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March 3, 2011

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General of the United States
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I write regarding the federal case against Sholom Rubashkin, whose kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa, was raided by federal agents in May 2008, and who was subsequently convicted of a number of federal crimes in November 2009. Several of my constituents have raised concerns about the handling of this case that should warrant your review.

Firstly, it is asserted that there may have been improper communications among the judge, the prosecutors, and the investigators in the months leading up to the arrest of Mr. Rubashkin.

Secondly, it appears that Mr. Rubashkin's sentence seems to be disproportionately harsh for his crimes.

Thirdly, it has been reported that the government opposed bail, stating that Mr. Rubashkin was a flight risk solely because, as a Jew, he was eligible for Israeli citizenship under that country's Law of Return. Such a position would reflect not only a misunderstanding of the Law of Return, but also a likely violation of the equal protection clause of the United States Constitution.

I believe that the health of our democracy depends on the unflinching truth that all federal prosecutions are conducted in a fair, even-handed, and above-all-else constitutional manner. I trust that you will consider the totality of the circumstances of this case to guarantee that the high standards of our judicial system are upheld, and to continue to ensure that all criminal defendants in this country receive the fair and impartial trial that they are due.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eliot L. Engel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Eliot L. Engel