



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

**ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING ENTITLED

“OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE”

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TESTIMONY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER
BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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Good morning, Chairman Leahy, Senator Sessions, and members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the accomplishments of the Department of Justice in the past year. During my confirmation and over the course of the past year I have articulated a very clear set of goals for the Department: protecting the public against threats both foreign and domestic; ensuring the fair and impartial administration of justice; assisting state and local law enforcement; and defending the interests of the United States. I have pledged to accomplish these goals in service of the cause of justice and free from politics and partisanship, as transparently as possible, and in accordance with the rule of law.

The American people can be confident that the thousands of men and women of the Department of Justice are tirelessly meeting these goals each and every day, whether in the pursuit and prosecution of terrorists, in the fight against crime, or in protecting our civil rights, preserving our environment, ensuring fairness in our markets, or fulfilling the many other daily responsibilities of the Department.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Protecting America against acts of terrorism remains the highest priority of the Department of Justice. The Administration will continue to use all lawful means to protect the national security of the United States, including, where appropriate, military, intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic, and economic tools and authorities. We will

aggressively defend America from attack by terrorist groups, consistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States, including our international obligations.

As a counterterrorism tool, the criminal justice system has proven its great strength in both incapacitating terrorists and gathering valuable intelligence. The criminal justice system contains powerful incentives to induce pleas that yield long sentences and gain intelligence that can be used in the fight against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. In 2009, there were more defendants charged with terrorism violations in federal court than in any year since 2001. The cases include fourteen individuals indicted in Minnesota in connection with travel to Somalia to train or fight with the terrorist group al Shabaab; an individual indicted in Chicago who recently pleaded guilty in connection with a plot to bomb a Danish newspaper and for his involvement in the November 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai; seven individuals charged in North Carolina with providing material support to terrorism and conspiring to murder or injure persons abroad; and two individuals indicted in undercover operations in Texas and Illinois after they separately attempted to blow up an office building in Dallas and a federal courthouse in Springfield. More recently, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was charged with federal crimes in connection with the attempted bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 near Detroit on December 25, 2009. These cases are a sober reminder that we face aggressive and determined enemies. The Department has worked effectively to ensure that terrorists are brought to justice and can no longer threaten American lives. We will continue to use all available tools whenever possible against suspected terrorists.

A leading example of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system is the case of Najibullah Zazi. In February 2010, Zazi pleaded guilty in the Eastern District of New

York to a three-count superseding information charging him with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction, specifically explosives, against persons or property in the United States, conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country, and providing material support to al-Qaeda. Zazi admitted that he brought explosives to New York on Sept. 10, 2009, as part of plan to attack the New York subway system. This was one of the most serious terrorist threats to our nation since September 11th, 2001, and, but for the combined efforts of the law enforcement and intelligence communities, it could have been devastating. On February 25, 2010, Zarein Ahmedzay and Adis Medunjanin, associates of Zazi, were charged in a five-count superseding indictment with conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction as part of the plan.

The Department's work against terrorism includes civil as well as criminal proceedings. In 2009, the Department litigated scores of habeas corpus petitions brought by detainees held at the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In these cases, we vigorously defended our national security interests in a manner consistent with the rule of law. The Department also successfully defended the Treasury Department's designation and attendant asset freeze of the United States branch of the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, Inc., a Saudi Arabia-based charity engaged in the widespread financial support of terrorist groups around the world, including al-Qaeda and Chechen mujahideen. We also obtained dismissal of over 40 nationwide class action lawsuits against numerous telecommunications companies that were alleged to have assisted the National Security Agency in post-September 11th surveillance activities.

In addition to these litigation matters, I am also pleased to report the completion of the work of three task forces established by the President by Executive Orders on

January 22, 2009: one on interrogation and transfer policy, one on Guantanamo detainees, and one on detention policy more generally.

Based on recommendations of the Interrogation and Transfer Task Force, the Administration has established a High Value Detainee Interrogation Group – also known as the “HIG” – an interagency team that combines some of our country’s most effective and experienced interrogators with support personnel, including subject matter experts. This specialized, interagency approach to interrogation has been used informally several times over the past year in support of counterterrorism activities to interrogate high-value detainees who are identified as having access to information with the greatest potential to prevent terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies.

