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January 30, 2017

The Honorable Charles Grassley

Chairman

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

224 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national organizations committed to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and the 213 undersigned organizations, we write to express our profound concerns about a number of President Trump's recent executive orders and policy statements and their connection to the nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions as Attorney General. In his first week in office, President Trump has made extraordinary claims of executive authority, has called for a major investigation into voter fraud, and has outlined numerous policy changes that pose grave dangers to civil liberties and civil rights. Given the reported involvement of Senator Sessions in advising President Trump on some of these matters, we believe you have a profound duty as Chairman and ask that you do everything necessary to ensure that Committee members are fully informed about the role of Senator Sessions in developing these new orders and proposals and his plans to implement and execute them.

It would be hard to overstate the urgency and importance of these recent developments. The Senate cannot meaningfully carry out its constitutional obligation, under Article II of the Constitution, to exercise "advice and consent" on the nomination without Senator Sessions providing the Committee with his views on the president's actions and proposals since his inauguration.

As you know, in his first hearing, Senator Sessions testified, "I have no belief and do not support the idea that Muslims as a religious group should be denied admission to the United States." Because one of President Trump's executive orders excludes refugees and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries, Committee members are entitled to know whether Senator Sessions will be involved in implementing this order and whether he believes it to be consistent with his first claim to the committee.

President Trump has also announced that he intends to seek a "major investigation" into voter fraud during the 2016 presidential election. Study after study has shown that voter fraud is virtually non-existent, and a comprehensive review found only thirty-one incidents out of one billion ballots cast.¹ President Trump's allegations of massive voter fraud, as

¹ Justin Levitt, "A comprehensive investigation of voter impersonation finds 31 credible incidents out of one billion ballots cast" The Washington Post, August 6, 2014 available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/08/06/a-comprehensive-investigation-of-voter-impersonation-finds-31-credible-incidents-out-of-one-billion-ballots-cast/?utm_term=.b01df0dcdd12.



nonfactual as they are, are already being used as pretext for laws that make it more difficult for people of color, young adults, people with disabilities, and low-income people to vote. If President Trump intends for the Department of Justice to have any role in this probe, it would be unconscionable for this Committee to proceed without determining in far greater detail just what is being alleged and without clarifying how the investigation and any policy responses will not make it more difficult for Americans to vote.

In addition to his Muslim exclusion order and his continued pursuit of voter fraud theories, the president has issued orders or threatened proposals in recent days which:

- Threaten broad changes to enforcement of immigration laws that will have significant impacts on both immigrants and American citizens across the country.
- Direct drastic changes to the relationship between the federal government and the states in punishing state and local governments for their treatment of immigrants, including actions which would use state and local governments to carry out federal immigration enforcement.
- Cut the annual budget of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice by \$58 million, which is roughly one-third of its budget, and decreases oversight of troubled police departments.
- Jeopardize the protections afforded by the Affordable Care Act to persons with disabilities, women, racial minorities, LGBT persons, and lower and middle income Americans.

These actions and proposals are relevant to this Committee not only because they severely threaten civil liberties and civil rights, but also because several media reports have described Senator Sessions—even while waiting for the committee to vote on his nomination—as an influential advisor to the Trump administration on some of these issues. None of these actions had taken place at the time of his first confirmation hearing. The Committee must establish a process for assessing these new developments, Senator Sessions' role in formulating them, and his level of expected involvement in carrying any of them out. Failure to do so would be a gross dereliction of your duty.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Zirkin, Executive Vice President of The Leadership Conference, at (202) 263-2880.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
32BJ SEIU
9to5, National Association of Working Women
ACCESS (Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support)
ACIJ
Advocates for Youth
Alianza Americas
Alliance for Citizenship
Alliance For Justice
American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity
American Association for People with Disabilities



American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Constitution Society for Law and Policy
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
The American Federation of Teachers
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Anti-Defamation League
Arab American Institute
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)
ASISTA Immigration Assistance
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Bill of Rights Defense Committee/Defending Dissent Foundation
Brennan Center for Justice
Bus Federation
Campaign Legal Center
Center for American Progress
Center for Community Change Action
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Media Justice
Center for New Community
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Responsible Lending
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Climate Hawks Vote
Coalition for Disability Health Equity
CODEPINK for Peace
Colectiva Legal del Pueblo
Common Cause
Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC)
The Constitution Project
Council on American-Islamic Relations
CREDO



Daily Kos
Democracy Initiative
Demos
Detention Watch Network
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Equal Justice Society
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality Now
Fair Elections Legal Network
Faith in Public Life
Family Equality Council
Family Values @ Work
Feminist Majority
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth
Free Press Action Fund
Global Progressive Hub
Grassroots Leadership
Greenpeace, Inc.
Healthcare Against Human Trafficking in the US
Housing Choice Partners
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Institute for Policy Studies
Institute for Science and Human Values
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
J Street
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Voice for Peace
Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Just Foreign Policy
Justice Policy Institute
Justice Strategies
Korean American Resource & Cultural Center
Korean Resource Center
Lambda Legal
Laotian American National Alliance
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

League of United Latin American Citizens
Legal Aid at Work
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
MomsRising
MoveOn.org
MPower Change
Mundo Maya Foundation
Muslim Advocates
Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
NAKASEC
National Abortion Federation
National Action Network
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association of Human Rights Workers
National Association of Social Workers
National Bar Association
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project of the NLG
National Iranian American Council for Action
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Religious Campaign Against Torture



National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
Natural Resources Defense Council
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
The New American Leaders Project
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
OneAmerica
Partnership for Working Families
People For the American Way
People's Action
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
PolicyLink
Population Connection Action Fund
Positive Women's Network-USA
ProgressNow
Project South
Project Vote
Public Advocates Inc.
Public Citizen
Public Counsel
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Salvadoran American National Network (SANN)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Sierra Club
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
South Asian Bar Association
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stand Up! for Democracy in DC (Free DC)
Students for a Just and Stable Future
Students Working For Equal Rights
TASH
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
UFW Foundation
UltraViolet
Union for Reform Judaism
United families
United Farm Workers
UnLocal, Inc.
US Women Connect



Voices for Progress
The Voter Participation Center
Voting Rights Forward
Voting Rights Institute
Voto Latino
Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project
We Count
Win Without War
Women Working Together USA
Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
YWCA USA

State and local organizations

Auburn Theological Seminary
Austin Jewish Voice for Peace
California Employment Lawyers Association
DC Cannabis Coalition
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
FANM/Haitian Women of Miami
Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC)
Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees
Green Party of Taos
Hawaiian Community Assets
The Interfaith Center of New York
The Legal Aid Society of New York
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Palm Beach County Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center
Reformed Church of Highland Park
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice
South Texas Human Rights Center