



---

## Federal Bar Association

---

*Office of the President*

**JAMES S. RICHARDSON SR.**

*U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces  
450 E St., NW  
Washington, DC 20442  
202.761.7365 • 202.761.7005(fax)  
jim.richardson@armfor.uscourts.gov*

September 8, 2008

The Honorable Judge Michael B. Mukasey  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Judge Mukasey:

The Federal Bar Association throughout its 85-year history has maintained strong, mutual ties with the Department of Justice and its attorney workforce. This has led to a deep appreciation for the mission of the Justice Department and the need for the evenhanded application of the Constitution and federal laws, assuring independence and integrity in the administration of justice. The attainment of the Department's mission begins with the equitable application of law and policy within the Department itself.

The recent reports of the Inspector General and the Office of Professional Responsibility finding that improper political considerations had been used in the hiring of career employees (including Immigration Judges, some Assistant United States Attorneys and employees detailed to offices in Main Justice) and in hiring decisions relating to candidates for the prestigious Attorney General Honors Program and the Summer Law Intern Program demonstrate the constant and continued need to guard against wrong-doing. This requires vigilant leadership at all levels, inspiring cultural deterrence as well as proactive supervision. The importance of adherence to merit systems principles and the removal of all partisan considerations in the hiring of career attorneys and other employees in this administration and future administrations cannot be overstated.

I write to commend and thank you for the substantial institutional reforms you have broadly and promptly initiated, including: new hiring processes for immigration judges, members of the Board of Immigration appeals, honors program candidates, and summer law interns; codified roles for career attorneys in the decision-making process; mandatory training for all political appointees regarding merit system principles and prohibited personnel practices and the expansion of that training to include all

Department employees, involved in career hiring; and the exclusion of political appointees in the Attorney General's Office from the process of hiring career attorneys.

The thousands of talented career attorneys within the Department are stirred by boundless loyalty to the pursuit of justice and service to our nation. Your continued efforts to correct the past and guard against future wrongs will reaffirm their faith in the Department's mission and the respect of all Department employees for the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James S. Richardson, Sr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James S. Richardson, Sr.  
National President