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CONTACT: media@landrieu.senate.gov

SENATE CONFIRMS FINLEY AS U.S. ATTORNEY IN WESTERN DISTRICT

Landrieu urges Senate to confirm Jackson, Foote whose nominations have been stalled since March 19

WASHINGTON – Behind the push of United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., the Senate, late last night, confirmed Stephanie Finley as U.S. Attorney for Louisiana’s Western District. Sen. Landrieu recommended Finley for the post in July of last year.

For the last 18 years, Stephanie Finley has practiced law in the federal arena as a Judge Advocate and an Assistant U.S. Attorney. She is currently senior litigation counsel for the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Lafayette, where she previously served as acting Deputy Chief.

“During the interview process, I was so impressed with Stephanie Finley’s law enforcement and military experience,” said Sen. Landrieu. “She is wholly committed to community safety and upholding public integrity. She will bring a wealth of knowledge to the U.S Attorney position, especially given her background as both an Assistant U.S. Attorney and prosecutor for the U.S. Air Force. Stephanie is also an ideal candidate for this federal post in the Western District. Over the past 14 years, she’s been an attorney in the Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, Lafayette and Lake Charles Division of the District. These deep roots in the region, as well as her fair-mindedness and impartiality will serve the people of the Western District well.”

“I am honored that President Obama has selected me and the Senate has confirmed my nomination to serve the people of the Western District of Louisiana as the U.S. Attorney,” said Finley. “Working for the Department as a prosecutor for the last fourteen years has been an extraordinary experience. I now look forward to leading this dedicated group of men and women in their tireless pursuit of justice. I am grateful to Senator Landrieu for her support throughout this process.”

A Lt. Colonel stationed at Barksdale Air Force Base, Finley previously served her nation on active duty in the U.S. Air Force, and currently is a reservist. In her military capacity, Finley accrued judicial experience as a Summary Courts-martial hearing officer, presiding over trials for violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, probable cause hearings and administrative discharge boards. In these capacities, Finley has been responsible for the charging of juries/boards, hearing arguments, ruling on evidence and rendering sentences. Finley earned her Bachelor’s degree from Grambling State University and her law degree from Southern University.

With a current backlog of more than 1,200 criminal and civil cases in Louisiana’s Middle District, Sen. Landrieu also renewed her call for the Senate to confirm two Louisiana nominees -- Brian Jackson and Elizabeth Erny Foote – who were unanimously approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on March

18. Although both Jackson and Foote are considered non-controversial nominees, attempts to confirm them have been blocked by Senate Republicans.

Jackson, the President's nominee to become to be U.S. District Court Judge for Louisiana's Middle District, was recommended by Sen. Landrieu for the post in May 2009. Foote, who has been nominated to be U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District, was recommended by Sen. Landrieu in July.

"It is time for Senate Republicans to stop playing politics and to start giving Louisiana's law enforcement community the support they need and deserve," Sen. Landrieu said. "For three years, Louisiana's only two active federal judges in the Middle District have struggled to keep up with a full docket of cases. As a result, the Middle District has an enormous backlog of 987 civil cases and 215 pending criminal cases. Dozens of convicted felons are awaiting sentencing.

"Yet, despite having been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee with broad bipartisan support, the nominations of Brian Jackson and Beth Foote have been stalled for 71 days and counting. This is unacceptable. Louisianians need these well-qualified individuals on the bench without further delay."

In recent months, Republicans have blocked a series of nominations – including Jackson and Foote – from being approved by unanimous consent. Today, nearly 100 nominations are pending before the United States Senate.