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December 22, 2008

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

Re: Nomination of Eric Holder as Attorney General

Dear Senators Leahy and Specter:

It has been some time since I last appeared before your Committee, and I am always grateful for the gracious and generous manner in which you received my appearances in a variety of capacities from Administrator of the DEA to Undersecretary for the Department of Homeland Security. The purpose of this letter is somewhat different, but of even greater importance.

I am pleased to express my support for Eric Holder as the next Attorney General of the United States. I know that your committee will thoroughly review this nomination and conduct hearings. I hope my comments will be beneficial to you as you deliberate this appointment, which I believe is the most important position in the administration. Without an Attorney General who is steadfastly loyal to the principles of justice, the government will not have the confidence and trust of the American people. I have known Eric Holder for more than 10 years, and I have observed his conduct as a lawyer and public official. It is my sincere belief that Eric will be the kind of Attorney General who puts the law first and political considerations second. I am confident that he will protect the institutional independence of the Department of Justice and follow the law, no matter where it may lead.

As a former federal prosecutor myself, I followed the work of Eric Holder as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, as he prosecuted Congressman Dan Rostenkowski on corruption charges. The Rostenkowski prosecution was important to help restore the public's confidence in government, which had been rocked with scandal. He helped protect the institution of Congress, of which I was honored to serve as a representative from the State of Arkansas from 1997 to 2001.

You are both very familiar with the Congressional investigations and oversight hearings on various controversies and scandals in the Clinton administration. We all had

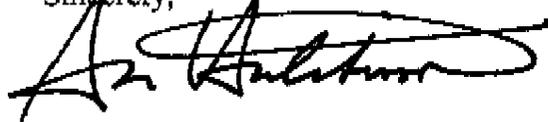
leading roles as the necessary Congressional hearings were conducted. It was during that time that I personally observed the integrity and commitment of Eric Holder to the rule of law. Eric served with distinction and extraordinary commitment as Deputy Attorney General under Attorney General Janet Reno. It was during that time he recommended to Attorney General Reno to expand the scope of the Independent Counsel investigation of then President Clinton. His decision demonstrates that Mr. Holder can make the tough call even when it goes against the administration in which he serves.

I served on the House Judiciary Committee and the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. While I served on the committees, Mr. Holder had occasion to testify on more than one occasion, and I always found Mr. Holder responsive to Congress and personally accommodating to the important role Congress plays in our system of checks and balances. While I certainly did not agree with every position Mr. Holder took while he served as Deputy Attorney General, I always found him to be truthful and forthcoming in his dealings with Congress and with me personally.

It is absolutely critical that our nation has an Attorney General who understands the criminal justice system and has personal experience as a front line prosecutor. As United States Attorney, Mr. Holder understands law enforcement, the courts and all the ingredients necessary to give justice the best chance of success in an imperfect society. Because of his experience and demonstrated love for the cause of justice and respect for the independence of the Department of Justice, it is my privilege to express support for Eric Holder, and for his confirmation as Attorney General of the United States.

With highest respect and warm regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson", written over a horizontal line.

Asa Hutchinson

Member of Congress (1997-2001)
Administrator, DEA (2001-2003)
Undersecretary, DHS (2003-2005)