



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 208 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.<sup>1</sup> President Trump's allegations of massive voter fraud, as

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<sup>1</sup> 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](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).

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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 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  
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 Action Network  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Association of Human Rights Workers  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Bar Association  
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)  
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