

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE JUDICIAL CONFIRMATION COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, September 9, 2015 – 11:00 a.m. – Room 25 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Scott K. Jenkins, Chair
Sen. Jim Dabakis
Sen. Peter C. Knudson
Sen. Karen Mayne
Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart
Sen. Todd Weiler

Members Absent:

Sen. Lyle W. Hillyard

Staff Present:

Mr. Benjamin N. Christensen, Policy Analyst
Ms. Susan Creager Allred, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Lucy W. Daynes, Legislative Assistant

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Jenkins called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. Sen. Hillyard was excused from the meeting.

Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

MOTION: Sen. Knudson moved to close the meeting for the purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, and physical or mental health of the judicial candidate. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Weiler was absent for the vote.

Chair Jenkins requested that all audience members leave the committee room for the closed portion of the meeting.

MOTION: Sen. Knudson moved to open the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Jenkins requested that the committee meeting be opened and that those in attendance be invited back into the committee room.

Chair Jenkins noted that Ms. Heather Brereton was placed under oath by Mr. Christensen while the committee was in closed session and that she would remain under oath through the remainder of the meeting.

2. Interview of Ms. Heather Brereton

Ms. Brereton introduced herself and her family and friends in attendance. She described her upbringing, education, and experiences clerking for judges after graduating from law school. She stated that she has worked with the Salt Lake Legal Defender Association for 15 years and is proud of the work she has done there, which includes cases ranging from misdemeanors to aggravated murder. She further explained that recently she has also been working with the Third District Court Mental Health Court and that this experience motivated her to apply to become a judge. She expressed that the duty of a judge is to apply the plain language of the law and to not overreach judicial authority.

In response to committee questions, Ms. Brereton described how mental health court works and its differences from other court settings. She answered questions from the committee regarding her legal education, veteran's court, and Utah's public defense system.

MOTION: Sen. Knudson moved to favorably recommend to the full Senate that Ms. Heather Brereton be confirmed as a judge in the Third District Court. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Knudson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Jenkins adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m.