

September 19, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am honored to provide this statement in support of the nomination of Amy L. Solomon to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice. I have worked with Ms. Solomon for more than a quarter century, at times as her supervisor, sometimes as her co-author, always as a friend and mentor. Based on this history, and my deep experience in the criminal justice field, I offer my support without qualification.

Allow me first to set forth my relationship with Ms. Solomon. From 1994 to 2000, I was privileged to serve as Director of the National Institute of Justice, nominated by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate. Before assuming this position, I had extensive experience in the criminal justice field, most recently as Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matters in the New York City Police Department, and was excited by the opportunity to lead the nation's premier research institute on the issues of crime and justice. Soon after the Senate confirmed my nomination, Congress authorized significant new funding for the National Institute of Justice to carry out research on a variety of criminal justice topics. To execute these responsibilities, the Justice Department approved new positions at NIJ. As we started our search for applicants, I received a call from Frank Hartmann, director of the Program in Criminal Justice at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, who recommended a woman he called "the best graduate student I have ever taught." That student was Amy Solomon. My colleagues at NIJ and I interviewed her and she was hired.

The intervening years have proven that Prof. Hartmann was right. Beginning with her service at NIJ, continuing through her position at the Urban Institute, then back to DOJ in the Obama Administration, and subsequently at Arnold Ventures, Amy Solomon has again and again demonstrated her brilliance, strategic savvy, good judgment, professional ethics and commitment to the cause of justice reform. In my opinion, she is one of the most gifted people I have ever worked with. If she is confirmed as Assistant Attorney General, the nation will be the beneficiary.

I have worked closely with Amy over this extensive time period and have had the privilege of watching her rise to her current position as a national leader in the justice reform sector. At NIJ, Amy led a number of our critical strategic initiatives, including our pioneering work on violence reduction strategies, the use of crime mapping techniques to guide crime prevention efforts, and a research effort to define the criminal justice challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the last year of the Clinton Administration, Amy and I started working closely together, with Attorney General Reno, on a topic that

became a defining feature of our working relationship – prisoner reentry. The Attorney General had asked us to answer the question, “What is the country doing to support people leaving prison?” Together we launched a suite of programs at DOJ, in close consultation with the Domestic Policy Council, the Office of Management and Budget and other cabinet agencies to focus new attention to the challenges of prisoner reentry. Amy was a critical thought-partner in these efforts, drawing on her extensive experience working in community corrections and her expertise in program evaluations.

As the Administration was coming to a close, I was recruited to join the Urban Institute as a Senior Fellow in the nascent Justice Policy Center. My agreement with the Institute was that they would provide support for the launch of a research program on prisoner reentry, and that I could hire a small team to support this work. With this agreement in place, I reached out to Amy (and one other NIJ colleague) and asked her to join me. I could not imagine a better partner on this new venture and was thrilled when she agreed.

Our work together at the Urban Institute was exhilarating. Together, we launched a multi-faceted portfolio of projects on prisoner reentry – including basic research on the experience of leaving prison, general audience publications, scholarly articles, policy analysis, and after President George W. Bush announced the Second Chance initiative, working with legislative staff on the contours of that landmark bill. The cornerstone of our portfolio was the Reentry Roundtable, which Amy and I conceived as a vehicle for generating interest in the reentry issues within a wide range of policy audiences. In a relatively short time, we had convened eight meetings of the Roundtable, in multiple cities around the country, resulting in several publications. Amy was the genius behind the Roundtable concept and demonstrated her special gift of bridging the distance between research and practice, the academy and politics, the communities and individuals most affected by incarceration and those public servants who were responsible for carrying out our country’s sentencing and corrections policies.

I left the Urban Institute in 2004 and watched from afar as Amy continued this work, brilliantly building a portfolio on reentry from jails. When the Obama Administration began, and Attorney General Holder was looking for talent to continue the work on justice reform, Amy once again joined the Office of Justice Programs, working for the Assistant Attorney General, Laurie Robinson. Once again, she demonstrated her unique ability to build coalitions, work through bureaucratic hurdles to get things done, and all the time keep her focus on the north star called “justice.” Several concrete accomplishments stand out – the creation of the federal reentry council (leveraging the resources of all cabinet agencies to improve outcomes for our fellow citizens facing the challenges of returning home); the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Safety (focusing on new strategies to reduce violence, improve policing, and promote racial reconciliation between law enforcement and the community); the Executive Session on Community Corrections at Harvard’s Kennedy School (to re-imagine community corrections); and the launch of the Second Chance Fellows program (bringing formerly incarcerated individuals into the policy-making process at the Office of Justice Programs). All of these demonstrated her truly unique ability to create a vision, bring people to support that vision, and execute on her vision.

Amy left government at the end of the Obama Administration and we found that we would once again have an opportunity to work together – we both joined the Laura and John Arnold Foundation (now Arnold Ventures) as this major philanthropy was seeking to expand its impact on the justice reform movement. What a pleasure it was to watch the Amy Solomon magic at work! In a few short years, she had built out an impressive portfolio of projects un the broad heading of “corrections reform” – including probation and parole, sentencing and corrections, reentry and reintegration and fines and

fees. When she accepted the call to return to public service at the Department of Justice, she left behind a talented team and a diverse national network that continues to carry out the ambitious reform agenda she designed. We at Arnold Ventures are in awe of what she accomplished

I cannot imagine a better nominee for the position of Assistant Attorney General. Since returning to the Office of Justice Programs, Amy Solomon has – once again -- demonstrated her unparalleled leadership capabilities. Those of us who have worked with her are not surprised. And I am honored to offer these comments on her behalf.

Sincerely yours,

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