The Guantanamo Review Task Force rigorously reviewed pertinent information regarding 240 Guantanamo detainees, determining their suitability for prosecution or for transfer to another country – or, if neither of those options is available, continued detention under the Authorization for the Use of Military Force, consistent with the rule of law. Each of these decisions was reached by the unanimous agreement of the agencies responsible for the review – the Departments of Justice, Defense, State, Homeland Security, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Detention Policy Task Force developed recommendations for the President on bipartisan military commission reform legislation that was adopted as part of the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. This legislation will help ensure that the commissions are fair, effective, and lawful. The Task Force also contributed to the formulation of a joint Department of Justice and Department of Defense protocol for determining whether detainees who had been referred by the Guantanamo Review Task

Force for possible prosecution should be prosecuted in federal court or in reformed military commissions. The Task Force also developed options for our future detention policies that remain under review.

CRIME AND FRAUD

Day in and day out, the men and women of our law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Attorney community, and the Criminal Division investigate and prosecute our nation's most serious crimes. From international organized crime and drug trafficking, to complex cyber crime, to violent crimes and crimes against children, to financial fraud, public corruption, and much more, the Department of Justice continues to disrupt sophisticated criminal conduct across a broad range of areas.

We have taken a variety of steps to eliminate the threat posed by Mexican drug cartels controlling the domestic drug market and plaguing our Southwest border. Through stepped up enforcement and a coordinated Southwest border strategy, including the Merida Initiative, we have made significant progress in addressing this serious threat. Also, the Department is deeply concerned that international organized crime has grown dramatically in scale and scope in the last 15 years and constitutes a national security threat to the United States. To counter this, the Department is implementing a comprehensive law enforcement strategy against international organized crime, which is being carried out with its other Federal law enforcement partners.

In addition to addressing the threat of violent crime, we are hunting down all those who commit serious frauds against the American people. In the wake of the economic crisis, pursuing financial fraud, mortgage fraud, health care fraud, and fraud in

government spending have been among the Department's top priorities. We are seeking prison time for fraud offenders, working tirelessly to recover assets and criminally derived proceeds, and striving to make whole the victims of such crimes.

Late last year, the Administration announced the creation of the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, an inter-agency organization that will spearhead our financial fraud enforcement strategy. Through a coordinated effort, we have brought to justice those in the finance industry who have embezzled their clients' money, who have attempted to defraud the U.S. government of millions of dollars, who engage in discriminatory lending practices, and many more. We have seized the assets of these wrongdoers, and we will not let up.

On mortgage fraud, the FBI has more than doubled the number of investigating agents and has created the National Mortgage Fraud Team at FBI headquarters. As of January 12, 2010, the FBI was investigating more than 2,944 mortgage fraud cases and 45 corporate fraud matters related to the mortgage industry. U.S. Attorneys' Offices are participating in 23 regional mortgage fraud task forces and 67 mortgage fraud working groups and are leveraging both criminal and civil tools, including civil injunctions and civil monetary penalties, to combat mortgage fraud and related abuses.

We have a renewed commitment to fighting health care fraud as a Cabinet-level priority at both the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services. Through the creation of the Health Care Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team (HEAT), a senior-level joint task force, we are marshaling the combined resources of both agencies in new ways to combat all facets of the problem. Our Medicare Fraud Strike Force prosecutors and agents are using billing data to target a

range of fraudulent health care schemes, deploying appropriate criminal and civil enforcement tools in hot spots around the country. Since it began operating in 2007, the Strike Force has charged more than 500 defendants in 250 cases totaling approximately \$1.1 billion in fraudulent billings to Medicare. All told to date, more than 280 defendants have been convicted, and nearly 205 have been sentenced to prison. Because this is a model that works, as part of the HEAT initiative, we have expanded Strike Force operations to seven metropolitan areas.

Finally, the Department has also brought successful civil enforcement actions to protect taxpayer dollars and the integrity of government programs from fraud. In Fiscal Year 2009, our recoveries under the False Claims Act topped \$2.4 billion – the eleventh time that our annual recoveries under the Act have exceeded \$1 billion. Since 1986, when the False Claims Act was substantially amended, the United States has recovered more than \$25 billion under the Act.

