

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairman Smith, Chairman Issa, Senator Grassley, Congressman Conyers, and Congressman Cummings:

The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) writes to express our unwavering support of Attorney General Eric Holder and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and their commitment to enhancing state and local law enforcement. We are concerned about reported threats to find the Attorney General in contempt of Congress in part for protecting information related to ongoing criminal investigations from political interference and public disclosure.

Creating safe and secure communities through the reduction of crime and violence are our highest priorities. The DOJ has been an invaluable partner in creating safe and secure neighborhoods for both citizens and law enforcement professionals. For example, Attorney General Holder has launched the Officer Safety Initiative and VALOR Training Program that supports the safety of our officers and offers the promise of reduced officer injuries and deaths.

Attorney General Holder has reinvigorated the DOJ, Civil Rights Division, and it is working to build climates of mutual trust and respect among citizens and law enforcement in affected communities. Especially noteworthy has been Attorney General Holder's unwavering support for the advancement of fair and impartial policing practices and his unparalleled recognition of the critical importance of active community engagement and community partnerships to effective law enforcement. These commitments have resulted in important gains in the delivery of public safety services that must not be discounted.

The DOJ has implemented a number of reforms to improve the operations and effectiveness of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). The Congressional inquiry is

becoming an unnecessary distraction, and an impediment to the vigorous enforcement of violence and crime that are affecting far too many of the nation's communities.

We believe Attorney General Holder and the DOJ have been forthcoming with Congress in keeping the tradition and duty of ensuring that law enforcement operations are not undermined by political obstacles. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you respect the DOJ's responsibility and tradition of withholding information related to ongoing law enforcement operations, rather than seeking to cite Attorney General Holder for contempt for standing up for this important principle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Akers, Jr.", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Joseph C. Akers, Jr.
Interim Executive Director