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February 18, 2014

Via Federal Express and E-mail

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4502

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-4502

Re: Leslie Caldwell, Nominee for Assistant Attorney General,
Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

I respectfully submit this letter in support of the nomination of Leslie Caldwell to be the next Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. I have known Leslie for approximately twenty five years and I am very familiar with her many professional accomplishments, and strong personal attributes and outstanding character. These accomplishments and traits will serve her and the DOJ well in her new role as the AAG for the Criminal Division should she be confirmed for that very important position.

I served in the U.S. DOJ from 1988-1994 and that is when I first met Leslie. I served as an AUSA in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of NY from 1988-1992, and then as a Deputy Chief in the Criminal Division of the U.S. DOJ in Washington, DC, from 1992-1994. During that time I (and my family) observed firsthand what an outstanding

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federal prosecutor and public servant Leslie was and would continue to be throughout her career. In the early morning hours of February 26, 1988, one of my younger brothers, rookie New York City Police Officer Eddie Byrne, was assassinated while he was on duty in a marked police car in South Jamaica, Queens. My brother Eddie was ambushed and assassinated by an extremely violent crack gang. That violent drug gang acted on the order from a jailed drug dealer and violent convicted felon, Howard “Pappy” Mason, to kill a cop. Mason had been sent back to NY state prison earlier in February 1988. Using a telephone for prisoners from his NY State prison, Mason ordered his gang to kill a cop to send a “message” to the cops that because he was sent back to jail, he and his violent drug gang would retaliate by killing a cop.

At the time that Eddie was assassinated (just 5 days after his 22nd birthday) he was on duty in a fixed post in the 103 Police Precinct in South Jamaica, Queens. Eddie was working the midnight to 8 am shift on February 26th, guarding the home of a Guyanese immigrant named Arjune. Arjune had previously called the police several times about drug dealers in his neighborhood and he had agreed to testify against them. As a result of Arjune’s heroic efforts, he and his family were repeatedly threatened and his home was firebombed prior to the night that Eddie was assassinated. To protect Arjune and his family, the NYPD established around the clock protection outside of his home with a marked police car manned by one NYC Police Officer at all times. When Mason’s drug gang readily complied with the order from Mason to murder a NYC Police Officer, they already knew that a single Police Officer would be sitting alone in marked police car on the night they ambushed and assassinated Eddie.

The premeditated assassination of rookie NYC Police Officer Byrne by a jailed, convicted drug dealer and his violent drug gang was an unprecedented crime at the time (and since then). It was meant to send a message of intimidation to all Police Officers and law enforcement personnel by violent drug dealers who ravaged the South Jamaica, Queens’s community (and many other parts of NYC) in the 1980’s. This was a crime that shocked New York City and the entire nation. This crime was a terrible tragedy for my entire family. My Dad was a NYC Police Officer for 22 years; one of my other brothers has been an FBI agent for almost 25 years and my other brother served as an Assistant District Attorney in Queens and has been an SEC Enforcement attorney for the past fourteen years. But this notorious act of violence was much more than just a personal tragedy and terrible loss for my family. As many public officials have noted over the years and very recently again, including the Honorable Charles Schumer (a distinguished member of this Committee and a great supporter of law enforcement for his entire outstanding career as a dedicated public official), the assassination of rookie Police Officer Eddie Byrne posed a grave threat to the safety and protection of all Police Officers.

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It was, therefore, extremely important as a matter of public policy and public safety that Mason and his gang who committed this notorious crime be brought to justice for it. Fortunately, then AUSA Leslie Caldwell led a great team of federal prosecutors and federal agents to investigate and prosecute Mason for this terrible crime. After a very complex, far-ranging investigation and a long, difficult trial (and lengthy, complicated post-trial proceedings) Mason was convicted and sentenced to life without parole for this terrible crime. Throughout that massive federal law enforcement effort to prosecute Mason, Leslie displayed what would become her customary tireless work ethic, good judgment, excellent investigative and trial skills, and the highest level of integrity and ethical behavior. She demonstrated the foregoing while being a forceful, effective and responsible advocate for the DOJ. I am confident that she will continue to use those many extraordinary strengths and talents should she be confirmed to serve as the AAG of the Criminal Division. I hope and strongly recommend that she be confirmed.

I want to thank you and the entire Committee for the opportunity to share this information with you. I hope it is helpful and I hope that our Great Nation will have the opportunity to be well served once again by Leslie in this extremely important position at DOJ. Please contact me at any point if you have any questions about the foregoing or Leslie more generally.

Respectfully submitted,,



Lawrence Byrne

cc: Honorable Charles E. Schumer