ADVANCING CIVIL RIGHTS

Over the last year we renewed the Department's focus on civil rights, ensuring that the Civil Rights Division is prepared to address both existing and emerging challenges. This work is a priority for the administration, for the Department, and for me personally.

In the wake of the nationwide housing crisis and the resulting wave of foreclosures, the enforcement of fair housing and fair lending protections are among the most pressing civil rights needs facing Americans. During the Department's first year under my leadership, the Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section initiated 183

matters, filed 41 lawsuits, including 22 pattern or practice cases, and entered into 24 consent decrees. We also have reinvigorated the Department's critical relationship with HUD to expand our collaborative efforts and leverage each department's resources and tools. In keeping with the Administration's commitment to combating financial crime, and working with the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, we have established a Fair Lending Unit in the Division and hired a Special Counsel for Fair Lending. We have begun to see the fruits of this labor. Earlier this month, we announced a more than \$6 million settlement with two subsidiaries of AIG to resolve allegations of discrimination against African-American borrowers by brokers with whom the subsidiaries contracted.

Prosecution of violent hate crimes also remains a top priority. The Division is working to implement the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, training attorneys and law enforcement officers in its enforcement, and the Division has several open investigations under the new statute. In the meantime, we have seen increased activity in hate crimes prosecutions under our existing authority. In fact, in the final three months of 2009, there was activity in the form of filings, sentencings, or pleas in at least 13 hate crime cases brought by the Department, -- more than the entire number of such cases filed in Fiscal Year 2006 or 2007. In 2009, the Division filed 19 hate crime cases, charging 43 defendants.

As President Obama mentioned during his State of the Union address, the Civil Rights Division is once again vigorously pursuing cases of employment discrimination. In the first year of the administration, the Division filed 29 employment-related lawsuits, the largest number ever filed by the Division in a single year. Of the 29 lawsuits, 19 were brought under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, and

10 under Title VII. The Civil Rights Division has more than a dozen active pattern or practice investigations. In addition, in New Jersey, the Division is challenging examinations used by all of the municipalities in the state that are part of the civil service system for promotion to police sergeant, which we believe have had a disparate impact upon both African-Americans and Hispanics. The Department is also playing a leading role in the administration's Equal Pay Enforcement Task Force to ensure all applicable equal pay laws are enforced throughout the country.

The Civil Rights Division is also working to strengthen enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. The Division is preparing for review of thousands of redistricting plans that jurisdictions will submit pursuant to Section 5 of the Act after release of the 2010 Census results. The Division is stepping up enforcement of prohibitions against discriminatory voting practices and procedures and has obtained consent decrees in Section 2 cases for minority vote dilution arising from at-large methods of electing municipal governing bodies. It is also working to ensure compliance with the language minority requirements of the Act. The Division has begun an aggressive initiative to ensure compliance with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act requiring that eligible voters be able to register at state social services agencies. The Division has begun inquiries of seven states, and intends to expand its inquiries elsewhere. The Division is also gearing up for enforcement of the new Military and Overseas Voters Empowerment Act of 2009.

In another important civil rights case, just last month, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and I announced the resolution of the *Pigford II* case, which was brought by African-American farmers who allegedly suffered racial discrimination in USDA farm loan programs. The settlement, which is contingent upon a congressional appropriation,

will provide \$1.25 billion to eligible African-American farmers. The settlement establishes a non-judicial claims process through which individual farmers may demonstrate their entitlement to cash damages awards and debt relief.

ASSISTANCE TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

One of the goals I established for the Department is to reinvigorate its traditional role in fighting crime. Since the vast majority of criminal offenses are investigated and prosecuted at the state and local levels, we have a duty to provide states and communities the resources they need to prevent and fight crime and manage prisoners. I am proud to say that the Department is meeting this charge through the efforts of our Office of Justice Programs (OJP), COPS Office, and Office on Violence Against Women.

Last year, OJP awarded \$5.6 billion to states, localities, tribal communities, and others to support the full range of justice system activities, from prevention and enforcement through corrections and reentry. This funding is being administered by OJP within a framework of accountability and transparency. All grant solicitations and awards are now posted on the OJP Web site, and OJP has strengthened internal control practices and procedures to ensure that the grants process is open and fair.

