



international organization for victim assistance

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President

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Honorable Barack Obama
President-elect, United States of America
c/o David Ogden
Presidential Transition Team
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President-elect Obama,

We join many of our colleagues in the crime victims' movement in enthusiastically commending your nomination of Eric Holder to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

Time and again, as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, Mr. Holder put into practice a victim-centered approach to the administration of justice. Concerning another former prosecutor, Janet Reno, we said proudly at the time of her nomination as Attorney General, paraphrasing Conrad, "she is one of us." A handful of graduates of the U.S. Attorney's office in Washington have earned that place of kinship within our movement, such as Donald Santarelli, Charles Work, and Reggie Walton. Eric Holder is the most recent member of this honor roll.

- Under Mr. Holder's leadership in the U.S. Attorney's office, the victim/witness assistance program was increased from six to twenty-four advocates, and its chief was elevated to the ranks of his senior staff.
- Within that unit, he hired specialists to focus on the special needs of the families of homicide victims, of sexual assault victims, and victims of domestic violence. Regarding domestic violence victims in particular, he set up innovative advocacy services in both the Superior Court and the U.S. District Court.
- His concerns for child victims led to his supporting the creation of a "Kids' Court" and the employment of a forensic child interviewer in the office, but it extended far beyond the special care children need as prosecution witnesses. He was perhaps the most influential supporter behind the founding of the D.C. Child Advocacy Center, and later, as Deputy Attorney General, he was the driving influence behind the Department's "Children Exposed to Violence" initiative.

It is now common, we believe, for those in the justice system to hold a genuine sympathy for the casualties of crime, and we applaud that sense of empathy among our justice officials. But we reserve a special place in our hearts for those who transform goodwill toward victims into concrete measures of reform. Such a figure is Eric Holder.

Sincerely,

Marlene A. Young, Ph.D., J.D.
President