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November 20, 2007

General Pervez Musharraf
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
c/o The Consulate General
10850 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1250
Los Angeles, California 90024

Dear General Musharraf:

I write on behalf of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. The Association is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary bar association with more than 24,000 members located throughout the United States and in other countries. Since its founding in 1878, the Association has often reacted to instances of grave injustice that affect human rights and liberties.

We write to express the Association's very grave concerns regarding the situation in Pakistan and in particular, actions which been taken to suspend your Constitution, to dismiss or place under house arrest or detention leading jurists including members of your Supreme Court, as well as the president and former president of your Supreme Court Bar Association, and scores of practicing lawyers in your country. Reports of these preemptory arrests and detentions have disturbed millions of individuals, including lawyers and judges, throughout the world.

We can appreciate the present challenges that you and your government face, but it is only through adherence to the rule of law and the maintenance of an independent judiciary that governmental action in difficult times remains legitimate. Condemning or punishing a lawyer for seeking to promote equal treatment under law does nothing to advance your country. Rather, it serves only to undermine your actions and the message that you seek to convey.

We respectfully urge that you take action to release those being detained and that you restore judicial independence in Pakistan. In doing so, you and your country will recover much both internally and on the world stage.

Respectfully,


Gretchen M. Nelson
President

cc: Honorable George W. Bush
Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Honorable Barbara Boxer

bcc: William H. Neukom
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