

July 15, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Nadler
Chair
House Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Nadler and Ranking Member Jordan:

On behalf of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the South Asian Bar Association (SABA) of North America, the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA) and the Disability Rights Bar Association (DRBA), we write to urge your committee to take all and appropriate actions to investigate recent allegations of improper and undue influence on career prosecutors at the Department of Justice, including the use of congressional subpoenas to compel testimony. Collectively, our organizations are committed to the equal protection and equal treatment of all Americans under the law.

The U.S. Department of Justice stands as a beacon of independence and a stalwart defender of the rule of law. This has been true historically. However, recent events involving the U.S. Attorney General and the Department of Justice have given the appearance of political pressure placed on career prosecutors who have sworn an oath to pursue the fair administration of justice for all Americans, regardless of race, political affiliation, or ideological beliefs. The incidents include, but are not limited to:

- The [resignation of all four career prosecutors](#) working on the federal case against political consultant Roger Stone after DOJ leadership overrode their sentencing recommendation.
- [Testimony from Assistant United States Attorney Aaron S. J. Zelinsky](#) alleging that career DOJ prosecutors were pressured by the “highest levels of the Department of Justice” to give a more lenient sentencing recommendation for Roger Stone because of his friendship and association with President Donald Trump.
- The [resignation of Brandon Van Grack](#), a lead prosecutor in the federal case against former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, the same day [DOJ attempted to drop charges](#) in the case.
- Attorney General William Barr’s Friday night announcement that US Attorney for the Southern District of New York Geoffrey Berman was “stepping down,” Mr. Berman’s [immediate public denial that he was resigning](#), Mr. Barr’s subsequent letter to Mr. Berman informing him of his [removal by the President of the United States](#), and Mr. Berman’s Saturday evening statement [confirming he indeed would be leaving the Justice Department](#) after he was assured his deputy, Audrey Strauss, would become Acting U.S. Attorney.

These events have raised doubts among our membership about the independence of career prosecutors working at the Department of Justice, an institution with historic importance to our communities and the defense of equal protection under the law. We urge you to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into these allegations to clear the names of the innocent and bring accountability to those who have violated the Department's code of ethics and the public's trust in impartial justice.

Our members and leadership are at your service to further discuss these matters with you and your staff.

Respectfully,

Irene Oria
National President
Hispanic National Bar Association

Bonnie Lee Wolf
President
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

Rippi Gill
President
South Asian Bar Association of North America

Thomasina Real Bird
President
National Native American Bar Association

Scott C. LaBarre
Chair
Disability Rights Bar Association