Of this \$5.6 billion, \$2.5 billion -- \$2 billion from Recovery Act funds and \$500 million from Fiscal Year '09 funds -- went to support front-line law enforcement operations under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants program, a vital source of funding for police departments and sheriffs' offices across the country. In addition, OJP administered more than \$200 million in other Recovery Act grants for a total of 3,800 Recovery Awards. These awards serve the dual purpose of creating and

preserving critical public safety jobs and fostering local innovation. For example, more than \$22 million went to help state and local law enforcement agencies hire civilian staff to serve as dispatchers, trainers, and intelligence analysts. These funds allow agencies not only to move toward smarter, data-driven methods of policing, but also to free up sworn personnel for street duty. We also awarded more than \$10 million dollars to state and local prosecutors' offices to combat mortgage fraud and crimes related to vacant properties. These grants are part of the Department's priority effort to fight financial fraud in all its forms. We will continue to help communities combat mortgage fraud through additional funding and by providing training and technical assistance to investigators and prosecutors.

OJP has also led the Department's efforts to encourage evidence-based practices. Innovations at the local level, such as mapping crime hot spots and using targeted enforcement to address drug and gang violence, are at least partly responsible for the recent drop in crime rates that we have seen in many cities. Research funded by our National Institute of Justice has shown that this is far from a groundless claim; place-based policing, drug market interventions, and other methods do, indeed, work in reducing crime. OJP has undertaken a comprehensive effort to integrate evidence-based approaches such as these into our program development and policymaking activities. The President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2011 includes a number of items intended to further those efforts, and we look forward to working with Congress to expand our knowledge base and to disseminate that knowledge to the field.

In addition to the assistance provided to our partners in state, local, and tribal law enforcement through OJP, the COPS Office last year awarded \$1.26 billion, including \$1

billion through the Recovery Act for its COPS Hiring Recovery Program, which will put approximately 4,699 police officers and sheriffs deputies on America's streets. The mission of the COPS Office is to advance the practice of community policing as an effective strategy in communities' efforts to improve public safety by helping law enforcement build relationships and solve problems. The Administration remains committed to providing communities across the country with resources to support the hiring (or rehiring) of 50,000 police officers.

TRIBAL JUSTICE

In the past year, the Department has made significant strides in strengthening relationships between the United States government and tribal nations. Improving public safety and law enforcement in tribal communities remains a top priority for the Department of Justice. Earlier this year, I issued a directive to all United States Attorneys with federally recognized tribes in their districts to develop, after consultation with those tribes, operational plans for addressing public safety in Indian Country. This approach recognizes that the public safety challenges in Indian Country are not uniform and that the success of any intergovernmental relationship is based on consistent and effective communication.

In developing district-specific operational plans for public safety in tribal communities, I asked each of these United States Attorneys to pay particular attention to violence against women in Indian Country and to work closely with law enforcement to make those crimes a priority. To that end, and at the request of tribal leaders, the Department is creating a task force on prosecuting violent crimes against women in

Indian Country. In addition, I am creating a Tribal Nations Leadership Council to advise me on issues critical to Indian Country. The Council will be made up of one tribal leader from each of twelve B.I.A. tribal regions and will be selected by the tribes of that region. Constituting this landmark Council is an important step in the Department's efforts to improve communication and coordination with tribal nations.

On December 7, 2009, the Department reached a settlement in the extraordinarily lengthy and contentious *Cobell v. Salazar* class-action case involving the government's handling of over 300,000 individual Indian trust accounts. The agreement, which is contingent upon legislation and a district court fairness determination, provides for approximately \$1.4 billion to be distributed to class members and another \$2 billion to fund a buy-back program to address the continuing "fractionation" problem caused by land interests being repeatedly divided as they pass through succeeding generations.

ENSURING COMPETITION

The Antitrust Division has focused on efforts to promote and protect competition, standing firmly in the corner of the American consumer, helping ensure that consumers receive innovative, high-quality products at the lowest prices. It has acted to protect consumers in merger matters, conduct matters, and criminal matters, as well as actively advocating for both domestic and international competition. The Division has focused on important sectors of the economy, including agriculture, defense, energy, finance, health care, telecommunications, and transportation, among others. Because addressing antitrust issues increasingly demands a global approach, the Division has increased its

focus on the international front as well, seeking to engage foreign enforcers on both policy and particular enforcement matters.

