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October 2, 2015

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
The Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Re: Senator Lester Hunt, Sr.

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

We are writing on behalf of our client, the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C. (“MSDC”), to bring to your attention information related to the tragic suicide of Senator Lester Hunt, Sr. in June of 1954.

The MSDC is a non-profit, non-partisan research and educational society. Its mission is to uncover the often-deleted political histories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans who faced persecution and discrimination at the hands of federal and state governments for over sixty years. The MSDC achieves this mission by conducting original archival research at The National Archives, U.S. presidential libraries, the Library of Congress, various federal agencies, and other public and private repositories across the country. The work of the MSDC has been profiled by the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, the *Washington Post*, and is the subject of a recent Yahoo News! Documentary, entitled *Uniquely Nasty*.

Senator Hunt’s death is of particular concern to the MSDC because it sheds light on a dark time in our history – a time when government officials targeted Americans for discrimination and blackmail, merely due to the suspicion of being gay. Indeed, there is now evidence to suggest that Senator Hunt was the victim of threats and blackmail after his son, Lester “Buddy” Hunt, Jr., was arrested in Lafayette Park for soliciting sex from an undercover male police officer. There is also reason to believe that Senators Joseph McCarthy (WI), Sytles Bridges (NH), and Herman Welker (ID) may have pressured the Department of Justice to prosecute Buddy Hunt, even after a decision was made to drop the case. Many have suggested that these circumstances – and the threats that hounded Senator Hunt – led him to take his own life.

In July of this year, Buddy Hunt wrote a letter, asking that your office look into the circumstances surrounding his arrest and prosecution, and his father’s death. We have now enclosed that letter for your review. **Exhibit A.**

The Honorable Loretta Lynch

October 2, 2015

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On October 1st, Senator Tammy Baldwin wrote to you, asking the Department to fully investigate and scrutinize the facts of this matter. **Exhibit B.**

We join these requests and further ask that the Department make available to the public any materials that shed light on this dark moment in our history. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We are available at any time to provide you with additional information.

McDermott Will & Emery LLP

By: 
Paul M. Thompson

Counsel for the Mattachine Society of
Washington, D.C.

McDermott Will & Emery LLP

By: 
Lisa A. Linsky

Counsel for the Mattachine Society of
Washington, D.C.

Enclosures (as stated)

cc: Charles Francis, President, the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT A

Lester C. Hunt, Jr.
400 E. Randolph St., Apt. #3910
Chicago, IL 60601-5051

July 30, 2015

Loretta E. Lynch
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Madam Attorney General:

My name is Lester C. Hunt, Jr. I am 87 years old and live in Chicago. In June of 1954 my father, Wyoming Senator Lester C. Hunt, took his own life. Over the years, I have come to believe he did so because he was being threatened and blackmailed by three of his Senate colleagues in order to change majority control of the U.S. Senate.

I was arrested on June 9, 1953 in Lafayette Park. I was charged with soliciting an immoral act. After some discussion with Detective Roy Blick, the investigating officer and Kitty Blair Frank, the Assistant U.S. Attorney in charge of the case, the charges were dismissed. Several weeks later I learned that Ms. Frank had been abruptly removed from the case and the charges had been reinstated. At the time, I didn't know why the decision had been reversed. I now believe it was the result of political pressure from Senators Styles Bridges (NH) and Herman Welker (ID).

The facts have been disclosed, at long last, in a 2013 biography of my father and a June 2015 documentary by Michael Isikoff. In the Isikoff film I am interviewed along with former U.S. Senator Alan K. Simpson and former Congressman Barney Frank. The film, titled *Uniquely Nasty-The U.S. Government's War on Gays* can be seen at <http://news.yahoo.com/uniquely-nasty--the-u-s--governments-war-on-gays-191808993.html>.

The matter is also the subject of a detailed investigation conducted by Wyoming historian Rodger McDaniel. His book *Dying For Joe McCarthy's Sins-The Suicide of Wyoming Senator Lester Hunt (2013)*, details the involvement of Senators Styles Bridges and Herman Welker as well as Senator Joseph McCarthy in the vile events which caused my father's death.

It is shocking to me that no formal investigation was ever conducted by either the senate or the Justice Department. On behalf of the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC, the law firm McDermott, Will & Emery has submitted Freedom of Information Act requests to the Department of Justice, in addition to FOIA requests submitted by Mr. McDaniel. Responses to these requests have been wholly inadequate and confusing, even stating that I may be deceased. Given the egregious nature of the matter, it seems to me that although belated, a formal review of the case is warranted and I am writing to ask that it be done.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lester C. Hunt, Jr.", written in dark ink.

Lester C. Hunt, Jr.

EXHIBIT B

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

October 1, 2015

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
The Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

I write to ask you to help shine a light on a dark chapter in the history of the United States Senate. On June 19, 1954, Senator Lester Hunt, Sr. of Wyoming took his own life in his Senate office. A year earlier, Hunt's son had been arrested in Lafayette Park for soliciting sex with an undercover male police officer. A recent review of the historical record suggests that Senator Hunt's death may have been precipitated by the efforts of several of his Senate colleagues — including one of my predecessors as Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy— to use his son's arrest to force him to resign. Furthermore, historical evidence suggests that those same Senators may have used their influence to advance criminal prosecution of Hunt's son when local authorities had not initially planned to pursue it.

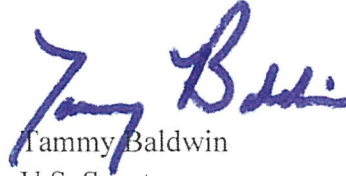
Shockingly, there is no evidence that a formal investigation into the death of a sitting Senator was undertaken, either by the Senate itself or the Department of Justice. While decades have passed since this tragic incident, it remains a troubling example of the misdeeds of the McCarthy era and the role homophobia and bigotry has played in the history of our nation, including at the highest levels of federal government. I believe it is important for the integrity of the Senate and our continued efforts to acknowledge and learn from the mistakes of our past that a formal investigation of Senator Hunt's death take place.

I understand that you have recently received a letter from Senator Hunt's son, Lester "Buddy" Hunt, Jr., asking you to look into the circumstances surrounding his arrest and prosecution and his father's death. I want to join Buddy Hunt in requesting that the Department investigate this egregious incident.

While the passage of time may make it impossible for us to fully understand all that happened, I believe it is important for Buddy, the Senate and our nation that the Department formally and

fully reviews the facts. I urge you to take this opportunity to scrutinize a troubling moment in the history of the Senate and provide greater closure and, with hope, justice to Buddy Hunt.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator