

July 5, 2013

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510



**POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM**

Chuck Wexler
Executive Director

Dear Senator Leahy:

I am writing to endorse the nomination of Mr. James Comey to become Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), an organization of police chiefs from across the country that conducts research on best practices in policing, I have some experience with Mr. Comey and I believe he has a record of working well with local law enforcement agencies on important issues. In fact, I think Jim Comey was far ahead of his time in recognizing the importance of federal-local partnerships in law enforcement.

I first met Mr. Comey in 1996 when he was the managing Assistant U.S. Attorney in Richmond, Virginia. At that time, the surge in crack cocaine use was a major issue, and gun crime was impacting Richmond and other cities across the country.

PERF saw what was happening in Richmond as reflective of a major crisis impacting many cities. And I believe that Jim Comey saw the role of the federal government somewhat differently compared to other federal prosecutors. He recognized the need to take a leadership role and go shoulder to shoulder with local police chiefs in taking on this epidemic of violence.

My sense is that most federal prosecutors are so busy with their own enforcement responsibilities that they do not always have the same sense of urgency that I saw in Jim Comey about developing strategies to complement the work of local officials. Operation Exile, which was developed out of the U.S. Attorney's office in Richmond, was one of the first programs of its kind to recognize the value of federal prosecutors taking gun cases to federal courts, where the penalties are significantly stronger.

At the time when Jim was dealing with gun violence in Richmond, I was working in Minneapolis with a task force of local, state and federal officials on strategies for reducing homicides. And the U.S. Attorney in Minneapolis heard about the Richmond model, and soon began taking gun cases federally. This had an immediate impact on homicides in Minneapolis, and I know that it also helped in other cities like Boston.

The role of the federal government in addressing the difficult issue of gun crime was shaped by the Richmond model, and prosecutors across the country saw Jim Comey as someone who recognized the importance of local/federal partnerships well before this became commonplace.

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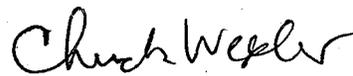
In fact, in 2009 PERF conducted a survey of local police agencies serving populations of 100,000 or more, and asked them about more than 40 different gun crime enforcement strategies – from tracing guns recovered at crime scenes and having special units to investigate gun “hot spots,” to gun buyback programs and investigation of illegal “straw purchases” of firearms. We asked local police whether they used each of these strategies – and about which strategies they found most effective. And by far, submitting information about gun felons to the local U.S. Attorney’s Office was the single strategy that local police agencies often used and found most effective.

When I think of how far the FBI has come since 9/11 with respect to developing partnerships, I think of Jim Comey and his leadership in gaining the trust and confidence of local police departments and police chiefs. I think Mr. Comey will be an outstanding director of the FBI, based upon my own experience working with him and on his outstanding record of public service.

Finally, on a personal level, I have found Jim Comey to be a man of character and integrity as well as someone who is down to earth and unassuming. I believe these qualities will help ensure that Mr. Comey will intuitively do what is right.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions, and thank you for your consideration.

Most sincerely,



Chuck Wexler
Executive Director
Police Executive Research Forum
Washington, DC

Cc: Commissioner Charles Ramsey
Philadelphia Police Department
President of PERF