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December 23, 2008

Chairman Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4502

Ranking Member Arlen Specter
U.S. Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3802

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Specter:

On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League, we write in support of President-Elect Obama's nomination of Eric H. Holder, Jr. to be the Attorney General. We have the highest regard for Mr. Holder and believe that he is uniquely qualified to serve our nation as Attorney General.

Rather than focus on the range of experiences and personal qualities which make Mr. Holder the right person for this position, we thought we would take this opportunity to offer the perspective of an organization that works closely with both the law enforcement and the civil rights communities. We have seen Mr. Holder in action from both perspectives, and particularly in connection with his work on hate crimes, he has demonstrated an ability to understand the appropriate balance. Appreciating and achieving that balance is not easy, but it is critical to the success of any Attorney General.

After his appointment as US Attorney for the District of Columbia in 1993, the League's Washington DC Regional Office worked closely and cooperatively with Mr. Holder to strengthen the enforcement of the District of Columbia's hate crimes law. The result was the creation of the District of Columbia Bias Crimes Task Force, an innovative and highly effective coalition of law enforcement and community organizations which became the model for the Hate Crimes Working Groups which were established in all ninety-four U.S. Attorney's Offices in the nation – police, prosecutors, and community groups. The groups have been successful because they have understood that good community relations, and respect for individual civil rights, are critical to the successful prosecution of hate crimes.

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Mr. Holder's work on hate crimes broadened when he serves as Deputy Attorney General. In that role, he supported a wide array of hate crime prevention initiatives within the Department of Justice and testified in support of expanded federal hate crime jurisdiction, a top domestic priority for the League, in May, 1999. In addition, Mr. Holder played an important role in promoting an aggressive Justice Department response to domestic and international terrorism.

Eric Holder has the experience, disposition, and skills necessary to lead the Department at this crucial time. We urge the Committee to act promptly and favorably on his nomination.

Sincerely,



Glen S. Lewy
National Chair



Abraham H. Foxman
National Director

GSL/AHF:dj

cc: Jess N. Hordes, ADL Washington Representative