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National District Attorneys Association
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June 8, 2009

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy and Ranking Member Sessions:

On behalf of the National District Attorneys Association, the oldest and largest organization representing America's state and local prosecutors, we offer our full support for the nomination of the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor to become the next Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Because state and local prosecutors handle 95% of the criminal prosecutions nationally, rulings by the Supreme Court have far-reaching, serious impacts upon criminal cases in state courthouses across the country. As former prosecutors yourselves, you have a unique appreciation of our concerns.

We practice where the law is truly tested: not in the deliberative atmosphere of an appellate courtroom, but on the streets where police must make split-second choices in dangerous situations and in trial court situations that sometimes give prosecutors and police only a moment to analyze and react. It is important to the National District Attorneys Association, and to the tens of thousands of prosecutors we represent, that the next Supreme Court justice be well steeped in the law and its practical applications.

I have had the opportunity to review the judicial record of Judge Sotomayor, particularly in areas important to prosecutors such as criminal and constitutional law. Through her rulings, Judge Sotomayor reveals a deep understanding of the law. As a prosecutor, I find her to employ a thoughtful analysis of legal precedent and the rule of law and apply that law to the specific facts of each case.

Just as important as her sophisticated knowledge of the law, as a former prosecutor and trial court judge Judge Sotomayor displays an understanding of the impact of those laws on law enforcement, victims and defendants. In interviews with prosecutors who served with Judge Sotomayor in the Manhattan District Attorney's office, Judge Sotomayor has often been described as a "tough and fearless" prosecutor. She vigorously and effectively prosecuted child pornographers, murderers, burglars and many other "street crimes" in the heart of New York City. She worked closely with law enforcement, deconstructed complex crimes, interviewed witnesses and investigated crime scenes. That kind of legal experience, combined with her 17 years on the federal bench, provide Judge Sotomayor with unique and unprecedented qualifications to be on the Supreme Court.

To Be the Voice of America's Prosecutors and to Support Their Efforts to Protect the Rights and Safety of the People

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Judge Sotomayor's depth of experience with all aspects of the law – as a prosecutor, a private litigator, a District Court Judge and as a Federal Judge – has made her into an exemplary judge and an outstanding nominee to serve on our nation's highest court. She possesses wisdom, intelligence and a real world training that would bring important insight to Supreme Court decisions. The National District Attorneys Association believes that Judge Sotomayor would be a welcome addition to the Supreme Court.

We are happy to offer our full support for Judge Sotomayor's nomination to serve as a Supreme Court Associate Justice and encourage her swift nomination by the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph I. Cassilly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" being the most prominent part.

Joseph I. Cassilly
President

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