



January 14, 2019

**OPPOSE THE NOMINATION OF WILLIAM BARR
TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES**

On behalf of The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), we are writing to express our opposition to the nomination of William Barr to serve as Attorney General of the United States. NCAVP is a national coalition comprised of over 50 local and affiliate organizations working to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence within and against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities.

As the nation's top law enforcement officer and leader of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the Attorney General is responsible for safeguarding our civil and constitutional rights. That is a core and enduring mission of the Justice Department, and the nation needs and deserves an Attorney General who is committed to that mission and to our country's ongoing progress toward equal justice and racial equality. The Attorney General must also operate with integrity and independence in service to the people, not the president.

Furthermore, the DOJ includes the Office of Violence Against Women which oversees funding for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assault through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). LGBTQ people experience alarming rates of violence¹ and for these survivors, supportive and restorative services are even harder to access than for many of their non-LGBTQ counterparts. VAWA is the only piece of federal legislation that protects the civil rights of LGBTQ survivors, and it is vital that we have an Attorney General who will uphold and honor the VAWA.

Mr. Barr has a troubling record on a number of civil rights issues, including LGBTQ rights and other intersecting issues such as justice system reform, reproductive justice, and immigrant rights. For example, Mr. Barr ignored suggestions made by the Department of Health and Human Services and asserted that HIV-positive immigrants should be barred from entering the United States.² In addition, Mr. Barr has promoted anti-LGBTQ ideologies in his own work, an indication that he would continue the deeply disturbing anti-LGBTQ and anti-civil rights policies and priorities of the past two years.

In *Legal Issues in a New Political Order*, Mr. Barr wrote, "It is no accident that the homosexual movement, at one or two percent of the population, gets treated with such solicitude while the

¹ National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP). (2018). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Hate and Intimate Partner Violence in 2017*. New York, NY.

² <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/28/us/health-dept-loses-in-aids-rule-dispute.html>

Catholic population, which is over a quarter of the country, is given the back of the hand.”³ He went on to refute “the effort to apply District of Columbia law to compel Georgetown University to treat homosexual activist groups like any other student group,” asserting “This kind of law dissolves any form of moral consensus in society.”⁴ The widespread promotion of such harmful ideologies further contributes to and exacerbates the current climate of hatred and discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

For the past two years, the Justice Department has been led by an Attorney General intent on restricting civil and human rights at every turn.⁵ Attorney General Jeff Sessions used his office to carry out dehumanizing immigration policies and the reinvigoration of the “war on drugs,” both of which have a disproportionately negative impact of LGBTQ communities, especially LGBTQ people of color, who are routinely over-policed and discriminated against. Session advanced an extreme, anti-civil rights agenda for decades in the U.S. Senate. In a recent op-ed, Mr. Barr called Mr. Sessions “an outstanding attorney general” and offered praise for his policies, many of which undermined civil rights, including those of transgender people.⁶ The Justice Department and the nation need an Attorney General who will prioritize the people of this country and the enforcement of our federal civil rights laws.

Confirming William Barr as Attorney General is putting the LGBTQ community, amongst many other groups experiencing institutionalized marginalization, at grave risk. People in the United States deserve an Attorney General who will promote racial equality, vigorously enforce our federal civil rights laws, and fight discriminatory barriers for the most systematically oppressed among us.

³ William P. Barr (1995) "Legal Issues in a New Political Order," The Catholic Lawyer: Vol. 36 : No.1, Article 2.

⁴ Ibid. p 9.

⁵ <https://civilrights.org/trump-rollbacks/>.

⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jeff-sessions-can-look-back-on-a-job-well-done/2018/11/07/527e5830-e2cf-11e8-8f5f-a55347f48762_story.html?utm_term=.6996b10fe367.