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Eric Holder is the Right Choice for Attorney General: The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Perspective

The Department of Justice is the primary law enforcement agency of the United States. As a community that is particularly vulnerable to bias-motivated violence, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (“LGBT”) community has a particular interest in appointment of an Attorney General who is committed to combating this national problem. Eric Holder has proven himself to be the right person to lead the Department of Justice as the nation’s next Attorney General.

In recent years, the priorities of the DOJ have shifted away from protecting communities from hate violence. In the last eight years, the Department of Justice has suffered from countless scandals and mismanagement. The morale of career professionals has been eroded and public confidence in the federal justice system undermined. No longer can citizens count on the DOJ to rigorously and impartially enforce the law.

The LGBT community can ill afford a Department of Justice headed by anything less than a competent and effective Attorney General. As the head of the primary law enforcement agency in the United States, the Attorney General sets policies and procedures that greatly impact the LGBT community. A strong Department of Justice headed by an Attorney General that understands the importance of a strong federal justice system can ensure that the DOJ responds appropriately to the needs of the LGBT community. These include:

- Returning the DOJ to a position of support for the expansion of federal hate crimes statutes and support the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in any expansion;
- Supporting expansion of federal employment non-discrimination laws to include sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Prioritizing vigorous enforcement of federal hate crimes statutes;
- Ensuring comprehensive collection of hate crimes statistics;
- Vigorously investigating and prosecuting police misconduct or “color of law” cases;
- Setting policies for federal detention facilities that protect LGBT inmates, and
- Establishing effective asylum precedent for the LGBT community.

Eric Holder has demonstrated that he will be an Attorney General who will exhibit leadership on these issues. Eric Holder knows that access to justice is a civil right. He supports rigorous

enforcement of existing laws, data collection and research about hate violence, and passing legislation that would give the federal government both the authority to prosecute these heinous crimes and the power to assist local governments that are pursuing justice.

Eric Holder is the right person to restore the integrity of the Department and refocus its efforts on impartial enforcement of the law. We encourage the Senate to promptly fulfill its Constitutional duty and swiftly confirm Eric Holder as U.S. Attorney General.