Sessions' SJQ "Woefully Inadequate": Groups Call for Delay in Hearing Schedule

WASHINGTON, DC, December 14 - The Senate Judiciary Questionnaire (SJQ) submitted by Sen. Jeff Sessions as a prerequisite for his confirmation hearing to become U.S. Attorney General lacks hundreds of entries that should have been included and is woefully inadequate in its current form, according to a number of organizations that have examined the publicly available document and its appendices. We agree with Sen. Dianne Feinstein, ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, who just yesterday expressed concern about the incompleteness of the SJQ, and are deeply disturbed by Senator Grassley's insistence that the hearings go forward on such a rushed schedule. Until the omissions from the SJQ are corrected, the Committee cannot carefully consider this critical nomination.

The following organizations have examined the SJQ and urge the Committee not to go forward with hearings until adequate information is provided with sufficient time for review: National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), Alliance for Justice, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, People For the American Way, National Council of Jewish Women, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Center for American Progress, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), National Education Association (NEA), Constitutional Accountability Center, Demos, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, and Human Rights Campaign.

In the first days since Sen. Sessions submitted the SJQ to the Senate Judiciary Committee, representatives of these organizations have found numerous omissions - including information that is not publicly available, as well as material that only he would be able to identify and provide. Examples of omissions include:

- No records of any radio or print interviews prior to 2002 or television interviews prior to 1998, although Sen. Sessions has been in public life for decades
- Notations that "no transcript or clips" are available for numerous speeches and interviews for which records are easily found online
Forty-three op-eds published by Sen. Sessions himself that are not included - nearly as many as were included

No records of speeches given before 1999, and omissions of speeches to specific groups in subsequent years, including speeches to the David Horowitz Freedom Center and Center for Immigration Studies

No records of any speeches after June, 2016, during the height of the presidential campaign

No record that Sen. Sessions was considered, and rejected, for a federal judgeship in 1986

The SJQ requires nominees to submit comprehensive information pertaining to their employment history, major cases litigated, published writings, media interviews, speeches, awards, finances, political activities and memberships, among other data. In light of the fact that Sen. Sessions was once before nominated for a position requiring Senate Judiciary Committee consideration, a federal judgeship, and was rejected for that position, it is even more critical that his full resume and biography be available for examination by the Committee. This is not possible given the incomplete records that have been submitted.

The organizations that have examined Sen. Sessions' SJQ and its appendices to the best of their ability believe that if hundreds of omissions can be identified in a few days, many more are likely to exist. Therefore, it is imperative that confirmation hearings for Sen. Sessions not go forward until adequate information is provided with ample time for review. The nomination process for such a critical position deserves the care and respect of the nominee.

Furthermore, Senator Feinstein has indicated that more than 150,000 pages of materials have been submitted, yet only 311 pages have been made available on the Senate Judiciary Committee website. To ensure a full and transparent process--and to determine how complete the SJQ is--all documents should be posted for public review.