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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703
June 22, 2007

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Charles Carreon
1131 Barrington Circle
Ashland, Oregon 97520

Dear Mr. Carreon:

Thank you for contacting me about the Administration's hiring and firing of U.S. Attorneys. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

As you may know, the 2006 reauthorization of USA PATRIOT Act included provisions granting the Administration the power to install interim federal prosecutors for an indefinite period of time. This allows the President to bypass the Senate, which is normally required to confirm U.S. Attorney appointments. I voted against reauthorizing this legislation because of provisions like this one that erode the Constitutional system of checks and balances.

In December 2006, the Bush Administration dismissed several United States Attorneys and used this provision to install replacements. Because of concerns over the nature of these firings and their replacements, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a February 2007 hearing on whether the Bush Administration is politicizing the hiring and firing of U.S. Attorneys. With my support, members of the Judiciary Committee continue to investigate this troubling issue.

I am also pleased to tell you that in March 2007, I supported the passage of the Preserving United States Attorney Independence Act, S. 214. This act, which the President signed into law June 2007, removes the authority to appoint interim U.S. attorneys from the Department of Justice and restores the traditional Senate confirmation process.

Please rest assured that I will continue to support efforts to determine why these U.S. prosecutors were fired and whether inappropriate political considerations were a factor. As I do so, I will keep your views in mind.

Again, thank you for keeping me apprised of your views. If I can be of any further assistance to you on this or other issues, please do not hesitate to contact me in the future.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

RW/bw

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