



Urban League of
Greater Atlanta

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

March 19, 2015

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy:

It is my honor to write to you in support of the nomination of Sally Yates to be named Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Justice Department. Throughout her more than 25-year career, Sally Yates has proven herself to be a non-partisan problem solver – a public servant and lawyer’s lawyer, a prosecutor who ardently defends the justice system and actively works to see justice applied fairly for people of all races and income levels. Where she has found disparities, Sally Yates has worked hard to address them.

As President of the Urban League of Greater Atlanta, I have witnessed Sally Yates’ commitment to justice first-hand. In 2013, we worked together to build and strengthen a program to address recidivism. Sally Yates clearly understood the issue and the necessity of building community partnerships to solve such a problem. She contributed the quote below to an article written to introduce the Urban League of Greater Atlanta’s “New Beginnings” adult reentry and transitional employment program to supporters in a newsletter last year.

“A key component of building safer communities is proactively addressing the high rates of recidivism. The New Beginnings program is a sterling example of how the collaborative efforts of state, local, federal, and non-profit entities can unite to address the serious issue of reentry and assist returning citizens with job training and life skills development, GED and secondary education, occupational skills training, linkages to meaningful employment and the social service support that they need to successfully reintegrate into society. As U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, I am proud that our office is a partner in the New Beginnings reentry program...”

The Urban League of Greater Atlanta was delighted when Sally Yates accepted the *Champion of Justice Award* from us at our 2013 Equal Opportunity Day Dinner. Her nomination for the honor had been enthusiastically endorsed by board members and other supporters of the League in the greater Atlanta region who were quite familiar with the excellent work Sally Yates had accomplished since 2010 as the first woman to serve as United States Attorney in the Northern District of Georgia.

In an era that shows collaboration to be in short supply, we need public servants like Sally Yates who has served important roles in Democratic and Republican administrations and has earned a well-deserved reputation as a fair and skilled problem solver. She also is extremely knowledgeable about potential partners and their skillsets.

In determining how she would promote programs to address recidivism, Sally Yates pulled from her knowledge of organizations and their talents. Recognizing the ULGA's growing expertise in the "re-entry" arena, Sally Yates helped guide the collaboration between the Urban League and a multi-agency coordinating council that included the Morehouse School of Medicine Community Voices, United States Department of Pardons and Paroles, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Georgia Department of Corrections, the Davis-Bozeman Law Firm, Gate City Bar Association and the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency.

Participants said that the program helped them improve their job readiness, connect with employment, connect with supportive services and housing and social and interpersonal skills, which led to reuniting with their families. Research has shown strong family connections and employment are the two most critical elements that reduce the likelihood of ex-offenders returning to prison. This is the kind of "outcomes focused" work Sally Yates engages in, understands and promotes. It is the kind of outreach that strengthens communities and reduces recidivism.

On behalf of the Urban League of Greater Atlanta and colleagues in partner organizations, I heartily endorse Sally Yates for this position in the Justice Department. If I can be of any more assistance, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Nancy Flake Johnson
President/CEO