attorneys.

She is deeply committed to the rule of law and the pursuit of justice. She will be an excellent family court judge.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.

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*Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. The Supreme Court of Hawaii grants Hawaii certification only to lawyers in good standing who have successfully completed a specialty program accredited by the American Bar Association.

From: [Mailing List](#)
To: [JDCTestimony](#)
Cc: te@hawaiilawyer.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for JC1 on Nov 5, 2019 10:00AM (Written Only)
Date: Sunday, October 27, 2019 9:53:50 AM

JC1

Submitted on: 10/27/2019

Testimony for on Nov 5, 2019 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testifying in Person
Tred Eyerly	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Rebecca Copeland to the District Court. I worked with Rebecca while she was at my firm for about four years. I found her hard-working and competent. She formed the Appellate Section of HSBA pretty much on her own and made it into one of the best attended and most successful sections. She has developed into an excellent appellate attorney. Therefore, I hope Rebecca will be confirmed soon.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov



Testimony of the
HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
relating to the nomination of

Rebecca A. Copeland
District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit (JC1)

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Derek R. Kobayashi
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

Hearing: Tuesday, November 5, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016
State Capitol

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the nomination of Rebecca A. Copeland for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

The HSBA Board of Directors followed its multi-step process to inform the confirming authority of its findings on this appointment.

- Notification to the nominee of the HSBA appointment review process, which includes a questionnaire requesting educational credentials, legal and other professional work experiences, personal references; a resume; a copy of the JSC application; a form authorizing disclosure from the Office of Disciplinary Counsel of any disciplinary action; and an interview with the HSBA Board of Directors.
- Notification via electronic transmission to the HSBA membership of the appointment and a request for comments on the nominee.
- Appointment of a three-person review subcommittee of HSBA Board members by the President which serves as a neutral fact-finding body to: review documentation submitted by the nominee, contact references submitted by the nominee, review comments received from the HSBA membership, and conduct follow-up member contact for clarification, if necessary, for presentation to the HSBA Board.
- Submittal of a report by the three-person review subcommittee to the President, and subsequently to the entire Board.

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- Meeting of the President, the Executive Director, and the nominee prior to the scheduled interview of the nominee by the Board.
- Interview of the nominee by the HSBA Board.
- Deliberation of the HSBA Board to determine if the nominee is qualified or unqualified.
- Submittal of the HSBA Board's recommendation to the confirming authority.

The HSBA President and the Executive Director met with Ms. Copeland on October 31, 2019 to discuss the subcommittee's findings. On November 1st, Ms. Copeland was interviewed by the HSBA Board of Directors in executive session.

Documentation submitted by Ms. Copeland was reviewed and the references listed were contacted for their personal opinions and observations. The comments and letters received from HSBA members reflected an affirmation of Ms. Copeland in all categories of the HSBA criteria which include:

- Integrity
- Diligence
- Legal knowledge and ability
- Professional experience
- Temperament
- Financial responsibility
- Public service
- Health
- Ability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of the position

Rebecca Copeland is well-known and well-regarded in the legal community for her legal skills and willingness to serve in different capacities to initiate, coordinate and/or plan programs and activities which further the goals of the HSBA to promote justice, serve the public, and improve the legal profession.

The nominee was very instrumental in the formation of the Appellate Section of the Bar, which provides a forum for State appellate practitioners to meet regularly to discuss cases and other judicial developments, and practice management on a regular basis. She is the HSBA's Board liaison to the Committee which plans and coordinates the Oahu Courts in the Community programs. On November 14th close to 600 Central Oahu high school students will meet at Waipahu High School to experience an actual Supreme Court oral argument. Rebecca was a leader in establishing the Appellate Pro Bono Project which provides legal services to litigants who have significant appellate issues to be resolved who would not otherwise be able to afford appellate expenses.

Ms. Copeland's legal skills, especially her ability to identify issues, document arguments concisely, and argue persuasively are widely acknowledged. She has worked with family case law and statutes through her years in private practice specializing in appellate work on family issues. This knowledge together with her appointment as a per diem judge since 2016 will assist in making the transition to a full-time family District Court judge who will preside over cases which involve intimate aspects of people's lives.

Most important, the Nominee's core values of applying the law to the facts, doing justice, and making people who appear before her feel respected make her an ideal judicial nominee.

After the interview of the nominee, which included dialogue and questioning relating to her background, experiences, and reasons for pursuing the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit, the Board of the Hawaii State Bar Association found Ms. Rebecca A. Copeland to be **QUALIFIED** for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments for consideration during the deliberations and decision making of our Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



DEREK R. KOBAYASHI
President, Hawaii State Bar Association

LATE

November 5, 2019

Senate Judiciary Committee
By Fax: 808-586-6131

Re: Nomination of Rebecca A.V. Copeland to the Family Court of the First Circuit

To Senator Rhoads and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Rebecca Ann Vradenburg Copeland, who is being considered for appointment to the Family Court of the First Circuit State of Hawaii.

I have been a licensed member of the Hawaii State Bar since May 1983 and am a practicing attorney with the Law Firm of Coates Frey Tanimoto and Gibson (hereinafter "CFTG"). CFTG is the largest family law firm on the Island of Oahu. We have been assisting families for over thirty years representing parties with their divorces, the establishment of paternity, child support, temporary restraining orders, abuse of household member prosecution/defense, guardianship of minors/incapacitated adults, adoptions and premarital agreements.

Like Ms. Copeland, I am also a per diem District Court Judge in the First Circuit Court, where she presides over both criminal and civil matters which affect our everyday citizens. In many cases, the litigants, like those in Family Court, are unrepresented.

I have come to know Ms. Copeland on a professional and personal basis through our contact at the District Court. Simply put, she is a kind, down to earth, and compassionate individual. She possesses a calm demeanor and an even judicial temperament. More significantly, her approachability to those who appear before her belies her well-known legal scholarship, intellect and appellate excellence. Ms. Copeland has been on the other side of virtually all of the appeals filed by our office on behalf of our family law clients. In all matters, she has been a principled advocate and the consummate professional, regardless of the final outcome of the appeal. In addition to being possessed of outstanding legal acumen, she is an articulate and effective communicator. She recently gave a presentation to the members of our Family Law Section on "Appellate Advocacy" where she made an otherwise esoteric topic easy to understand and less intimidating for those of us who never step foot in the Appellate Courts. Her ability to empathize with litigants, and to guide them through the legal process in an understandable and efficient manner is an asset that I see Ms. Copeland bringing to the Family Court bench.

She has also been an active member in the bar association and has given many pro bono hours to assisting the underserved in the community. She is heavily involved in public service.

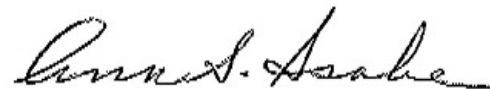
Senator Rhoads
Page Two

An inspiring and educational project which she has spearheaded is the "Courts in the Community" program where high school students participate in a mock moot court exercise, based on an actual Hawaii Supreme Court case. The project culminates with the students meeting and observing the actual oral argument before the Supreme Court Justices at Waipahu High School on November 14, 2019. This is an eye opening and life changing experience for many of our young students who come to learn about civics, the separate branches of government and are given the opportunity to meet volunteer attorneys and Judges – who may serve to inspire them in their post high school professional pursuits.

In my opinion, Ms. Copeland would make an excellent Judge, given her extensive judicial experience and appellate court background in the area of family law and would serve the best interest of our families in the State.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this letter in support of her application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ann S. Isope".

ANN S. ISOPE