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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2801

October 26, 2010

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The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General of the United States
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 5111
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I am writing to call your attention to the recent prosecution and conviction of Sholom Rubashkin, a former chief executive officer of the defunct Agriprocessors, the largest kosher meatpacking plant in the U.S. In November 2009, after being convicted of 86 counts of financial fraud, Mr. Rubashkin was sentenced to 27 years imprisonment by Judge Linda Reade.

The federal investigation into Mr. Rubashkin's financial dealings began after a May 2008 workplace raid that netted 389 illegal aliens. Certainly, the employment of hundreds of illegal aliens and perpetration of bank fraud are inexcusable. However, it has been brought to my attention that prior to that operation, agents from several federal departments met with Judge Reade. Information about this meeting was not presented to defense attorneys, suggesting that it may have been proper for the judge to have recused herself from the trial. Questions have been raised about the extent of the collaboration between Judge Reade and federal agents. The possible violation of the judicial principles of transparency and fairness – two fundamental features of the American courtroom – is deeply problematic.

I am aware that several of my colleagues in Congress have contacted you in support of a thorough investigation into the handling of Mr. Rubashkin's case by Judge Reade and the prosecution. Please keep me informed of developments in this matter. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,


SHELLEY BERKLEY
Member of Congress

SB:cg