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January 13, 2025

VIA Email

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States

Dear Senators Grassley and Durbin:

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center (the "Center"), an organization that has advocated on behalf of women and girls for over fifty years, we write in strong opposition to the confirmation of Ms. Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States. Ms. Bondi's record on abortion access, LGBTQ rights, immigration, healthcare, and election denialism raises serious concerns about her capacity to serve as Attorney General. Her record also reveals a litany of ethical concerns and deep-seated political partisanship, casting doubt on her ability to protect the independence of the Department of Justice, uphold the Department's commitment to the rule of law, and enforce the laws that protect the rights of women and girls.

As the nation's chief law enforcement official, the Attorney General is responsible for enforcing federal laws, including laws of the utmost importance to women. The Attorney General is tasked with enforcing Title VII, Title IX, the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE), the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Voting Rights Act (VRA), and the Fair Housing Act (FHA), as well as core constitutional protections, including the Equal Protection Clause and the right to privacy. The Department of Justice, led by the Attorney General, also enforces federal hate crime laws, which create enhanced criminal penalties for crimes that target victims based on gender, race, sexual orientation, and disability, among other bases. Consequently, the Attorney General has a profound impact on the legal rights and very lives of women across this country.

During her tenure as Florida's elected Attorney General, Ms. Bondi spent eight years working to undermine the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQ people. Ms. Bondi received the Susan B. Anthony's List endorsement during her Attorney General race in 2010 for her extremist anti-

choice legal positions, especially regarding her opposition to “abortion funding in healthcare.”¹ She then joined the National Pro-Life Women’s Caucus in 2013, which is a network for women lawmakers seeking to pass anti-abortion legislation in their states.² As Attorney General, Ms. Bondi continued the fight against abortion access in 2015 by defending Florida’s 24-hour abortion waiting period.³ These waiting periods endanger women by undermining their ability to access timely and safe abortion services. In addition to her anti-abortion stance, Ms. Bondi spent years unsuccessfully fighting against marriage equality in the Florida courts, relenting only after the Supreme Court’s 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision recognizing a federal constitutional right for same-sex couples to marry.⁴ Ms. Bondi’s record as Florida’s Attorney General casts grave doubt on her willingness to enforce the laws that protect the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQ people and suggests that she will instead seek to undermine these protections. At a time when states are violating federal law requiring that emergency abortion care be provided when necessary to stabilize patients’ health and seeking to ban care critical to the lives and health of transgender people, her hostility to protecting the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQ people is profoundly dangerous.

In addition to her anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQ record, Ms. Bondi has shown support for discriminatory immigration tactics and engaged in concerted efforts to undermine affordable healthcare. Ms. Bondi has expressed hostility towards immigrants by calling for enactment of a Florida statute similar to Arizona’s infamous “show me your papers” law, effectively calling for systemic racial profiling in Florida.⁵ Moreover, under Ms. Bondi’s leadership, Florida joined litigation challenging the Obama administration’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which enabled hundreds of thousands of immigrants who entered the U.S. as children to remain and work legally.⁶ Ms. Bondi’s support for racial profiling laws and disregard for immigrants and their families impugns her commitment to protect rights.

¹ Susan B. Anthony Pro Life America, “SBA List Candidate Fund Endorses Pam Bondi,” April 27, 2010, <https://sbaproplife.org/newsroom/press-releases/sba-list-candidate-fund-endorses-pam-bondi>.

² Susan B. Anthony Pro Life America, “SBA List Launches National Pro-Life Women’s Caucus,” June 10, 2013, <https://sbaproplife.org/newsroom/press-releases/sba-list-launches-national-pro-life-womens-caucus>.

³ Michael Auslen, “Last-minute attempt to stop Florida’s new abortion waiting period falls short,” *Tampa Bay Times*, June 30, 2015, <https://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/stateroundup/fate-of-mandatory-abortion-waiting-period-unclear-hours-before-law-goes/2235672/>.

⁴ Hannah Rabinowitz and Evan Perez, “Trump’s AG pick Pam Bondi is more conventional than Gaetz, but the agenda to disrupt the Justice Department won’t change,” *CNN Politics*, November 23, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/23/politics/pam-bondi-attorney-general-justice-department/index.html#:~:text=Bondi%20also%20fought%20for%20years,sex%20couples%20can%20marry%20nationwide>.

⁵ Michelle L. Price and Colleen Long, “What to know about Pam Bondi, Trump’s new pick for attorney general,” *AP News*, November 25, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/things-to-know-pam-bondi-eecl1d16075c7debd62223b475e3977d>.

