



January 26, 2015

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of members of People For the American Way, we write to express our strong support for the nomination of Loretta Lynch as Attorney General of the United States. Lynch is highly qualified to run the Justice Department and become the nation's top law enforcement official.

The Department of Justice plays a powerful role in ensuring that America lives up to its responsibilities of liberty and justice for all. It plays a central role in enforcing the nation's civil rights laws, including those protecting the right to vote. It also ensures that our criminal laws are enforced in an effective and fair manner to keep us all safe, be it from violent criminals, terrorists, corporate malfeasors, or officials abusing their power and the public trust.

Lynch is no stranger to the Department of Justice. She worked as a federal prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York starting in 1990, serving in a number of leadership positions throughout the decade. In 1999, President Clinton elevated her to U.S. Attorney, a position she held until 2001. She was asked to return in 2010 when President Obama nominated her – and the Senate unanimously confirmed her – to serve again as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. She now manages an office of more than 160 Assistant U.S. Attorneys and 120 support staff to prevent, confront, and punish terrorism, community violence, human trafficking, financial fraud, public corruption, and other assaults on the rule of law.

While she has obvious expertise in the many issues that confront one of the most important districts in the nation, she also has a deep knowledge of the many issues confronting the Justice Department nationwide. She has been a member of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee for U.S. Attorneys since 2010, becoming its chair in 2013.

Support for civil rights is a prerequisite for anyone seeking to be Attorney General. Fortunately, Lynch, who would become the first African American woman to serve as Attorney General, has an unquestioned commitment to civil rights. The decisions she has made and the skill with which she has carried them out have protected ordinary people – citizens and noncitizens alike – whose rights have been violated.

Her commitment can be seen in her prosecution of hate crimes, which she recognizes as “offend[ing] the very principles upon which this country was founded.” It shows in her work with New York firefighters to eliminate racial discrimination in hiring, leading to an agreement where victims of discrimination received compensation and the fire department reformed its hiring process. Her commitment to the rights of ordinary people against the powerful can be seen in her prosecution of the rogue police officers who beat and sodomized Haitian immigrant Abner Louima, and in her prosecutions breaking up human trafficking rings that enslave victims and force them into prostitution.

In an era when Americans are more and more concerned about the unchecked power of corporate interests and their seeming immunity from the rules that govern the rest of us, Lynch and the Eastern District have been instrumental in obtaining record settlements against banks for misconduct related to residential mortgage-backed securities. For instance, Bank of America recently paid \$1 billion in the nation's largest False Claims Act settlement relating to mortgage fraud carried out by its Countrywide subsidiary.

But her commitment to people's rights goes even beyond her priorities and accomplishments at the Justice Department over the course of her public career. In 2005, while in private practice, she worked as Special Counsel to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, investigating allegations of witness tampering relating to the Rwandan genocide of the 1990s. She took on this critically important assignment on a pro bono basis.

The remarkable breadth of support her nomination commands from those across the ideological spectrum who know her best is a powerful indication of Lynch's abilities, her leadership, her independence, and her commitment to justice.

The Congressional Black Caucus urges her confirmation, citing her "distinguished record as United States Attorney" and her "high intellect and character."

Twenty-five former U.S. Attorneys who served under Democrats and Republicans alike write that they "believe that serving as U.S. Attorney provides a strong background to be Attorney General. Both because of that and because of her own strong personal qualifications, we believe that Ms. Lynch has the experience, temperament, independence, integrity, and judgment to immediately assume this critically important position."

The National District Attorneys Association writes that "[a]s prosecutors facing challenges in the field from violent crime, to human trafficking, to gangs and drug traffickers, our membership feels that Ms. Lynch understands the operational nature of these challenges and will be a strong independent voice at the helm of the Department."

President Obama has made a nomination that Senate Democrats and Republicans alike can support. Loretta Lynch would make an excellent Attorney General. She should have a fair hearing, devoted to her unquestioned qualifications, and a timely confirmation.

Sincerely,



Marge Baker
Executive Vice President for Policy and Program



Paul Gordon
Senior Legislative Counsel

cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee