

January 7, 2009

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman
The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
SD-224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6275

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Specter:

We are pleased to be able to write in support of Eric Holder, a man who stands with the most qualified who have been privileged to be nominated to be Attorney General of the United States. President-Elect Obama's nomination of Eric as the historic appointment of our first African-American Attorney General should be hailed as a milestone. He is an extraordinary lawyer and an even better person. We would hope that Eric would be confirmed swiftly as a key component of the President's National Security Team.

Eric Holder has a lifetime of public service to this country. His 30 year professional career has been consistently characterized by unfailing integrity and a commitment to political independence. Eric began his career as a federal prosecutor in the Public Integrity Section of the U.S. Department of Justice. There he tried many cases and prosecuted successfully widely heralded public corruption cases against officials from both political parties. Thereafter, Eric was appointed a D.C. Superior Court Judge by President Reagan and served with distinction on the Bench for five years. As a Judge, Eric had a sterling reputation for being both tough on crime but fair to all litigants. He was then appointed the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia in 1993. As Washington, D.C.'s U.S. Attorney Eric ran one of the largest and most important prosecutorial offices in the country from 1993-1997. While U.S. Attorney he oversaw the prosecution and conviction of ex-Congressman Dan Rostenkowski (D. Ill.) among other substantial achievements. Once again, his reputation was tough on crime but always fair and professional. From 1997 to 2001 Eric served as Deputy Attorney General, the critically important number two job at the Department of Justice. There he gained invaluable experience for his current nomination and developed a bipartisan reputation, making difficult decisions such as recommending that Kenneth Starr's investigation of a sitting Democratic President be expanded.

From 2001 to the present Eric has practiced law as a Partner in the prestigious Washington, D.C. law firm of Covington & Burling. There he has experienced our criminal justice system from the other side of the fence as one of Washington's leading white collar defense counsel. While at Covington Eric also represented major companies and executives in a wide variety of complex litigation and internal investigations.

While everyone seems to agree with us that Eric is extraordinarily well qualified to be Attorney General, some have raised questions about certain Presidential pardons issued by President Clinton on the day before he left office. Mentioned most prominently was the Marc Rich pardon. The short answer to any and all of these questions is that the power to issue a Presidential Pardon is a clear plenary power of any President. It is his or hers alone to execute and justify. A Presidential

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pardon is then unreviewable. Virtually no one disputes that Eric was an outstanding Deputy Attorney General in every respect, President Clinton's pardons notwithstanding.

Due to his character and experience, Eric today enjoys the endorsement of literally thousands of law enforcement officials from across the country, including NAPO (National Association of Police Organizations), NDAA (National District Attorneys Association), PERF (Police Executive Research Forum), NSA (National Sheriffs' Association), NAAUSA (National Association of Assistant U.S. Attorneys) and NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives). From his experience Eric fully understands and appreciates the constant threat posed by Al Qaeda and Islamic extremists. As former federal prosecutors and senior officials of the Department of Justice we are profoundly aware of the challenges that the Department and the country are facing. Eric Holder is the right man at the right time to protect our citizens in the critical years ahead.

In closing, we note that not only is Eric superbly qualified to be Attorney General, but he is a truly good man. He is the father of three children and the devoted husband of Dr. Sharon Malone. As a kid from New York City's public schools who made it to and through Columbia University and its Law School, Eric is indeed another great American success story. We urge his rapid confirmation as our next Attorney General of the United States.

Sincerely,

William P. Barr
Former General Counsel, Verizon Corp.
Former Attorney General of the United States

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Former United States Attorney for the
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cc: Judiciary Committee Members