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John H. Garvey, Dean
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Dear John:

I was shocked to learn little more than two weeks ago that Boston College Law School had invited Michael Mukasey, the current Attorney General of the United States, to be its graduation speaker. I was appalled when I read the press release issued by the law school in which you are quoted as saying that, "It is a singular honor for Boston College to have the Attorney General of the United States as our commencement speaker. . . . I cannot imagine a better role model for the Class of 2008." The press release was issued on January 23, 2008, a time during which Mr. Mukasey continually refused, despite his confirmation hearings, to confirm that waterboarding constitutes torture and cannot be tolerated or condoned by American authorities; that the largest telecommunications companies in this country, including AT&T and Verizon, should receive blanket, retroactive immunity for invading the privacy rights of their customers by turning over that information to members of the Bush administration without a warrant, as required by explicit, unquestioned law; and who has supported, and continues to support, nominees of the administration to both the Justice Department and the federal judiciary who are absolutely and unequivocally unsuitable for those posts.

I understand that you had made the decision to invite Mukasey without conferring with members of the faculty or representatives of the law school's third year class. How you could have made such a decision unilaterally is beyond me. The message it sends to the current student body, members of the third year class, the alumni of the law school and members of the public is nothing short of extraordinary. It demonstrates a fundamental lack of judgment and sends a public message that neither the law school nor your administration believes in the rule of law. Stating that Mukasey is the best role model for the class of 2008, or anyone else for that matter, is preposterous. Providing Mr. Mukasey public recognition and a public forum for his conduct and positions since becoming Attorney General is antithetical to the ideals of the law school that I went to and graduated from. Can anyone imagine what Father Robert Drinan, the dean at the law school when I began and who served on the House Judiciary Committee during the Nixon impeachment proceedings, would have said?

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Regrettably, this is not the first instance in which your judgment involving the law school and matters of public importance has been questioned. Nearly two years ago, to stimulate debate, as I have been told, you authored and allowed to be published with both your name and title as an op-ed piece in the Boston Globe an article concerning the decision by the Catholic church in Boston to have Catholic charities cease its adoption placements because of state requirements that require that placement services not discriminate against same sex or gay parents who wish to adopt children. It raised the question of whether governments should be able to prohibit discrimination against women if those women are employed by the Catholic church. The article explicitly included your agreement with the church's decision. This had repercussions on the student body at the law school, as well as many alumni. Because it was written by you as "Dean" it carried the connotation that the article's position carried the imprimatur of the law school.

I have fond memories of the law school and have returned on several occasions. I have also provided substantial financial support because of the education I received and the opportunities it provided. But I will not continue to financially support an institution whose dean would publicly recognize and associate the law school now with Michael Mukasey. Given his public record, I hope that the invitation will be rescinded by the faculty of the law school at the earliest opportunity.

Sin

cerely yours,



James C. Sturdevant

JCS:bn