

# **Crime Victim/Survivor Assistance Professionals' Support for Judge Merrick Garland's Appointment to Serve as U.S. Attorney General**

January 28, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schumer, Durbin, McConnell and Grassley:

We, the undersigned, are all individuals who have had 25 or more years' experience, both personally and professionally, as advocates for victims and survivors of crime. We have worked at the national, state, Tribal and local levels for system- and community-based victim service agencies and organizations, and as volunteers dedicated to helping victims and survivors recover from their traumatic experiences.

We are writing to express our strong, bipartisan support for the appointment of Judge Merrick Garland as Attorney General of the United States.

Judge Garland's previous roles at the Department of Justice, including as a Federal prosecutor, a Special Assistant to the Attorney General, an Assistant U.S. Attorney, a Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General, and as the Deputy Attorney General, make him uniquely qualified to rebuild the Department and the American public's confidence in it. He has served Attorneys General under Administrations of both political parties, demonstrating his unswerving dedication to ideals of justice. He is eminently qualified to restore independent leadership to this critical agency.

On a more personal level, many of the undersigned worked directly with Judge Garland when he led the investigation and prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing case. On April 19, 1995, while first responders were still searching for the injured and the dead in the ruins of the Alfred J. Murrah Federal Building, Judge Garland decided that he would not simply oversee the investigation from his Washington office. Instead, he said goodbye to his own family and flew to the largest and most complex crime scene anyone in American law enforcement had ever encountered at that time. Throughout the case, Judge Garland maintained close contact with those of us working with victims and survivors and surviving family members, as well as with law enforcement. With his towering intellect, exceptionally sound judgment, and extraordinary decency and compassion, he provided the leadership and wise counsel that helped us face both novel legal issues in the courtroom and unprecedented challenges in supporting a community of victims that numbered in the thousands. Judge Garland's support was critical, not just as a supervisor, but as a mentor, a counselor, and a protector of victims' rights.

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As Attorney General, Judge Garland will carry forth his commitment to equal justice for all. As crime victim/survivor advocates, we are confident that he will lead the Department as it fulfills its mission to, among other things, provide justice and assistance to victims and survivors of crime, and uphold the tenets of crime victims' statutes. Certainly, for us, among the most pressing issues is the protection of the rights of crime victims to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect. We know that, as Attorney General, Judge Garland will ensure complete and meaningful compliance with the Federal Crime Victims' Rights Act.

Equally important are those programs administered by the Department to provide resources for programs that directly serve and assist crime victims and survivors. Foremost are the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). These programs, along with USDOJ efforts to respond to mass violence (including environmental justice crimes) and terrorism, such as the International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP) and other mass violence/terrorism programs that arose out of the Pan Am 103 bombing, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the 9/11 attacks, are financially dependent upon deposits into the Crime Victims Fund, which is now in serious jeopardy. We know, from past experience, that Judge Garland understands the importance of these programs, and we are confident that he will lead the Department in a manner that will help secure these programs in the future.

It is with great pride that we, individually and collectively, offer our support for the nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to serve as our Attorney General. We appreciate your consideration of our recommendation, and look forward to continue to work closely with the U.S. Department of Justice on all issues related to comprehensive, quality victim/survivor assistance.

Sincerely,

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