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MARK PRYOR  
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825 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
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(202) 224-2353

2527 FEDERAL BUILDING  
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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 4, 2003

Mr. Alberto Gonzales  
Counsel to the President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

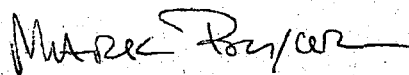
Dear Judge Gonzales:

Thank you for your letter reiterating Miguel Estrada's availability to meet with me "to answer appropriate questions [I] may continue to have about his nomination." At this time, I do not feel that private meetings with individual Senators adequately address the concerns I and a number of Senators share regarding Mr. Estrada's nomination. Moreover, your statement regarding "appropriate questions" captures the heart of one of my primary concerns: Whether Mr. Estrada can determine independently that the type of questions asked of judicial nominees prior to him are inappropriate and refuse to answer them.

I appreciate your facilitating my request to meet with him previously and the efforts you have made to assist with this process. Nevertheless, I believe firmly that to put into practical effect Mr. Estrada's offer to cooperate, the Administration should provide the requested Justice Department documents, Mr. Estrada should answer fully and completely the questions of the Committee, and he should make himself available to the Judiciary Committee to answer any follow-up questions. I hold firmly to the principle that the Senate process should not be circumvented.

Again, thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,



Mark Pryor

MLP/wop