

April 30, 2012

The Honorable John Cornyn

c/o Mr. Jonathan Huhn

South Central Deputy Regional Director

United States Senator John Cornyn

600 Navarro Street, Suite 210

San Antonio, Texas 78205

Re: Application of Mr. Robert Duane Dittman for service in the United States Coast Guard

Dear Senator Cornyn:

 Robert Dittman, one of our students at St. Mary’s University School of Law, has requested that I write to you in support of his application for acceptance as an active duty Coast Guard JAG officer. I am happy to recommend him to you, and hope that you also will support his application. I have known Robert since his first year of law school when he was enrolled as a student in my criminal law class. You should know two things about Robert: He is blind, and he has been an active and dedicated member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary since 2001.

 Prior to his matriculation at St. Mary’s, Robert’s Coast Guard duties primarily involved administrative and communications work. He has pursued a legal education with the single-minded purpose of practicing law within the JAG Corps of the Coast Guard. Robert undertook this arduous training with the full realization that only by securing exceptional approval could he be accepted for active duty military service. Despite the obvious obstacles Robert faces in all of his pursuits, not least of which is preparing for a profession that depends so heavily on written communication, he has persevered and succeeded.

 I am the co-founder and frequent director of St. Mary’s Institute on World Legal Problems, conducted at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. Robert decided to attend that program, despite the challenges of language, culture, transportation, and terrain. He found ways to be self-sufficient and participated fully in both the academic and social life of the Institute during his five-week stay in Europe. He functioned as well in a foreign environment as he has on a familiar home campus. I expect no less from him in any situation.

 The most important thing I can tell you about Robert Dittman is that he has the will to succeed as a Coast Guard JAG officer, and the demonstrated ability to work in an environment that often is not friendly to the visually impaired. As a former military officer, I do not hesitate to express to you my conviction that Robert Dittman can perform the duties of a military lawyer. His commitment to service equals that of any officer I have encountered. His acceptance and work as a Coast Guard service member will serve to demonstrate his ability, and not his disability.

Sincerely,

Gerald S. Reamey

Gerald S. Reamey

Professor of Law and Co-Director of International Legal Programs

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