December 16, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: URGENT OPPOSITION to H.R. 5179, the District of Columbia Attorney General Appointment Reform Act

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned organizations—representing a broad range of ideological, faith-based, and civic perspectives—write to strongly oppose H.R. 5179, the District of Columbia Attorney General Appointment Reform Act.[1] This legislation would fundamentally undermine the independence of the District's chief law enforcement office and create a dangerous precedent that threatens every nonprofit organization operating in or headquartered in the District of Columbia, regardless of political orientation.

By eliminating a locally accountable, independently elected Attorney General and replacing that office with a direct Presidential appointee, H.R. 5179 would concentrate excessive legal and regulatory power in the hands of the Executive Branch. This change is not a neutral governance reform; it is a radical expansion of executive control over an office that wields sweeping authority over nonprofits, charitable assets, consumer protection, and civil enforcement. The consequences for civil society are profound and alarming.

The District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General exercises expansive authority over the oversight, investigation, and enforcement of laws governing nonprofits, foundations,

[1] United States. *District of Columbia Attorney General Appointment Reform Act of 2025*, H.R. 5179, 119th Cong., introduced in House Sept. 2025. Congress.gov, Library of Congress, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5179/all-actions

advocacy organizations, and faith-based institutions. Virtually every national 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) headquartered in the District falls within its jurisdiction.

Placing this power under the direct control of the President – any President -creates a clear and credible pathway for political retaliation, coercion, and ideological intimidation—no matter which party controls the White House. Today's ally could quickly become tomorrow's target. Under a President of a different ideology, removing the independence of the DC Attorney General could once again be used as a weapon. Neither side wins in this dangerous gamble.

Under a politicized, President-appointed OAG, nonprofits of all persuasions would face unprecedented vulnerability, including:

- Ideologically motivated investigations into tax-exempt status, political activity, or internal governance of organizations whose views diverge from the administration's agenda;

- Retaliatory enforcement actions based solely on perceived political opposition;

- Selective audits and subpoenas designed not to ensure compliance, but to harass, intimidate, and financially burden disfavored organizations until they are forced to self-censor or curtail their operations;

- Manufactured allegations of fiduciary failure for the purposes of deterring donors and sowing fear and uncertainty.

These are not speculative concerns. They represent the precise tools that an unaccountable, politically driven enforcement authority could deploy to silence dissent and reshape civil society to fit the preferences of any sitting President.

The risks are not limited to nonprofits. A D.C. Attorney General appointed by the President could also selectively target demonstrators or activists—from racial justice organizers to pro-life protestors—based on political convenience, chilling constitutionally protected rights of speech and assembly. At the same time, the office could be used to shield political allies and donors from consumer protection or civil fraud investigations, while pursuing aggressive actions against businesses or individuals that support opposition causes.

The D.C. Office of the Attorney General currently serves as a critical guardian of DC residents and consumers. Its effectiveness rests on its independence and its accountability to the people of the District—not to a single national political figure. Allowing the President to appoint the District's Attorney General would severely weaken this accountability and substitute political loyalty for independent judgment, inviting selective enforcement and politicized decision-making.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you and your House and Senate colleagues to OPPOSE H.R. 5179 and reject this sweeping expansion of unchecked executive power.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

National Consumers League
Access Ready Inc.
Americans for Financial Reform
California Bicycle Coalition
Center for Auto Safety
Center for Economic Integrity
Citizens Action Coalition of IN
Claire Bear Foundation
Community Economic Empowerment Network
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
DC Consumer Rights Coalition
Derrick Stone Safe Sleep
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Economic Action Maryland Fund
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
Kids and Car Safety
Legal Aid DC
Maine People's Alliance
National Association of Consumer Advocates
Oregon Consumer League
People Power United
Public Citizen

Reese’s Purpose
Safety Research & Strategies, Inc.
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Tzedek DC
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
Woodstock Institute