

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of Giffords, I write to urge you to confirm Judge Merrick Garland to serve as United States Attorney General.

The Department of Justice serves as the federal body tasked with ensuring public safety, preventing crime, and seeking the fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans. Considering that critical mission, it is vital that the Senate confirm a principled leader committed to honoring the integrity and independence of the Department of Justice. For more than two decades, Judge Garland has served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, where he has proven to be a fair-minded decision-maker and independent thinker. His record illustrates his great respect for the rule of law. His long tenure of public service indicates he will lead the Department of Justice with decency and courage.

Judge Garland has demonstrated a commitment to lead the Department of Justice's efforts to end the gun violence epidemic and support the implementation of gun safety laws. During last week's nomination hearing, Judge Garland stated that his views of the Second Amendment are reflected by *District of Columbia v. Heller*, in which Justice Antonin Scalia described several types of gun laws that are consistent with the Second Amendment.¹ Judge Garland also acknowledged the importance of universal background checks, which help ensure people prohibited from possessing firearms, like those with felony or domestic violence convictions, do not obtain firearms. Similarly, he stated that it is important to prevent someone at risk of harming themselves or others from accessing a firearm.

In light of recent events, the nomination of Judge Garland to be Attorney General is particularly prudent given his previous service at the Department of Justice, where he prosecuted multiple cases of domestic terrorism, including leading the prosecution of the perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing. He stated that a central part of the Department's mission is to combat extremist threats and attacks on democratic institutions, as well as the growing trend of extremists relying on firearms to incite fear. He committed to the prosecution of the

¹ *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U. S. 570 (2008)

extremists who attacked the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 in an attempt to thwart the democratic election process and impede the peaceful transfer of power, a hallmark of U.S. democracy.

Similarly, Judge Garland committed to prioritizing racial justice as Attorney General, a promise of paramount importance given the impact of systemic racism on communities of color, which also disproportionately suffer from gun violence. During his hearing, he detailed the Department of Justice's historic role in combating white supremacy and fighting to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans, and he noted the importance of the civil rights division and committed to work towards equal justice for all Americans.

As an organization dedicated to ending the gun violence crisis in America, Giffords emphatically supports Judge Garland's nomination. We urge you to vote to confirm Judge Garland to serve as United States Attorney General.

Sincerely,

Adam Skaggs
Chief Counsel & Policy Director