



April 17, 2013

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Senator Tom Harkin, Chair
Senator Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: *Nomination of Thomas E. Perez to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor*

Dear Senators Harkin and Alexander:

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center (the "Center"), an organization that has worked since 1972 to advance and protect women's legal rights, we write in strong support of the nomination of Thomas E. Perez to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Department of Labor serves a critical role in ensuring opportunities for women in the workplace. It enforces the federal guarantee that workers can take job-protected family and medical leave, wage and hour protections that protect workers from exploitation and abuse, and rules requiring federal contractors to advance equal opportunity in their workforces, including equal pay, among other crucial protections. It also houses the Women's Bureau, whose mission is to improve the status and working conditions for wage-earning women. The next Secretary of the Department of Labor will have the opportunity to continue the important progress toward fairer workplaces for women, and for all workers, that has been made during Secretary Solis' tenure.

Mr. Perez, who currently serves as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the Department of Justice, has demonstrated such a commitment throughout his career. Under his leadership, the Civil Rights Division has reinvigorated enforcement of federal laws against discrimination. Among other things, it has litigated groundbreaking Title IX sexual harassment complaints against public schools, colleges, and universities; challenged discriminatory barriers for women working in nontraditional fields in state and local government, investigated sex discrimination by law enforcement agencies; brought numerous cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act's prohibition of sex discrimination; and protected women's ability to obtain essential health care without physical harm, harassment or intimidation under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act.

Before becoming Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Mr. Perez served as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR), experience that would be highly relevant to the position to which he has been nominated. In his capacity as Secretary of DLLR, Mr. Perez has supported implementing the recommendations of the Maryland Equal Pay Commission, which helped ease the passage of a pay disparity data bill in 2008; this paved the way for the passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Civil Rights Restoration Act on

April 14, 2009 (mirroring the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act). Moreover, he supervised an agency of 1700 employees and managed a \$170 million budget.

The rest of Mr. Perez's twenty-year career in public service similarly demonstrates a commitment to civil rights and to enforcing legal protections upon which women, and all Americans, rely. He worked as a career prosecutor in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, was promoted to be Deputy Chief of the Criminal Section, and was later appointed Deputy Attorney General for Civil Rights. He served as Senator Edward Kennedy's Special Counsel on the Senate Judiciary Committee, acting as the Senator's principal adviser on civil rights. From February 1999 until the end of the Clinton Administration, Mr. Perez served as Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), where he advised the HHS Secretary on a number of civil rights issues, including discrimination in welfare-to-work programs based on race, disability, and national origin. Following his service in the federal government, Mr. Perez taught at the University of Maryland School of Law for six years as a clinical law professor and served on the Montgomery County, Maryland, County Council.

Throughout his career, Mr. Perez has worked to protect and further legal rights and protections crucial to the women of this country. Mr. Perez has the experience and the commitment to enforcing the federal laws upon which women, and all workers, rely, and is well-positioned to continue the important work of the Department of Labor. Consequently, the Center offers its strong support of Thomas E. Perez to be the Secretary of the Department of Labor, and urges you to support his nomination. If you have questions or if we can be of assistance, please contact us at (202) 588-5180.

Sincerely,



Nancy Duff Campbell
Co-President



Marcia D. Greenberger
Co-President

Cc: Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski
Sen. Patty Murray
Sen. Bernard Sanders (I)
Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Sen. Kay R. Hagan
Sen. Al Franken
Sen. Michael F. Bennet
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse
Sen. Tammy Baldwin
Sen. Christopher S. Murphy
Sen. Elizabeth Warren

Sen. Michael B. Enzi
Sen. Richard Burr
Sen. Johnny Isakson
Sen. Rand Paul
Sen. Orrin G. Hatch
Sen. Pat Roberts
Sen. Lisa Murkowski
Sen. Mark Kirk
Sen. Tim Scott