

Statement of
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein

United States Senator
California
January 28, 2009

Senator Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
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Statement for the Record
Confirmation of Eric Holder

I am very pleased to vote today in support of Eric Holder's confirmation.

I have followed Mr. Holder's career for many years, and I have found him to be a dedicated public servant, a law enforcement official with a strong backbone, and a man of great heart and character.

I think he is an excellent choice to lead the Department.

Mr. Holder has made some mistakes in the course of his 33-year career, but he has forthrightly acknowledged them, and I believe him when he says that he is better and tougher because of them.

His nomination has broad bipartisan support from Republican and Democrats that he has worked with in the past. Police and prosecutors have come out in huge numbers to urge the Senate to confirm him; and civil rights groups almost unanimously support his confirmation.

In Holder, President Obama has wisely chosen an Attorney General who promises to be the chief law enforcement officer for all Americans.

If confirmed, we know that he will have a very difficult task in front of him.

As this Committee has documented on many occasions, the last eight years have been dark days in the Department of Justice. It will be Mr. Holder's job to turn the Department around.

During the last administration, at least 9 U.S. Attorneys were fired for making decisions out of line with the White House's partisan agenda. It will be Mr. Holder's duty to ensure that such schemes are never hatched, and that prosecutors follow the facts - and only the facts - and enforce the law as they find it.

Inspector General Glenn Fine has also released four separate reports documenting politicized hiring throughout the Department. It will be Mr. Holder's duty to make sure that career attorneys are hired based on merit alone, without respect to their political party or ideological affiliations.

Mr. Holder gave me great confidence last week when he said unambiguously that "the notion that the Justice Department would ever take into account a person's political affiliation or political beliefs in making [career] hiring decisions is antithetical to everything that the Department stands for"

I was also extremely pleased to hear first-hand that he is committed to enforcing our national security laws vigorously and tenaciously, and in a manner consistent with our nation's values.

Finally, and most importantly, it was clear from last week's hearing that Eric Holder understands that "No one is above the law."

It will be up to him to restore the Department's rightful place as an institution where all employees - from first year prosecutors to the Attorney General - speak truth to power, and where facts and the rule of law always have the final word.

This will be hard work, but I believe Mr. Holder is up to it.

He has my support to be the next Attorney General of the United States, and I urge my colleagues on the Committee to vote in favor of his confirmation as well.