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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

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Director

January 14, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Leahy and Grassley,

I am writing to you in my personal and professional capacity as Director of the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation. I am writing to support the nomination of Leon Rodriguez to become the Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This letter is solely based on my professional evaluation of his capabilities at this capacity to serve as a senior government official in this critical area of national practice. It is both an honor and I believe my obligation to comment in a substantive manner on his nomination and I hope his confirmation to the position mentioned above.

Let me go directly to the heart of this matter. I worked with Leon Rodriguez in Montgomery County when he served as county attorney for this large metropolitan jurisdiction. While I am well aware of his exceptional work in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, and the Department of Health and Human Services, my contribution is to the individual and our working relationship in Montgomery County, Maryland.

I have worked as a "served at the pleasure" Director of Correction for over 36 years in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, King County, Washington and for the last 14 years in Montgomery County, Maryland. All are large metropolitan jurisdiction and each as the rough and tumble of difficult working environments, yet each as a reputation for good government. Leon Rodriguez is the finest county attorney that I have ever worked with in my long career as a successful appointed Director of County Correction.

This is an exceptional individual who is tough as nails and knows how to carry out executive responsibilities in a no nonsense manner. He is a thoroughly trained public policy and public service attorney who will have a very short learning curve into the specific of his new executive assignment.

Montgomery County Correctional Facility

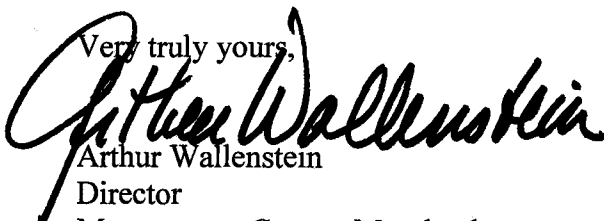
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His new area of practice also requires a well-defined level of sensitivity whether it is case management or the interpretation of existing federal policy guidelines. I have seen him walk that difficult line and I know his sense of personal ethics and legal judgment will always be defined by the rigor of extensive analysis and then direct action on the matters before him.

Leon brings enormous sensitivity to the public policy world of diversity, ethnicity and all elements that impact individuals who have sought out the United States as a place to live. I need to share one very tangible experience. Montgomery County developed an exemplary program to engage non-English speakers through the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) template. In our county, Leon and I were the only two department directors to serve on this committee. We both served as a matter of personal choice, recognizing the importance of governmental access for all individuals and in this case, individuals without English proficiency or even minimal English skill level. Leon never missed a meeting. He was an aggressive, sensitive advocate and made it clear to everyone on the Task Force that the county program must work in every office environment in Montgomery County. An exceptional policy was developed which later won the NACO Best Program, and I will suggest Leon Rodriguez played a driving role in the work that was completed. He walked the talk of serious management of administration and was absolutely clear where he was going.

Leon has strong criminal justice experience, deeply involved human services/accountability experience and he can lead a large staff both by personal example and by getting out and engaging his employees directly in the field. Leon Rodriguez has enormous potential and he has by definition accomplished a great deal up until the present. I do not know him outside of work, but individuals, whom I respect, hold him in the highest regard and I have never seen a single lapse or questionable issue regarding governmental or personal ethics. I would stake my reputation on the work of this individual. I strongly urge and support confirmation of Leon Rodriguez for the position of Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

Very truly yours,


Arthur Wallenstein
Director
Montgomery County Maryland