

Jeh Charles Johnson

December 12, 2013

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your November 6 letter and the opportunity to respond to it.

In general, I wish to assure you of my belief that our Nation's immigration enforcement resources must first be focused on those who pose a threat to our national security, public safety and the integrity of our borders. If confirmed, I intend to continually monitor the Department of Homeland Security's efforts in that regard, to ensure that we do in fact remain focused on those priorities. I realize also that, if confirmed, I have more to learn to gain a better understanding of existing policies and potential reforms to those policies.

If confirmed, I intend to ensure that the implementation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) process continues to be effective. I am not now in a position to outline what specific steps I would take in this regard. It is my understanding that USCIS has made clear that it will continue the DACA process. I also understand that, as of October 31, approximately 614,000 individuals have already come forward to request DACA. If confirmed, I will take all appropriate steps to ensure that the program remains a success, and implementation of DACA will be a priority for me.

You ask about the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program. With regard to MAVNI, from a policy perspective, it seems to me that having the widest pool available of potential applicants who meet the MAVNI criteria is a good thing.

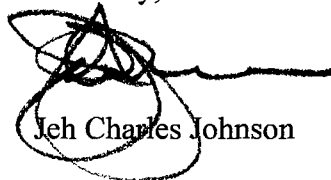
I agree that our Nation's immigration enforcement efforts must focus on the quality of the enforcement actions we take. I do not believe that deportation quotas or numeric goals are a good idea. As I stated above, in my view immigration enforcement must be focused first on those who pose a threat to our national security, public safety and the integrity of our borders. If confirmed, I intend to continually evaluate the prosecutorial discretion guidelines of Immigration and Customs Enforcement to ensure they are consistent with the Department's enforcement priorities.

Finally, if confirmed I intend to visit immigration detention centers on a regular basis, and review conditions of confinement at these centers. This was something I did

with respect to DoD's detention centers, beginning within 10 days of taking office as General Counsel in February 2009. I agree that policies and procedures on issues of solitary confinement, access to lawyers and social services, screening and treatment of those with mental illness, sexual assault prevention and detainee access to phone calls should be carefully and continually evaluated.

Senator, if confirmed I look forward to continuing to hear your views and working with you on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeh Charles Johnson", written over a printed name. The signature is highly stylized and somewhat illegible due to overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeh Charles Johnson