



POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM

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Executive Director

December 12, 2008

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

Dear Senators Leahy and Specter,

On behalf of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse the nomination of Eric Holder to be the nation's next Attorney General.

PERF is a Washington, D.C.-based professional association of police chiefs and other leaders of local and state police departments. PERF also serves as a research and consulting firm specializing in helping police agencies to improve their policies and operations. PERF is governed by a board of directors of leading police chiefs.

As an organization that, on a daily basis, works with hundreds of local police chiefs and has its finger on the pulse of policing and homeland security issues, PERF is very familiar with the career of Eric Holder, and we have always been impressed by Mr. Holder's commitment to local police.

As recently as October 8, Mr. Holder spent several hours at a PERF meeting of police chiefs and mayors here in Washington—listening to their concerns about violent crime issues, the effect of the economic recession on police budgets and operations, and other matters. In addition, Mr. Holder made a presentation to PERF members detailing Sen. Barack Obama's positions on crime and justice issues, and listened as former Deputy Attorney General George J. Terwilliger III presented the views of Senator John McCain.

PERF has long been impressed not only with Eric Holder's impeccable career as a U.S. Attorney, federal judge, and Deputy Attorney General, but also with his strong understanding of the many challenges facing local police departments. Because Mr. Holder has experience as a career prosecutor, our members know that he has "been there" and understands what it is like to deal with violent crime. This real-world experience gives him strong credibility among police officials and others in the criminal justice system.

Furthermore, as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, Mr. Holder created a domestic violence unit, implemented a community prosecution initiative that involved working with local residents on public safety issues, expanded on a hate crimes program, developed a strategy to help prevent child abuse, improved a crime victim/witness program, and developed an "Operation Ceasefire" gun violence reduction program.

These are the very types of issues that local police executives have been dealing with in recent years. PERF's member chiefs have noticed that Mr. Holder has gone out of his way during his career to create new initiatives aimed at solving the types of problems faced by local police.

Indeed, at our October meeting, Mr. Holder said to our member police chiefs, "In an Obama Administration, one of the things that will be key is to be in partnership with the people in local and state law enforcement. We're going to listen to what you have to say." Those words were welcomed by many police chiefs who believe that federal policies sometimes seem to have been crafted without the benefit of their experience and expertise.

And of course, anyone who has followed Mr. Holder's career cannot help but be impressed by his brilliant intellect, his strong work ethic, and his lifetime of public service. He is an American success story, and his wide range of experience makes him ready to immediately assume the duties of the position of Attorney General.

On behalf of PERF, I urge you to give expeditious consideration to Mr. Holder's nomination and to confirm his appointment to this critically important post in the Obama Administration.

Respectfully,



Chuck Wexler
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