

July 13, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are 80 former senior officials of the United States Department of Justice who have served in administrations of both parties. We all care deeply about the Justice Department as an institution and about the caliber and integrity of the men and women who are entrusted with leading the Department and its critical components.

We also all personally know and/or have worked with Matt Olsen, President Biden's nominee to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, during his 22 years of government service as a federal prosecutor, as a leader in the Justice Department and as a senior official in the Intelligence Community. We have seen firsthand how Matt approaches his public service with absolute integrity and with unflinching commitment to the cause of justice and the interests of the American people. We are therefore proud to support his nomination, and we do so with enthusiasm and with firm conviction that his confirmation will enhance both our national security and the rule of law in our country.

Matt has been nominated to lead the National Security Division (NSD), a position that plays a vital role in the government's national security operations, integrating the Justice Department's law enforcement and intelligence components and coordinating its efforts against our foreign adversaries. Matt is perhaps uniquely qualified to serve in this role, having served as the Deputy Assistant Attorney General overseeing NSD's intelligence units when the division was first established in 2006 and then as the acting Assistant Attorney General during the presidential transition in 2009.

Matt's exceptional career of public service has garnered him the experience that will equip him to effectively handle the responsibilities of NSD from day one of his tenure. Starting with his work as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and through his years as a career prosecutor and senior national security official, Matt consistently demonstrated his commitment to justice and the rule of law and played a central leadership role in a number of important and complex challenges at the intersection of law and national security.

As a civil rights attorney, he worked to ensure equal voting rights for minority citizens. As a prosecutor in Washington, D.C. for over a decade, Matt handled a wide range of cases, including homicides and white-collar offenses, and was recognized with the Attorney General's Award for his advocacy work on a year-long racketeering trial. As senior counsel to FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, III, he supported the post-9/11 transformation of the FBI. In his roles as a national security official in the Justice Department and as the General Counsel of the National Security Agency, Matt led teams of national security attorneys and managed several sensitive programs and operations, working to ensure that the government exercised its authorities in a manner that was consistent with privacy interests and the rule of law.

In his last government post, Matt served as the Senate-confirmed Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). In this role, he led an intelligence agency charged with integrating terrorism information and "connecting the dots" that allow the Intelligence Community to combat terrorist threats in the United States and around the world. He regularly briefed the President and senior national security officials on terrorist plots and strategic trends, and he played a key role in developing policies to meet the evolving terrorist threat. As President Obama stated when Matt stepped down as NCTC Director, "Most Americans may not know Matt Olsen's name, but every American is safer because of his service."

Since his departure from federal service in 2015, Matt has maintained his focus on justice and national security issues, teaching classes at Harvard Law School and the University of Virginia on national security law and policy. He has also worked in private-sector roles that have both drawn upon and enhanced the skill set he developed during his government service. As the Chief Trust and Security Officer of a global technology company, Matt has responsibility for safeguarding the company's data against cyber threats and building its security and investigative capabilities. This hands-on experience in the private sector will be an invaluable asset as he takes on the responsibility for confronting our foreign cyber adversaries at the National Security Division.

In addition to his professional experience, Matt brings a personality and character that will make him a tremendously effective leader, both inside the Department and within the national security inter-agency process. Matt leads by example – by the example of his work ethic, his integrity, and his single-minded focus on doing what is right for the cause of justice – and in the process, he inspires and brings out the best in those around him. That brand of leadership is exactly what the National Security Division needs as it faces today's complex and evolving threats.

Given Matt's sterling character and exceptional record of public service, we are honored to provide our unqualified and enthusiastic support for his nomination. We can think of nobody better equipped to lead the National Security Division in this critical period, and we respectfully request that this Committee and the Senate confirm him as the next Assistant Attorney General for National Security.

Kent Alexander
United States Attorney
Northern District of Georgia (1994-97)

Malcolm Bales
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas (2009-16)

Alan Bersin
United States Attorney
Southern District of California (1993-98)

Lanny Breuer
Assistant Attorney General
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District of Nevada (2008-09)

Kenyen R. Brown
United States Attorney
Southern District of Alabama (2009-17)

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United States Attorney
Middle District of Florida (1999-2001)

Mark Calloway
United States Attorney
Western District of North Carolina (1994-2001)

Don Cazayoux
United States Attorney
Middle District of Louisiana (2010-13)

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United States Attorney
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Booth Goodwin
United States Attorney
Southern District of West Virginia (2010-15)

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Walt Green
United States Attorney
Middle District of Louisiana (2014-17)

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United States Attorney
District of Kansas (2010-16)

Melinda Haag
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Northern District of California (2010-16)

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Middle District of North Carolina (1994-2001)

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Northern District of Georgia (2015-17)

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District of New Mexico (2001-06)

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Office of Legislative Affairs (2003-06)
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(2006-08)

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Eastern District of Virginia (2006-08)
DEA Administrator (2015-17)

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District of Colorado (2010-16)

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FBI Director (1978-87)

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Middle District of Georgia (1981-86)
Northern District of Georgia (1990-93)

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