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February 15, 2022

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairperson
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairperson Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am pleased to write to enthusiastically support the nomination of Paul Monteiro to serve as Director of the Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS). At a time when hate crimes, white supremacist extremism, and bias-motivated attacks are surging in far too many American communities, it is more important than ever to ensure that CRS has strong leadership to fulfill its crucial mission.

The Community Relations Service serves a unique and vital function within the Department of Justice. CRS is the only federal agency dedicated to working on the ground with community groups to resolve local conflicts and prevent and respond to hate crimes and incidents. CRS works to build relationships with community stakeholders before tragedy occurs, helping ensure that crisis response can be both timely and meaningful. CRS's focus on prevention provides a unique value-add to communities, bringing experts to help problem solve and build local capacity to prevent and respond to conflict, tension, and bias-motivated incidents. CRS also provides crucial relationship-building programs designed to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community – work that is vital to effectively preventing and responding to hate crimes as many of the communities targeted by such violence often have a historically tense or mistrusting relationship with law enforcement.

CRS's work has never been more important. The FBI's annual hate crimes report revealed that hate crimes were at historic highs in 2020 as the pandemic raged. 2020 saw a 13 percent increase in reported hate crimes from the previous year – the highest total in nearly two decades. Reported hate crimes targeting Black people rose by at least 49 percent, and the number of anti-Asian hate crimes increased significantly. Hate crimes targeting the Jewish community continued to represent the largest portion of religion-based hate crimes, at nearly 55 percent. But the threats facing historically targeted communities are more than just statistics. The horrific hostage-taking at Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Colleyville, Texas on January 15, 2022 has once again brought

into stark relief the fact that synagogues and other Jewish institutions remain deeply vulnerable to violent, antisemitic attacks. Similarly, the mass shooting targeting three spas in the Atlanta metropolitan area in March 2021 that resulted in the death of eight people, including six Asian women, highlighted the lethal threats facing the AAPI community.

Paul Monteiro is an inspired choice to lead the agency often known as “America’s Peacemaker” in this moment in our nation’s history. Monteiro will hit the ground running, returning to the agency he led for more than year at the end of the Obama Administration. Under his leadership during his previous tenure at the agency, CRS mediators worked to address conflicts related to law enforcement-involved shootings as well as the rise of hate crimes targeting various groups. Monteiro’s existing familiarity with the agency, particularly his deep knowledge of its assets and understanding of the value it brings to communities, will make him an effective leader from the moment he is confirmed.

Monteiro’s other experiences only bolster his unique fitness to serve as Director of CRS. Monteiro has extensive expertise with community engagement and outreach, serving for four years in the White House Office of Public Engagement and as National Director of of the AmeriCorps VISTA program. In addition to these professional accomplishments, Monteiro exemplifies the values of public service and community engagement in his personal pursuits, particularly through his service on the Prince George's County Public Schools Board of Education, the Board of Governors of Wesley Theological Seminary, and the board of directors of Helping Children Worldwide, a nonprofit organization.

Several members of my senior staff at ADL and I had the privilege to call Paul a colleague and friend during his time serving in the Obama Administration and at Howard University. I found him to be a dynamic public policy professional, a creative thinker and problem-solver, and a dedicated public servant who always demonstrated the highest ethical values.

Paul Monteiro would be tremenous asset to the Department of Justice – and to American communities – and I strongly urge his swift confirmation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Greenblatt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Greenblatt".

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO & National Director