The Department has acted against six merger transactions already in Fiscal Year 2010, reaching settlements to protect competition in the vast majority, including the combination of Ticketmaster and Live Nation, and is currently litigating against Dean Foods, the nation's largest dairy processor, seeking divestiture of milk processing plants. Non-merger aspects of the civil antitrust enforcement program have been active as well. The Department has presented its views in important court competition proceedings, such as filing statements of interest with the court regarding competitive concerns about Google's proposed settlement with the nation's largest book publishers as well as competitive concerns about so-called "pay-for-delay" agreements in the pharmaceutical arena, whereby firms agree to delay the entry of generic-drug competition through settlement of a patent dispute, forcing consumers to pay substantial increased costs for needed drugs.

On the criminal side, our cartel enforcement has remained active. Over \$1 billion in criminal fines were obtained against Antitrust Division defendants in Fiscal Year 2009, and nearly a quarter of a billion so far in the current fiscal year. But fines are only one part of the story; individual accountability in terms of jail time is a major focus of our criminal antitrust program. In Fiscal Year 2009, the Antitrust Division obtained jail sentences against 80 percent of its defendants, amounting to 25,396 total jail days imposed in its sentencings. Ongoing investigations of price fixing in the liquid-crystal-display and cathode-ray-tube industries continue and anticompetitive conduct in the municipal bond industry has and will result in significant criminal fines and jail time.

The Department has also taken an active role advocating on behalf of competition and consumers, including providing comments to the Federal Communications Commission on broadband competition and embarking on an important series of joint workshops with the USDA to examine agricultural issues in greater depth. Through these efforts we are ensuring that American consumers have an ally in protecting their pocketbooks from illegal marketplace conduct.

PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY

The President has pledged to make this Administration the most open and transparent in history, and the Department is doing its part to make that pledge a reality. We have worked to implement the President's Memoranda on Transparency and the Freedom of Information Act, including by issuing the new guidelines I issued with respect to FOIA. Through outreach, education, and the review of cases in litigation, additional information was – and continues to be – disclosed to the public through careful application of the guidelines at the agency level.

The Department resolved a FOIA case in 2009 that further promoted the goals of transparency and openness. As part of the settlement in *National Security Archive, et al. v. Executive Office of the President, et al.*, a case involving millions of electronic messages in the Executive Office of the President ("EOP"), the plaintiff organizations were provided with thousands of records describing the archiving of EOP e-mail and with millions of restored e-mail. EOP also agreed to describe to plaintiffs how its current system effectively preserves and archives email. The Department will continue to advance the cause of transparency in the future.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

The Department continues to vigorously enforce environmental laws through its Environment and Natural Resources Division. In 2009, the Environment Division brought actions to protect the nation's air, water, land, wildlife, and natural resources; upheld its trust responsibilities to Native Americans; and defended important federal programs. In Fiscal Year 2009, the Division secured nearly \$69 million in civil and stipulated penalties and \$2.6 billion in corrective measures through court orders and settlements. In addition, the Division successfully concluded 41 criminal cases against 85 defendants, obtaining over 42 years of jail time and nearly \$73 million in fines.

Our enforcement priorities include reducing harmful air emissions from large coal-fired power plants and oil refineries, cleaning up environmental sites, and preventing water pollution, especially from municipal sewer systems and contaminated stormwater runoff. In one case, *In re Asarco, L.L.C.*, the successful conclusion of the largest environmental bankruptcy reorganization in U.S. history also resulted in the largest recovery of money for hazardous waste cleanup ever -- \$1.79 billion to be used to pay for past and future costs incurred by federal and state agencies and environmental restoration at more than 80 hazardous waste sites in 19 states. Last year, we also entered into a landmark agreement to clean up the contaminated Hanford nuclear site, a matter in which both Secretary of Energy Chu and I were personally involved.

The Environment Division also successfully brought criminal prosecutions against a number of companies and individuals who have intentionally discharged

pollutants from vessels en route to American ports, and it continued to work with the Environmental Protection Agency to obtain the cleanup of major river bodies in the United States, including the Fox River (Wisconsin), the Kalamazoo River (Michigan), and the Hudson River (New York). Protecting the environment will continue to be one of the Department's most important objectives.

