



# NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION

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The Honorable Darrell Issa  
Chairman Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

June 18, 2012

Dear Chairman Issa:

On behalf of the National Bar Association (NBA), I write to share my organization's opposition to and concern about threats by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee to hold Attorney General Holder in *Contempt of Congress*.

The NBA is the oldest and largest organization of African American attorneys and judges in the world representing over 44,000 lawyers, judges, legal scholars and law students. As some of your most engaged constituents, we believe that issuing a *Contempt of Congress* citation against Attorney General Holder is not only an extraordinary abuse of Congressional power but also misguided and politically motivated.

The review of the "Fast and Furious" program is an important exercise of congressional authority; however, we are concerned that the tenor and approach that has been taken throughout this investigation is a disservice to Congress, the Attorney General's office, and the American people. A *Contempt of Congress* citation will only add to an environment already riddled with partisanship and distrust, which is distracting at a time when the Attorney General needs to focus on the vigorous enforcement of the nation's laws – including those protecting our voting rights, fair lending and fair housing, equal opportunities in education and employment, and in investigating and prosecuting law enforcement misconduct and human trafficking.

The Attorney General's demonstrated commitment to working with House and Senate leadership continues despite not only the discourteous and alarming manner in which members of the Committee have questioned him but also the looming threat of a contempt citation. The Attorney General and the United States Department of Justice have submitted more than 7,600 pages of documentation to Congress. The Attorney General has appeared before Congress on this issue nine times.

In addition, the Attorney General has ordered the Inspector General to investigate this matter. Furthermore, he has provided the Inspector General with tens of thousands of additional documents that are inappropriate to turn over to the House, because they include law enforcement information, grand jury transcripts, and other information that would compromise ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

The National Bar Association is proud of the integrity and diplomacy with which Attorney General Holder has met this situation. We are sensitive to what appears to be repeated efforts to undermine and hinder the Attorney General's ability to serve the American People. Since his 2009 swearing in, Attorney General Holder has revitalized the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice. Members of Congress should be supporting him in these efforts, not trying to distract or belittle him with partisan tactics such as a contempt citation. We urge you to reconsider this course of action.

Thank You for Your Consideration,

Daryl D. Parks  
President, National Bar Association