June 19, 2017

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
1331 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 1150
Washington, DC 20425

Re: Public Briefing on Collateral Consequences: The Crossroads of Punishment, Redemption, and the Effects on Communities

Dear Commissioners:

The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) welcomes this opportunity to provide supplemental material to the Commission in response to your May 19, 2017, Public Briefing on Collateral Consequences.

NACDL commends the Commission for hosting an informative hearing designed to bring much needed attention to the issue of collateral consequences. As was stated by several of the witness, there are more than 65 million people in the United States who have either been arrested or convicted and therefore suffer from the over 48,000 collateral consequences associated with that offense.

In the fall of 2011, NACDL undertook an effort to study the various impacts of arrest or conviction and to come up with recommendations that local, state and federal entities should employ to alleviate these consequences. As part of that study, the Task Force:

- conducted a series of regional hearings to study state and federal relief mechanisms, focusing on those that appear to be successful in enabling people to get on with their lives once the court-imposed punishment has been satisfied.
- took testimony from officials responsible for administering relief systems, legislators and policy-makers, defense lawyers and civil practitioners representing clients who need the relief, and of course the clients themselves.
reached out to political leaders of diverse ideology and members of the faith community, prosecutors, and corrections personnel working with convicted persons in the community.

In 2014, the Task Force issued *Collateral Damage: America’s Failure to Forgive or Forget in the War on Crime*, which identified best practices and specific legislative and policy proposals that seek to facilitate restoration of rights and status after completion of sentence. The Task Force further recommended a comprehensive implementation plan, which was adopted by NACDL’s Board of Directors, to put the nation on a path towards providing meaningful and accessible opportunities for convicted persons to secure full restoration of rights and status.

NACL encourages the Commission Members to review the Collateral Damage Executive Summary and report for a comprehensive list of witnesses, policies and legislative recommendations. NACDL and the members of the Task Force on the Restoration of Rights and Status stand ready to assist the Commission in furthering the goals of the Commission and recommendations within the report.

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Sincerely,

Norman L. Reimer
Executive Director