ENFORCING TAX LAWS

In support of its mission to defend and enforce the nation's tax laws, the Tax Division continues to assist the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in tracking down tax cheats, shutting down tax schemes and scams, and combating abusive tax shelters. In a time of high deficits, it is essential to reassure the overwhelming majority of law-abiding taxpayers that nobody is immune from paying taxes. Tax Division prosecutors work closely with United States Attorneys' offices to ensure that criminal tax statutes are administered fairly and uniformly throughout the country. The Tax Division continues to aggressively investigate and prosecute individuals who use offshore accounts to hide income and assets in order to evade U.S. taxation. The Division's efforts have resulted in a number of high-profile prosecutions of not only the citizens who sought to evade their tax obligations, but also the professionals who helped to develop and implement these illegal schemes. The Tax Division continues to devote significant resources to assisting the IRS in obtaining more information about individuals who maintain undeclared foreign accounts. The worldwide publicity surrounding the Tax Division's enforcement efforts reflects the dramatic impact that the government has had in combating the

negative impact on tax administration of tax haven jurisdictions and traditional notions of bank secrecy.

Unscrupulous lawyers, accountants, and tax return preparers present a serious tax administration and law enforcement problem. While some professionals dupe unwitting clients into filing false or fraudulent returns, others serve as willing “enablers,” often providing a veneer of legitimacy to otherwise illegitimate or illegal transactions. The Tax Division employs a range of civil and criminal enforcement tools to ensure that schemes are detected and shut down, and that the participants are held accountable either civilly or criminally.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the hard work that you have undertaken to expeditiously confirm the President’s nominees to the federal bench. Many of these nominations are to courts in which judicial emergencies have been declared, as backlogs are high and judicial vacancies have existed for an extended period of time. I appreciate the confirmation hearings that you have held and the favorable reporting of nominees for the consideration of the entire Senate. I encourage all members to provide up or down votes on these nominees as rapidly as possible consistent with your constitutional duty to advise and consent. There are currently 105 vacancies on the federal courts. Yet the Senate has confirmed only 19 federal judges during the 15 months of this administration. That is less than 34% of the President’s judicial nominees and less than half the number confirmed during the same time period for Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush. I ask

that you do everything possible to move expeditiously to fill the vacancies on our federal courts.

In addition, it is critical to fill United States Attorney, United States Marshal, and other Department positions. Currently, there are 19 United States Attorney and 17 United States Marshal nominations awaiting Committee action, and I urge you to approve them without delay. I am pleased that in recent weeks the Committee has approved other nominees whose services I need at the Department of Justice, and we look forward to their confirmation by the full Senate.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, I trust that the foregoing will help the Committee appreciate just some of the wide-ranging efforts that the Department of Justice is undertaking to protect the safety, rights, and resources of the American people. We have accomplished much, but we are not standing still. I again recognize and applaud the thousands of conscientious employees of the Department who have made these accomplishments possible.

Eric H. Holder, Jr.

Eric H. Holder, Jr. was sworn in as the 82nd Attorney General of the United States on February 3, 2009 by Vice President Joe Biden. President Barack Obama announced his intention to nominate Mr. Holder on December 1, 2008.

In 1997, Mr. Holder was named by President Clinton to be the Deputy Attorney General, the first African-American named to that post. Prior to that he served as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. In 1988, Mr. Holder was nominated by President Reagan to become an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

Mr. Holder, a native of New York City, attended public schools there, graduating from Stuyvesant High School where he earned a Regents Scholarship. He attended Columbia College, majored in American History, and graduated in 1973. He graduated from Columbia Law School in 1976.

While in law school, he clerked at the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund and the Department of Justice's Criminal Division. Upon graduating, he moved to Washington and joined the Department of Justice as part of the Attorney General's Honors Program. He was assigned to the newly formed Public Integrity Section in 1976 and was tasked to investigate and prosecute official corruption on the local, state and federal levels.

Prior to becoming Attorney General, Mr. Holder was a litigation partner at Covington & Burling LLP in Washington.

Mr. Holder lives in Washington with his wife, Dr. Sharon Malone, a physician, and their three children.