

January 13, 2017

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The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chair
Committee on Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing to express our strong opposition to the nomination of Senator Jefferson "Jeff" Sessions to be Attorney General (AG) of the United States. Sen. Sessions' record on civil rights and immigration are inconsistent with the critical mission of the Department of Justice, and we cannot support his nomination to be chief law enforcement officer of our nation. His nomination should be rejected.

The U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has the responsibility to uphold the laws of the land, particularly those laws supporting the civil rights of all Americans. AFSCME, as an organization, has a rich history in this struggle and is compelled to support only those leaders who will enforce laws fairly, without personal bias, and who will defend the constitutional freedoms of all American citizens regardless of race, religion, class, gender identity, sexual orientation or national origin. Senator Sessions' record is unsettling on key civil rights issues like voting rights, immigration, and protections for our brothers and sisters in the LGBTQ community.

Throughout his service in Congress Sen. Sessions has consistently voted against key civil rights reforms. He has made no secret of his personal views, which raises serious questions about his ability to remain an impartial steward of the law on many pressing civil rights questions, including those dealing with voting rights, racial justice and other issues. In particular, he has called the Voting Rights Act of 1965 "intrusive" and has been accused of failing to protect voting rights of advocates who were working to register minority voters.

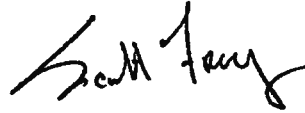
Comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) is one of the most important civil rights challenges in our country today. In 2010 when he had an opportunity to show his leadership, as Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, he voted against the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act that protects children and provides a pathway for legal status for the thousands who were brought to this country at no fault of their own. Sen. Sessions has repeatedly voted against CIR – in 2006, 2007, and in 2013. At DOJ, he would be in a position to shape the character of the next administration's approach to what should be equality and civil justice to undocumented persons. However, we share with many in our nation, legitimate anxiety

that his views on immigration may further inflame growing hostility toward those seeking legal status based on country of origin and race. This issue is particularly important to AFSCME members who are either immigrants themselves or who have family members who are immigrants. The AG should have a strong demonstrated public support for pathways to citizenship for undocumented people of diverse backgrounds.

Finally, Sen. Sessions has a checkered civil rights record on LGBTQ matters. Senator Sessions opposed inclusion of LGBTQ people in the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and in the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. Hate crimes against many groups seem to be increasing across the nation especially targeted toward persons identified with the LGBTQ community.

Again, Sen. Sessions' views on these core issues are out of step with many Americans, and inconsistent with the mission of the Department of Justice. We ask you to oppose his nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Frey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott Frey
Director of Federal Government Affairs

SF:KLS:mc