



May 30, 2007

The Honorable Alberto Gonzales
Attorney General of the United States
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Gonzales:

I am writing to ask that you immediately step down from your position as Attorney General of the United States.

Over the past several weeks, the public and its elected representatives in Congress have sought straight answers about how and why nine U.S. Attorneys were asked to resign last year. You first allowed your staff to suggest that the fired prosecutors were dismissed because they had performed their jobs poorly. When this argument proved untenable, you then sought to distance yourself from the firings, claiming that you had no memory of participating in key meetings or discussions concerning which prosecutors to dismiss. In appearances before the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, you then provided muddled – and in some cases internally inconsistent – explanations of the firings and your role in them that were contradicted by current and former Justice Department aides.

It has become obvious that the U.S. Attorney firings were either handled in an incompetent manner or were motivated by a desire to politicize the Justice Department's most sensitive law enforcement functions to advance partisan interests. There is no hope of rebuilding public confidence in the integrity of the Justice Department and its prosecutorial functions without new leadership at the top, and I urge you to step aside in the interests of the country.

You have presided over a Justice Department that dismissed nine U.S. Attorneys whose track records were allegedly deemed not partisan enough. It appears that they were dismissed primarily for prosecuting Republicans, failing to prosecute enough Democrats or failing to prosecute specious claims of election fraud.

- Six of the seven U.S. Attorneys dismissed on Dec. 7, 2006 had recently received outstanding performance reviews.
- At least three of the dismissed U.S. Attorneys were told by a superior that they were being forced to resign to make jobs available for other Bush appointees.

Your own truthfulness has been called into question, as your public statements regarding your lack of knowledge about the firings have been directly contradicted by

Congressional testimony of other Justice Department officials as well as Justice Department memoranda and e-mails. Additionally, one of your senior advisors, Monica Goodling, admitted under oath last week that the Attorney General's office used political criteria in the selection of non-political positions within the justice department.

Common Cause is not alone in thinking your resignation is best for the country. More than 40 Members of Congress from both political parties are also on record in favor of you stepping aside.

Our sincere hope is that you will take action to avert a further crisis of confidence in the nation's top law enforcement official and in the Department of Justice and heed this call for your resignation. In this country, where the rule of law is paramount, the top law enforcement official must set the example for legal and ethical behavior. That example has been sorely lacking at the Justice Department.

Sincerely,

Bob Edgar
President and CEO
Common Cause