Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 9, 2017

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:

As the Chairs of the Congressional Tri-Caucus – composed of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus – we write to express our deep concerns about the nomination and possible confirmation of Senator Jeff Sessions to serve as the 84th Attorney General of the United States. Senator Sessions has an alarming record that is of great concern to the communities of color we represent, from his views on race issues to his resistance towards improving our broken immigration system and restoring the right to vote.

In 1986, President Reagan nominated Sessions, then a young U.S. attorney from Mobile, Alabama, as a U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama. Due to serious concerns regarding his insensitivity on issues of race, Sessions ultimately became only the second nominee in 50 years to be rejected by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Despite the fact that a Republican-controlled Judiciary Committee deemed Sessions too regressive on issues of race and civil rights to serve as a district court judge, President-elect Trump has nominated Sessions to serve as Attorney General. The nomination of Sessions as the top law enforcement official in the country makes it clear that the concerns expressed by communities of color have not been heard.

Throughout his decades-long career in public service, Senator Sessions has found himself on the wrong side of countless issues that are vital to the well-being of the people and communities we represent. He has opposed essential components of the Voting Rights Act. He has served as an obstacle to criminal justice reform and a vocal proponent of the disastrous War on Drugs. He has also led the charge to deny equitable funding to public schools in Alabama, and demonstrated his resistance to advancing LGBTQ rights and women's rights by opposing the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" as well as efforts to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work. He has opposed both our current legal immigration laws and efforts to reform our broken immigration system. On immigration, Senator Sessions does not only support a ban on Muslim immigrants, but opposes even our legal immigration system. He has implied that Syrian refugees fleeing war are "terrorists", and has also attacked policies that support limited English proficient Americans. Even more concerning is the fact that Sessions does not even believe in upholding the concept of birthright citizenship, which is ingrained in our 14th Amendment.

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As Senator Sessions moves through the confirmation process, much will be made of his track record on issues of justice, equality, and civil rights. Many will debate the question of whether Sessions is or is not a racist. While this is a very important question that warrants consideration, it is ultimately a question for which there will be no definitive answer. What can be said definitively is that Senator Sessions, in a career spanning more than three decades in public service, has advocated for and in some cases implemented policies that are in direct conflict with the values of the Congressional Tri-Caucus, its members, and the people we represent. There is no doubt that Senator Jeff Sessions is unfit to lead a department he has long railed against, and that he will advance an agenda that will do great harm to citizens, immigrant communities, and people of color. We strongly urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to vote no on his nomination and instead advance an Attorney General who champions civil rights protections for all Americans.

Sincerely,

CEDRIC RICHMOND Member of Congress Chair, Congressional Black Caucus	JUDY CHU Member of Congress Chair, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus	MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM Member of Congress Chair, Congressional Hispanic Caucus