December 27, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2018

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the over 400,000 members of the American Bar Association (ABA), I write to thank you for your efforts to pass meaningful criminal justice reforms during the 115th Congress. Your recent legislative successes involving prison and sentencing reforms, reauthorization of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs, reauthorization of second chance reentry programs, and support for opioid recovery and other drug treatment programs will improve many aspects of our criminal justice system, but there is still more to be done. I urge you to build on your legislative successes in the criminal justice arena by passing the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2018 before this Congress ends.

The National Criminal Justice Commission Act would create a commission to conduct a comprehensive review of our nation’s criminal justice systems -- from policing to prosecutions to prisons – and then recommend potential reforms needed at the federal, state, and tribal levels. A study of this magnitude has not occurred in several decades and is needed to identify where to focus limited resources and improvement efforts to maximize their effectiveness. The Senate already passed the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2018 (S.753) by unanimous consent last Saturday, thereby showing the strong bipartisan support and need for such a comprehensive review. We hope that you will quickly pass similar legislation in the House.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please contact Ken Goldsmith in the ABA Governmental Affairs office at kenneth.goldsmith@americanbar.org or 202-662-1789.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Carlson

cc: Bob Goodlatte, Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee
    Jerry Nadler, Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee