



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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December 22, 2008 VIA FACSIMILE

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
FAX (202) 224-9516

The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
FAX (202) 224-9102

Dear Senators Leahy and Specter:

On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association, I am writing to express our strong support for the nomination of Eric Holder to be the Attorney General of the United States. We urge you to confirm his nomination without delay.

Mr. Holder has an outstanding record of public service in his role as a federal prosecutor, a trial judge, the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia and the Deputy Attorney General for the Department of Justice. We believe that Mr. Holder is the right candidate to lead the Department of Justice to guide us in strength, respect and independence and ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice for the nation.

During his tenure at the Department of Justice, Mr. Holder was instrumental in the implementation of the Anti-Violent Crime Initiative, a strategy created to forge partnerships among law enforcement agencies at every level of government. A key element in the success of the Anti-Violent Crime Initiative was community policing, an idea developed by local law enforcement and implemented by the Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The COPS program is undoubtedly the most successful federal law enforcement program in the nation's history.

In addition to his record of fostering a strong partnership with local law enforcement from an "enforcement" perspective, Mr. Holder has demonstrated his commitment to crime prevention through his strong support for innovative community policing strategies aimed at domestic violence.

As elected law enforcement officials, sheriffs not only respond to crimes and enforce the law, but are intimately attuned to the needs of the communities that we serve. We continue to be steadfast in our outreach efforts to victims of crimes, youths, to parents

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and to the elderly to build understanding and trust, all with the aim of making our neighborhoods safer places to live.

The nation's chief law enforcement officer must understand that to overcome the pathological environment of distrust which may exist between law enforcement and the communities they serve, we must continue to collectively reassess our methods for fighting crime. Without a strong partnership at all levels of government, the ultimate consequences are too great and troublesome, including increased criminality in affected neighborhoods and citizen reluctance to participate in the criminal process as the legitimacy of law and its enforcers are undermined.

But this mission will only be fully realized through the collaborative efforts of the law enforcement agencies and the community by employing effective community policing strategies and problem solving techniques, supported by aggressive enforcement of federal, state, and local laws.

It is in this spirit of partnership and a holistic approach to criminal justice that the National Sheriffs' Association fully supports the nomination of Mr. Holder to be the nation's top law enforcement officer. The nation's sheriffs are committed to doing everything we can to expand the kind of partnership and dialog essential to engender community confidence throughout the country.

As one of the largest law enforcement organizations in the nation, the National Sheriffs' Association is calling on the United States Senate to approve Eric Holder to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

Respectfully,



Sheriff David A. Goad
President



Aaron D. Kennard
Executive Director