



**January 9, 2017**

**Chair Charles E. Grassley**

U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein**

U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee  
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:**

The Bus Federation writes today in strong opposition to the nomination of Senator Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III as Attorney General of the United States. The Attorney General and Department of Justice are charged first and foremost with protecting the safety of Americans while ensuring that our civil rights are respected. Senator Sessions' record as a prosecutor and Senator makes clear that his priorities would threaten the health and livelihoods of millions of Americans, weaken our commitment to civil rights, turn a blind eye to very real public safety threats, and dedicate federal resources to harassing Americans for activities that enjoy widespread popular support.

The Bus Federation writes in opposition as a voice of younger Americans. Our organization supports and scales the work of local organizations, building a movement of young people, by young people, and for all people. We represent a network of local young people's organizations from Seattle, Washington to Miami, Florida.

As nonpartisan young voter mobilization experts, we have assisted millions of young Americans to register and vote over the past decade. Our work serves Republicans, Democrats, and unaffiliated voters to ensure that young Americans have a voice in our great democracy. Based on this experience, we believe the people of the United States would greatly suffer under an Attorney General as openly hostile to voting rights as Senator Sessions. From calling the Voting Rights Act a "piece of intrusive legislation," to using his power as U.S. Attorney to lead a jury-rejected prosecution of Alabama civil rights leaders for leading voter registration drives, Senator Sessions's career indicates an inclination to use his power to disenfranchise voters rather than protect their rights. This would be an extraordinary break from American tradition and values, as the Department of Justice has served as the last line of defense for voting rights under Republican and Democratic presidents alike.

Despite a self-professed belief in states' rights, Senator Sessions has demonstrated hostility toward the rights of many states to govern themselves without interference from the federal Department of Justice, particularly as it concerns cannabis-related laws. A number of states, driven by popular sentiment at the polls, have moved to legalize and regulate cannabis for recreational or medicinal purposes. As laws have changed and the federal government has indicated a tolerant approach to shifts in state policy driven by popular demand, a number of individuals and businesses have established personal or



commercial cannabis activity. Due to his belief that “good people don't smoke marijuana”, Senator Sessions has made myriad public statements giving strong indication that he will pursue actions to target these individuals and businesses, strip billions of dollars out of our states’ economies, come between doctors and their patients, and go against overwhelming public opinion.

Equally unsettling is Senator Sessions’s cavalier, and even encouraging attitude toward extrajudicial government infringement on the constitutionally protected rights of American citizens. Senator Sessions is arguably the US Senate’s foremost defender of civil asset forfeiture, a process by which an individual’s property may be seized on suspicion that the property is connected to a crime. The action requires no conviction in a court of law and puts the burden of proof on individuals in a way that is firmly out-of-step with fundamental traditions of our legal system. Senator Sessions stated in 2015 that he is “very unhappy” with criticism of the practice, that it’s “not wrong” and that “95%” of victims of civil asset forfeiture have “done nothing with their lives but sell dope.” Given the important role of the Department of Justice in encouraging and supporting best practices in law enforcement, Senator Sessions’s support for this deeply unfair program should trouble every American.

Despite advances in policy and practice, the United States has a long ways to go in pursuit of ending sexual assault and partner violence. We find deeply inappropriate Senator Sessions’ glib remarks about sexual assault. His rejection of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization in 2013 raises additional questions regarding his commitment to protecting the safety of all Americans.

Finally, Senator Sessions has defined his career in opposition to immigration of all kinds, ranging from vitriolic attacks on undocumented immigrants to regular insistence that the United States curtail legal immigration. Many in our nation have waited decades for the Congress to set credible policy on immigration. Senator Sessions himself has been a major barrier to adoption of popular, coherent, bipartisan immigration reforms. If confirmed, his record indicates that he will dedicate significant federal resources to breaking up families and initiating costly, needless fights with state and city governments in the US.

Based on this record, we strongly urge you to oppose Senator Jeff Sessions for attorney general.

**Sincerely,**

**Matthew Singer**  
**Executive Director, The Bus Federation**

CC: Members of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee