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September 24, 2025

Senator Luke A. Rankin
Rankin & Rankin, P.A.
201 Beaty Street, #1
Conway, 29526

Dear Senator Rankin:

I am writing directly to you because of our long friendship, starting in law school 41 years ago, and to Mrs. Craig, Mr. Lay, Mr. Stegmaier, and Mr. Campsen because of brief, friendly and professional connections with them during the last 38 years of law practice. Pleasantly, Mr. Campsen, it turns out, is still my state senator even though I moved from Sullivan's Island to Beaufort a few years ago (and his wife, Lalla Lee, is one of my favorite people from my high school days in Columbia, which I am sure he hears all the time).

The subject of this letter is Justice John Few, and my letter is intended to be an effort to express my full and complete support for him to remain in his position as a Justice on our Supreme Court for another - and final - 10 year term.

For the last 38 years, while you have been ably leading our state in the legislature, I have been toiling away in the Circuit Courts of South Carolina, and more than occasionally appearing in the appellate courts, with decidedly mixed results in them all. In doing that, I have dealt with every judge, and every Justice, your committee has seen fit to put in front of me. The quality of those judges has also been decidedly mixed, though you have never heard a complaint from me about that.

Over those many years, I feel blessed that I have encountered a number of judges, and Justices, who were highly capable, intelligent and undertook their work seriously, with gravity but also with good humor and exceptional judicial temperament. John Few is one who, among three or four others, has always stood out for exemplifying those traits.

Justice Few and I met about 25 years ago when I tried a two-week case in front of him in Beaufort. He was a young Circuit Judge at the time, visiting Beaufort. George Mullen, Frank Smith and Manning Smith were the other lawyers in the case, so it was highly contested with plenty of "vigorous advocacy" going on. Judge Few ably handled the case for a week before it was settled

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at the directed verdict stage. During that trial it was easy to see the intelligence Judge Few possessed, but it was his fairness and his keen interest in the case, in us as lawyers, and how it was being tried, that still stands out to me today. We all believed we had gotten a fair trial with Judge Few, which is all any trial lawyer has a right to ask, but Judge Few went far above and beyond that.

After the trial, Justice Few and I became casual friends but my only other appearances in front of him have come while arguing a few cases since he has been on the Supreme Court. As I knew he would be, as a Justice he is razor sharp, knows the law, is inquisitive and interested in the cases and the lawyers and, essentially, understands the mechanics and nuances of trial work. He is a truly exceptional Justice.

Our current Supreme Court seems extremely well-qualified, and Justice Few is a big part of that. He, and the Supreme Court as a whole, are beacons of legal knowledge and intellect and fairness to me and other lawyers who work within the system, day in and day out. While I am a realist, politics seems far removed from the Supreme Court, as it should be.

I cannot express the depth of my support for Justice Few to remain in his position for another term. If I can do anything else to support his cause, please let me know.

With kindest regards, I am

Very truly yours,

LYLES & ASSOCIATES, LLC



Robert T. Lyles, Jr.

RTL/cw

cc: Mary Agnes Hood Craig, Esquire
John T. Lay, Esquire
Christian Stegmaier, Esquire
Senator George E. "Chip" Campsen, III