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February 13, 2013

THE HONORABLE PATRICK LEAHY  
CHAIRMAN  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
224 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BLDG  
WASHINGTON DC 20510

Re: Nomination of B. Todd Jones as ATF Director

Dear Senator Leahy:

I have had the privilege of serving as the Dakota County Attorney since 1987 and am the longest serving County Attorney in the metropolitan area of the Twin Cities. I also have served as a member of the Board of Directors of the National District Attorneys Association since 1987 and the Minnesota County Attorneys Association since 1988. In my role as the County Attorney in our state's 3rd largest county, I have worked closely with the United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota.

I am writing to provide my strong recommendation for the confirmation of B. Todd Jones as the next Director of the United States Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (commonly referred to as ATF). I have had the privilege of working with Todd Jones throughout both of his terms as the United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota. I can tell you without hesitation that Todd Jones has been an outstanding United States Attorney who has developed a close working relationship not only with me, but with other County Attorneys throughout Minnesota. He has worked hard to forge a partnership with our state's prosecutors which has always been greatly appreciated.

Todd Jones has always been available to meet and discuss items concerning the prosecution of crime with me and my colleagues. He has, in fact, gone out of his way to communicate with Minnesota's County Attorneys by often attending the Board of Directors meetings of the Minnesota County Attorneys Association and the Minnesota Urban County Attorneys Association (the latter organization is comprised of County Attorneys in our state's largest jurisdictions). Whenever he attends one of these meetings, he provides us with updates regarding the work and priorities of his office. He is always open to questions and considers our input when offered.

Criminal Division  
Scott A. Hersey, Head

Community Relations Director  
Monica Jensen

Civil Division  
Jay R. Stassen, Head

Victim/Witness Supervisor  
Kelly Nicholson

Office Manager  
Patricia Ronken

Child Support Enforcement Division  
Sandra M. Torgerson, Head

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Beyond these interactions, Todd Jones has spoken at training sessions for Minnesota's County Attorneys on several occasions, most recently at a training provided to the senior managers of Minnesota's largest County Attorney's offices. He is a great speaker who is always well prepared and well received. On another occasion during his first tenure as our U.S. Attorney, Todd Jones actually came to Dakota County to speak to all of the attorneys working in my office. I mention this to reflect upon Todd's willingness to share with his state colleagues his insight and knowledge despite the many obligations of his job in serving as our state's leading federal litigator.

Throughout his tenure as United States Attorney, Todd Jones has managed his office with professionalism and integrity. In my opinion, his leadership and management skills are superb. He is always upfront and open, acknowledging as he must when he is not at liberty to discuss certain matters due to national security or privacy concerns, but he has never been evasive or misleading in any of my interactions with him. To the contrary, what you see with Todd Jones is what you get – and that is a man of honor and integrity who has served his nation and state with impeccable skills, wisdom and devotion throughout his career, both in the military and as the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota.

I am grateful for the opportunity that I have had to work with Todd Jones as the United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota and I do not believe that you can find anyone more qualified to carry out the important duties of leading the ATF. Thank you for considering my recommendation for B. Todd Jones. Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Very truly yours,



JAMES C. BACKSTROM  
DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY

JCB:jl

cc: The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
The Honorable Al Franken