⁶ Marc Caputo, “Florida joins 17 other states in lawsuit against President Obama’s executive immigration plan,” *Miami Herald*, December 6, 2014, <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article4299838.html>.

Ms. Bondi has also demonstrated her hostility to health care access, basing her campaign for Attorney General on the promise to use her position to challenge the Affordable Care Act.⁷ Ms. Bondi eventually joined several states in two separate lawsuits seeking to overturn the ACA in its entirety, eventually resulting in the Supreme Court’s 2012 *Florida v. Department of Health and Human Services* decision which resulted in more than 25 million Americans losing access to the Medicaid benefits that the ACA would have provided.⁸

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Ms. Bondi’s record raises serious questions about her ability to follow, interpret, and enforce the law independently from the personal and political interests of Donald Trump, if confirmed as Attorney General. For example, in August 2013, when New York’s Attorney General filed a lawsuit against Trump University citing “fraudulent and deceptive conduct,” Ms. Bondi acknowledged that the Florida Attorney General’s office had reviewed numerous fraud complaints against the for-profit school.⁹ However, immediately after her PAC received a \$25,000 donation from the Trump Foundation in September 2013, Ms. Bondi declined to investigate or join New York’s lawsuit against Trump University.¹⁰ In the years since, she has further demonstrated that her loyalty to President-elect Trump is stronger than her loyalty to the rule of law. In 2020, Ms. Bondi made numerous election fraud claims without evidence or legal basis in states where President Trump lost his presidential race.¹¹ She filed several meritless election fraud lawsuits following the 2020 election.¹² Additionally, when then-presidential candidate Donald Trump called for the prosecution of his perceived political enemies on the 2024 campaign trail, she echoed these deeply un-American and anti-democratic statements.¹³ As Attorney General, Ms. Bondi would be the lawyer for the people of the United States, not Donald Trump’s personal lawyer. Ms. Bondi’s record raises serious concerns about

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Michael Van Sickler, “Pam Bondi’s (and Rick Scott’s) Texas-sized role in Affordable Care Act fight,” *Tampa Bay Times*, December 15, 2018, <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2018/12/15/pam-bondis-and-rick-scotts-texas-sized-role-in-affordable-care-act-fight/>; Patrick Drake, Jennifer Tolbert, Robin Rudowitz, and Anthony Damico, “How Many Uninsured Are in the Coverage Gap and How Many Could be Eligible if All States Adopted the Medicaid Expansion?” *KFF*, February 25, 2024, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/how-many-uninsured-are-in-the-coverage-gap-and-how-many-could-be-eligible-if-all-states-adopted-the-medicaid-expansion/>.

⁹ Eric Lipton, “Pam Bondi, a \$25,000 Donation and Trump University: Questions Remain,” *The New York Times*, November 22, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/22/us/politics/pam-bondi-trump-university.html>; Alan Feuer, “Trump University Made False Claims, Lawsuit Says,” *The New York Times*, August 24, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/25/nyregion/trump-university-made-false-claims-lawsuit-says.html>.

¹⁰ Eric Lipton, “Pam Bondi, a \$25,000 Donation and Trump University: Questions Remain,” *The New York Times*, November 22, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/22/us/politics/pam-bondi-trump-university.html>. Note that this donation was later found to be illegal, and Mr. Trump was required to repay the illegal donation to the foundation. Ms. Bondi did not return the money.

¹¹ Sarah N. Lynch, “Trump’s attorney general pick Bondi questioned his 2020 election defeat,” *Reuters*, November 22, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trumps-attorney-general-pick-bondi-questioned-his-2020-election-defeat-2024-11-22/>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Alexandra Hutzler, “What Pam Bondi, Trump’s new AG pick, has said about investigating DOJ prosecutors,” *ABC News*, November 22, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/pam-bondi-trumps-new-ag-pick-investigating-doj/story?id=116136850>.

her ability to separate these roles and exercise legal judgment independently from the White House and provides additional grounds for rejecting her nomination.

In conclusion, given Ms. Bondi's record, the public can have no confidence that, as Attorney General, she would fairly enforce the critical laws and constitutional protections that are intended to secure equality, fairness, and opportunity for all Americans. Consequently, the National Women's Law Center strongly opposes the confirmation of Ms. Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States and urges the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to reject his nomination. If you have questions about the Center's opposition to Ms. Bondi's nomination, please contact me, or Alison Gill, Director of Nominations & Democracy, at agill@nwlc.org.

Sincerely,



Fatima Goss Graves
President and CEO