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The Honorable Senator Jeff Sessions
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sessions,

I write concerning your nomination as United States Attorney General and the longstanding precedent that Senators nominated to Cabinet positions recuse themselves from voting on their own confirmations. All six sitting Senators, both Democratic and Republican, to be nominated and confirmed to cabinet level positions since 1960 have declined to cast a recorded vote on their own nominations.

If confirmed as Attorney General, you will serve as the nation's most powerful law enforcement official, responsible for administering the law impartially and fairly, faithful to the Constitution above partisan or personal interest. Public confidence and trust in the administration of justice is indispensable. Your decisions will be held to the highest standard and should be unclouded by personal bias or conflict of interest – and that approach starts with the Senate confirmation process.

If the Senate votes on the confirmations of your potential Cabinet colleagues while your nomination is pending, I urge to recuse yourself from these votes as well. Such recusal is essential to avoid any appearance of bias and impropriety. Judges routinely recuse themselves from any matters where they may be seen as having a personal interest. So too you should allow your colleagues to evaluate all Cabinet-level nominees without your participation. Notably, the Code of Conduct for United States Judges encourages judges to recuse themselves from matters where even the appearance of a conflict of interest arises. This practice is critical to public confidence and trust.

I respectfully urge you to send a strong signal that your work as Attorney General, if you are confirmed, will be conducted with necessary impartiality and fairness by voluntarily recusing yourself from voting on your own nomination, and the nominations of your potential future Cabinet colleagues, when these votes come before the Senate.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate