

Testimony of

The Honorable John Warner

December 18, 2007

SENATOR JOHN WARNER STATEMENT
TO THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
ON THE NOMINATION OF ONDRAY T. HARRIS
TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE
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Chairman Leahy, Senator Specter, and my distinguished colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, I am pleased to introduce to the Committee Mr. Ondray T. Harris, who has been nominated to serve as the Director of the Community Relations Service at the Department of Justice.

As you know, the Community Relations Service helps local communities resolve serious racial and ethnic conflicts. CRS has worked extensively in response to church burnings, violence prevention in schools, and in response to civil unrest in various parts of the country.

Certainly, CRS has an important mission, and - in my view - Mr. Harris's experience seems to be tailored well to lead this agency. Throughout his career in public service and legal practice, Mr. Harris has developed exceptional experience with federal and state standards on civil rights. Since May 2007, he has served as the Acting Director of CRS, and I believe that he is deserving of Senate confirmation with respect to this position.

Prior to joining CRS, Mr. Harris was a Deputy Chief within the Department of Justice, with a responsibility of managing attorneys in the Employment Litigation Section. In this capacity, he also served as a liaison between the Department, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and private minority organizations to strengthen the working relationships between these entities.

For five years, before entering the Administration, Mr. Harris worked on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia as an Assistant Attorney General. In addition to his duties in litigation and grievance hearings, he was assigned to act as the sole counsel for the Virginia Council on Human Rights, a state agency that protects against unlawful discrimination. Mr. Harris provided legal advice, assisted in interpreting the agency's statutory authority to form regulations and policies, and instructed personnel regarding appropriate procedures and the laws of civil rights.

Mr. Harris received his B.A. from Hampden-Sydney College and his law degree from Washington & Lee University. I am pleased to note that, in addition to his diligent work, he has provided volunteer service through the Richmond Women's Bar Mentorship Program.

I look forward to the Committee reporting Mr. Harris's nomination favorably and for a confirmation vote before the full Senate.