

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate Committee
on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

January 10, 2017

Dear Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, and Members of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee,



YWCA USA
1020 19th Street NW, Suite
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Washington, D.C., 20036
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On behalf of YWCA USA, I write to express our opposition to the nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions for Attorney General of the United States of America. As one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, serving over 2 million women, girls and families, YWCA USA is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities. We have been at the forefront of the most pressing social movements for more than 150 years — from voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity, from violence prevention to health care reform. Today, our 217 local associations in 47 states and the District of Columbia combine programming and advocacy in order to generate institutional change in three key areas: racial justice and civil rights, empowerment and economic advancement of women and girls, and health and safety of women and girls. Notably, YWCA is the largest provider of domestic violence services in the country.

YWCA USA has grave concerns about Mr. Sessions' record as a U.S. Senator and as a state and federal prosecutor with respect to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, and his record on civil rights. Senator Session's record demonstrates a profound lack of support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault: he opposed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and has promoted policies that harm immigrant victims and survivors. His record also demonstrates a history of undermining critical civil rights protections: he has promoted racially discriminatory laws and policies, and he voted against legislation that made targeted violence against LGBTQ people a hate crime.

We are also concerned by the significant omissions in Senator Sessions' responses to the committee's questionnaire. Proceeding with consideration of his nomination without more forthcoming and detailed responses to these questions leaves the American people without critical information needed to assess his commitment to protecting survivors of gender-based violence and

constituencies impacted by civil rights violations the Department of Justice is tasked with enforcing.

The written role of the Attorney General, as head of the Department of Justice and chief law enforcement officer of the Federal Government, is to represent the United States in legal matters, including affording equal protection under our criminal, civil and civil rights laws to all individuals within our society.¹ YWCA USA believes deeply that our nation needs an attorney general who will help restore faith in our justice system. We need a leader who will bring together members of local communities, law enforcement agencies, churches and civil rights organizations, and ensure that law enforcement agencies receive adequate training, document racial profiling incidents, and are held to high standards. In light of his record on equal opportunity, equal protection, and gender-based violence, we do not believe that Senator Jeff Sessions is that leader. We ask you, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to ask him direct questions regarding the concerns we have raised in this letter and to oppose his nomination as Attorney General.



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Best Regards,

Dara Richardson-Heron, MD
CEO, YWCA USA

¹ 28 U.S.C. §§ 516, 519.