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**April 23, 2026**

**The Honorable Chuck Grassley**  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
*BY ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION*

Dear Senator Grassley,

I am writing to you today to offer my strongest possible endorsement of Don Berthiaume for the position of Department of Justice Inspector General, succeeding Michael Horowitz.

This may seem like an unexpected recommendation coming from me. Don Berthiaume investigated me for several years regarding the Jean Baptiste Kingery grenades case. The investigation was initiated because the Phoenix U.S. Attorney's Office did not appreciate my congressional testimony on June 15, 2011, about their unwillingness to prosecute legions of firearms traffickers in the prelude to Operation Fast and Furious. As you may recall, I contacted your office after former Attorney General Eric Holder, the Phoenix U.S. Attorney's Office, and ATF senior leadership publicly stated that Special Agent John Dodson was lying when he asserted that ATF let guns walk in Operation Fast and Furious. The allegations against me in the Kingery case were an attempt to discredit me and silence my whistleblowing. Their efforts were unsuccessful.

I also want to take this opportunity to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to you and your dedicated staff for having my back during the deeply difficult period that followed my protected disclosures regarding Operation Fast and Furious. At a time when powerful forces within the Department of Justice sought to discredit and silence me, the support of your office was not merely appreciated—it was a lifeline. Your commitment to protecting whistleblowers and holding government accountable, regardless of political consequence, is a testament to the kind of principled public service that our nation desperately needs. I am forever grateful.

Being accused of misconduct was one of the most stressful and terrifying experiences of my 35-year law enforcement career. I questioned whether I would be able to support my family. The investigation hung over my head like a dark cloud for years, affecting every aspect of my professional and personal life.

However, I must tell you this: Don Berthiaume did not take the politically easy path. He was tough, inquisitive, and unrelenting in his pursuit of the truth. Most importantly, he was fair.

As a whistleblower who risked everything—my career, my family's financial security, my professional relationships, and my reputation—to shine a light on government misconduct, I

fully understand how critically important the role of Inspectors General are in our system of government oversight. The Inspector General rightly serves as the conscience of federal agencies and the last line of defense against corruption and abuse of power. This is not a position for the timid or the politically motivated. It requires someone with the backbone to follow the facts wherever they lead, the integrity to resist pressure from powerful interests, and the fairness to treat all subjects of investigation with impartiality.

Don Berthiaume exemplifies these qualities. While investigating me, he could have easily taken the path of least resistance—accepting the narrative pushed by prosecutors and senior officials at face value. Instead, he conducted a thorough, multi-year inquiry. He asked hard questions. He pushed when others might have backed away. He didn't give me a pass, but he also didn't railroad me to satisfy political objectives.

The DOJ Inspector General's Office needs leadership that understands the delicate balance between holding government officials accountable and ensuring that investigations themselves are conducted fairly. Don Berthiaume has demonstrated he possesses this understanding. His investigation of me, while personally difficult, showed me that he is capable of navigating complex, politically charged cases while maintaining his professional integrity.

As you know from our work together on Fast and Furious and Kingery, government accountability depends on having principled investigators who will not be swayed by political pressure or institutional bias. The next Inspector General will face tremendous challenges in investigating misconduct within the Department of Justice—an agency that has shown itself capable of circling the wagons and protecting its own. This position requires someone who cannot be intimidated, cannot be bought, and will not compromise the truth for political expediency.

Since retiring, I have endeavored to ensure that my 35 years in law enforcement continue to serve a purpose beyond my own career. Walking away from a profession that defined me for over three decades was not easy—it never is for those who have given their lives to this work. But I have come to understand that retirement does not mean the end of service; it simply changes its form. I have volunteered my time with Empower Oversight, a government watchdog non-profit founded by two former members of your staff—Jason Foster and Tristan Leavitt—whose dedication to transparency and accountability reflects the values I witnessed in your office. I have spoken to numerous law enforcement groups about the hard lessons learned from Operation Fast and Furious and the critical importance of ethical leadership at every level of government. And I now serve as the Director of Law Enforcement Affairs for the Federal Law Enforcement Foundation, where I can continue to advocate for the men and women who serve on the front lines of this nation's law enforcement community. I view writing this letter as very much a continuation of that service—something I will always be quite passionate about.

Beyond my experience as the subject of his investigation, I have had the opportunity to speak with Don Berthiaume since my retirement. In those conversations, he has shared his vision for how oversight should be conducted at the Department of Justice—a vision grounded in independence, impartiality, and an unwavering commitment to following the evidence wherever it leads. Having spent years as an ATF executive and having witnessed firsthand the institutional

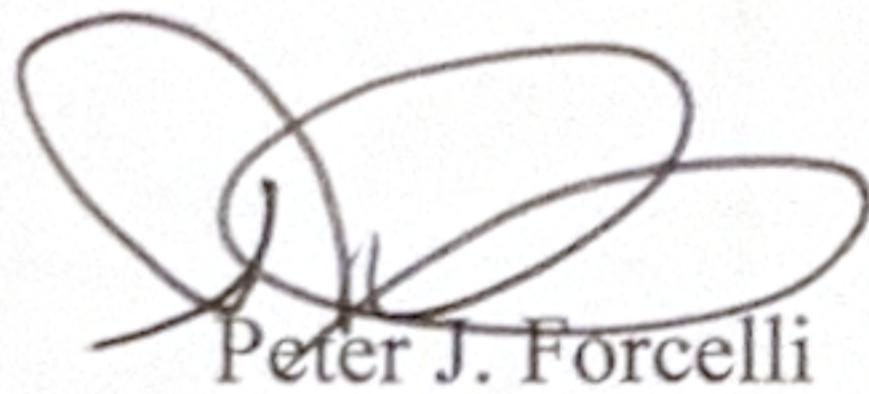
failures and political pressures that can corrupt the oversight process, I can say with confidence that his vision is precisely what the Department of Justice needs. He understands not only how oversight should work in theory, but how it must function in practice within a department that is not always eager to be held accountable.

Based on my direct experience as the subject of his investigation and as a former Senior Executive Service member of the United States Department of Justice who is passionate about the importance of good and honest government, I believe Don Berthiaume is an exceptional nominee for this role. There is simply no better candidate for this critical position.

I respectfully urge you to support his confirmation for the position of Inspector General of the United States Department of Justice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Peter J. Forcelli