



May 15, 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 National Partnership for Women & Families, and the undersigned organizations, 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 challenged pay discrimination and pregnancy discrimination by public employers; 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 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 state's Lilly Ledbetter Civil Rights Restoration Act on April 14, 2009 (mirroring the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act). Moreover, he supervised an agency of 1,700 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, we offer our strong support of Thomas E. Perez to be the Secretary of the Department of Labor and urge you to support his nomination. If you have questions or if we can be of assistance, please contact Fatima Goss-Graves of the National Women's Law Center at (202) 588-5180 or Sarah Crawford of the National Partnership for Women & Families at (202) 986-2600.

Sincerely,

National Women's Law Center
National Partnership for Women & Families
9to5
Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund
Equal Rights Advocates
Feminist Majority
Institute for Science and Human Values
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Legal Momentum
Maine Women's Lobby
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Congress of Black Women
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women (NOW)
People For the American Way
Women's Law Project

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